

WoH 476 For translation

Natural Pest Control_ Naomi's Call to Mission

Tammy: Hello Carol, ... how is your garden going?

Carol: Well Tammy, I'm enjoying it – mostly – but the biggest problem I have is the pests and diseases.

Tammy: Yes, we're not the only ones who enjoy our garden! When we grow lots of plants we can expect to have lots of visitors. Not just the people who will love to look at our garden, but birds, insects and little animals will come and want to share the delicious food...

Carol: Hello to you, it's good to be together again on Women of Hope. It's a long time since we talked about our gardens isn't it! How is *your* garden growing?

Tammy: Well, I've been having some trouble with pests in *my* garden so I've been talking to Harley our gardener friend again and he's given me lots of ideas.

Carol: Great...so what can we do about these pests – the birds, insects, and other little animals? How can we stop them from damaging our garden?

Tammy: Well I'm going to tell you some ideas that I've tried, and others that I've heard about, but I can relax a little because I realise that some of the visitors I used to think were pests are really friends.

Carol: Oh, really? Shouldn't we try to keep them *all* away?

Tammy: Some of them actually help to keep other pests under control, so you can have a whole variety of birds and insects that don't really do too much damage to the garden. They may eat a little, but so long as you get *most* of your fruit or vegetables, that's OK.

Carol: That's an interesting way to look at it. I'll have to think about that...and while we're thinking let's listen to this song about...

Tammy: Are you comfortable? I always enjoy talking with Harley. He knows a lot about gardening and has good, simple ideas to share – so let me share some of them with you today here on *Women of Hope*.

Control of pests really starts with the health of your plants. Very strong, healthy plants won't get damaged by pests and diseases as much as weak ones. It really helps if you have plants that normally grow well where you live. Walk around your area and look at other people's gardens, and talk to the gardeners. Ask them, which plants grow best? Which ones don't have many diseases?

Carol: That's a good idea Tammy.

Tammy: I didn't do that. I planted some fruit trees, but every year they have diseases. I asked someone nearby recently how to control the disease on these trees, and he said, 'Oh, those. I used to grow that kind of tree, but I gave up and cut them out years ago. Just grow the trees that grow well here!'

Carol: That makes such good sense.

Tammy: But even with those fruits and vegetables that grow well in your area, you will still need to look after them well... We have some little helpers in our garden.

Carol: Do you? What do you mean?

Tammy: We have some ducks. They're good gardeners, just as chickens are. They give lots of fertiliser from their droppings, and eat some of the pests, and of course they give us eggs as well.

Carol: I did have chickens for a while.. but I found that they scratched up my new plants.

Tammy: Yes, you need to protect the young plants so they don't get dug up. Maybe you need to put a temporary fence around the seedlings, or put a cut-off plastic bottle over each little plant for a while. But allow your chickens or ducks to get in quite close to the young plants so that they will fertilise them.

Carol: A good idea. I think I might get some more chickens. And did our gardener have any advice about how to plant out the vegetables?

Tammy: Yes; it's good to mix them up. If you plant all the same type of vegetable or fruit in a long row or in a few rows together, they're much more attractive to the insects and birds. You'll have more success if you mix them up. It may not look as neat, but they'll grow better. And if you put in a garlic plant here and there it will help keep some insects away.

Carol: Really? Don't they like the smell?

Tammy: I don't know the reason, but it seems to work. Some people keep insects away by spraying or painting on a mixture made out of garlic.

Carol: How would you do that?

Tammy: Mash some garlic into water and grate in some soft soap. Leave it to soak for a couple of days, then strain out the solids, and mix it with lots more water, then spray it onto the plants. *They* don't mind the smell!!! (laughing)

Carol: Ok, I'll try that. I've heard that parsley plants help keep insects away too. A lot of insects don't like it.

Tammy: Another idea, and this one makes your vegetable garden look pretty as well, is to plant some flowers here and there. They attract the bees and other helpful

insects, and they can help to control the harmful ones. This is called companion planting.

Carol: ...And what about fungus disease? Some years this is a real problem for my plants.

