

THE EAGLE

Intent of the Story:

Like the Eagles, we are born for the sky. The Lord has called us to live with our eyes fixed on heaven, not on earth., yet too many of us are satisfied to live like chicken in barnyards, contentedly with the safety of our families, our finances, our careers and the comfortable crumbs of modern life.

The Story

Once upon a time, walking through the forest, a farmer found an eaglet lying on the ground. It was wounded. It was dying. Out of pity, he picked it up and took it home. He kept it in the hencoop of his barn with the rest of his chickens. Very soon, the eaglet learned to eat chicken food and behave like a chicken.

Many days later, a bird-Naturalist happened to bump into that farmer's hencoop. When he saw the eaglet eating worms and grain and living in the farm, full of surprise said to the farmer: "How come that there is an eaglet in your farm living with the chickens? The eagle is the king of birds. Eagles are meant to fly, not to live in farms and eat chicken food!"

The farmer replied: "What else could I do? I found it in the forest when it was very small, I felt bad for it. I picked it up and kept it in my barn. It grew here and it looks quite happy being like one of the chicks."

The Naturalist retorted: "My dear friend, you are mistaken; an eagle is an eagle. We have to teach this eaglet how to fly. He has to realize his potential, his qualities. Only by using them to the full, he will find true happiness and fulfillment."

Immediately, the Naturalist picked the eaglet in his hands and tried to teach him to fly. But, all in vain! The eaglet would not even open his wings. He was afraid of flying. He did not even know that he could fly!

Again, the Naturalist lifted the eaglet from the ground. This time he kept him high above his head. Patiently, he kept saying: "You belong to the sky, look at the heavens, look up there, open your wings, and begin to fly."

The eaglet was confused and scared. When the eaglet saw- the chickens eating their food on the ground, he dropped heavily to the ground and joined them. The naturalist did not give up. He knew that in spite of all the evidence, inside that bird there was an eagle's heart throbbing for greatness, longing for excellence.

The next day, at sunrise, the Naturalist took the eaglet and went to the top of a small mountain nearby and patiently, began encouraging the frightened bird to fly. He kept telling the bird: "Fly, fly, dear eaglet. Open your wings. Climb the heights, forget the chicken barn below. Fly! Fly!" And without more ado, he flung the bird upwards towards the sky.

The eaglet, unaware of his unknown self and afraid of the height, shivering with fear allowed himself to drop down. There, he was now on the cliff of the mountain still .gazing at the faun house down below in the valley! ,

Then the Naturalist made the eaglet lace the rays of the rising sun; lovingly, he kept telling him: "Realize your greatness, you are not a chick, you are an eagle! You can fly. The sky is your fatherland. The heights are calling you. You are not meant for the earth. Open, open your wings and dare fly!"

Finally, the eaglet stared at the brightness of the rising sun. Its ardors caressed his wings. Its piercing brightness stabbed his heart. Something awoke in his soul. All of a sudden the eaglet trembled, he shook all over, slowly his wings expanded; then, they fluttered.

At last, with his eyes glued to the radiant sun, the eaglet majestically, rose from the ground and started flying. He hastened and hastened his speed, soared and soared, higher and higher, till regally, he reached the inaccessible heights of the heavens!

(Adaptation of the Story, "The Eaglet" of Nancy Missler)

Points for Reflection and Discussion

1. Why so many of us do not try to climb the heights, but prefer to behave like chicks enjoying the security the farmhouses?
2. Do you really believe that there is an eagle deep down in your heart longing to be set free? What have you done about it?
3. At home, at school, and in college, have you been brought up and treated like a chick or like an eagle? What effect had that on you?
4. At your place of work, in life as a whole, have you been behaving like a chicken or like an eagle? Explain.
5. Have you ever found in your life a "naturalist" who helped you to discover your true self? What did he do to you? What difference did it make in your life?
6. In the way you behaved towards people at home, and with others in general have you been like the "fanner" or like the "naturalist"? Give instances.
7. How can we be "naturalists" and help others to discover their hidden greatness? Explain give instances.
8. Mention the names of some persons who have been real eagles in the history of the world. In what way were they eagles?

Explain or Discuss the Following Statements

- . A person's "potential self" is richer than his "actual self".
- . Believe you are an eagle, act like an eagle and you will be one
- . Don't look at what you are, look at what you can be..
- . Each one is a mixture of great unknown strengths and of tiny known weaknesses.
- . Even in the smallest seed, there is a tree that wants to bloom.
- . Every eagle needs a "naturalist" to discover what he is
- . Every person in his own unique way is born an "eagle"
- . Great oaks have been tinny acorns.
- . The glory of God is a man fully alive.
- . There is a "naturalist" in your heart, don't silence him
- . To overcome your weakness, believe in your strengths'
- . Treat people according to what they "can" be, not according to what they think they are.
- . We are born for the heavens, not to crawl on earth..
- . We carry treasures in earthen vessels.
- . All of us are priceless gifts of God to the world, enveloped in simple wrappers

