

From This Corner
When Spring is Sprung
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During one of those warmer winter nights prefacing spring, my olfactory nerves jolted me awake. As I came to my senses, so to speak, I knew it could be one of two things. One was natural gas. The other a sure sign that spring was about to be sprung from its winter vacation. The gas leak being by far the most dangerous I promptly checked the furnace to make sure it was functioning properly. It was. The next presumption was a neighboring skunk had been motivated by the impending advent of spring to let loose with a practice round. It was boldly marking its territory on my territory. The wonders of nature never cease to amaze me, especially at 2 a.m. You have to admit the skunk's eau de cologne is effective. We leave them alone if we know what is best for us. I went back to bed and covered my head with the blankets.

The appreciation of nature has always played an important part in my faith. My father was an excellent amateur photographer who enjoyed taking his wife and two boys out to see what God had put under their noses. He was instrumental in teaching me that God is extremely creative. Dad produced a program entitled "Learning to See" which he took around to various civic groups and school assemblies. The gist of "Learning to See" was that if we would open our eyes we would observe that we are surrounded by limitless splendor and variety. His first picture would be of a pastoral scene, like a forest or field. The next would zero in on a tree or particular plant. The next would be a leaf. The one after that would be an insect on the leaf. He would then focus as closely as he could until the audience was face to face with whatever was there. I remember one shot he had of a Stag Beetle that made it look like a dinosaur. The fierce bronze bug with its intimidating pincers literally would have people pressing against the backs of their seats in an effort to escape. Other times it was a drop of water on the petal of a delicate flower. Dad had an eye for the way I suspect God sees the world. Nature was definitely dad's entrée to faith. When he died we made sure we sang "This is my Father's world, the birds their carols raise, the morning light, the lily white, declare their maker's praise."

Jesus too noticed things around him in minute detail. Once when he needed to make a point about the Father's care he said, "Consider how the lilies grow. They do not labor or spin. Yet I tell you, not even Solomon in all his splendor was dressed like one of these." (Luke 12:27 NIV) The point could not have been more clear. The disciples were "learning to see."

By the time you are reading this, spring will have sprung. Take a closer look, and marvel at part of what God has done. I highly recommend it unless it is furry, black and white. A few things are better appreciated from a distance.