Tammy: Yes, it's difficult to control fungus when the weather is wet for a long time. The best way to prevent fungus is to leave space between plants so that the air can get in, but even then the fungus or mildew can take over. I've heard that chive tea can be helpful. Pour some boiling water over a handful of chive leaves. Let it cool then strain the leaves out and spray the water on plants like pumpkins and zucchini...on anything that seems to grow fungus or mildew. You can use a watering can with very small holes to spray the tea.

Carol: That sounds like a good idea.

Tammy: And I've heard that a mixture of milk and water stops mildew!

Carol: Well, I'll try those ideas. Thanks for sharing some of our gardener's secrets with me. Remember...choose plants that are suited to your area; ask others in the area what seems to grow well.

Tammy: And ducks and chickens will help fertilise the garden, but protect the young plants so they don't dig them up, or eat them.

Carol: Also - mix your plants up to help keep the insects away – and both garlic and parsley will also keep a lot of insects away.

Tammy: And chive tea ... and milk mixed with water is good to help get rid of fungus and mildew. These things should help you get the most out of your garden.

Carol: Welcome back. I hope you've learned something you didn't know about gardening today. I have. Maybe you have something you'd like to share with us that has worked well in *your* garden. We'll tell you where you can contact us a little later.

You know, this battle with pests in the garden reminds me of something I read in God's word, the Bible. It comes from Ephesians Ch 6 (v10-17) and it's talking about protecting ourselves. Just like plants that can resist pests, people can resist temptation best if we are trusting in God. Let me read it to you...

...let the mighty strength of the Lord make you strong. Put on all the armor that God gives, so you can defend yourself against the devil's tricks. We are not fighting against humans. We are fighting against forces and authorities and against rulers of darkness and powers in the spiritual world. So put on all the armor that God gives. Then when that evil day comes, you will be able to defend yourself. And when the battle is over, you will still be standing firm. Be ready! Let the truth be like a belt around your waist, and let God's justice protect you like armor. Your desire to tell the good news about peace should be like shoes on your feet. Let your faith be like a shield, and you will be able to stop all the flaming arrows of the evil one. Let God's saving power be like a helmet, and for a sword use God's message that comes from the Holy Spirit.

Carol: We read from a book by Naomi Reed a little while ago. Maybe you were with us. Naomi wrote about how she realized that the God of the whole universe loved her, just as she was. He wanted her to love him too...and she said Yes to God. She was only 12 years old, but she knew her life would never be the same again. We wanted to hear more of her story, didn't we? So I'm going to read some more today.

Tammy: Let's listen together to what Naomi wrote.

Carol: I knew that it wasn't enough to be happy because God loved me. God's word says: 'Love *one another* as I have loved you', and that really stayed with me. How could I do that? How could I lay down my life for another person?

I had a group of friends at High School who also followed Jesus. My family didn't go to church, but these friends helped me to grow in my faith. One of them was a boy named Darren. That's another whole story! We both studied physiotherapy. Physiotherapists learn how to help people to overcome their injuries and disabilities. And then one beautiful spring day, Darren and I were married. It couldn't have been more perfect.

A year later, Darren and I were sitting on a grassy headland, watching the waves crash onto the beach. Suddenly I asked Darren, 'Have you ever thought about serving God overseas?' He was astonished!

You see, I'd been reading a book by a woman doctor. She worked in a Christian hospital in Africa during a time of revolution. She wrote about the challenges and the way God had provided for her, even though she had been captured by rebels. It felt like God was asking me some hard questions.

Questions like: What was I willing to do for God? And the answer was, Easy things, things I could control.

Where was I willing to go? I thought, Somewhere nice, not too hot, somewhere close by.

I wondered, Would God really be able to use me, just a young physiotherapist? And, could I trust God when I couldn't be in control of my situation?

You know, at that moment God reminded me that he loves to use the 'nobodies', those who feel they are weak. He promised in his word: 'My grace is sufficient for you, my power is made perfect in your weakness' (1 Cor 12:9).

I didn't think that God was telling me I must go to Africa, but I did think he was asking me to be *willing to serve* others, somehow. Then, just one week later, I was at a conference, learning about new methods of helping people with disabilities to use artificial arms and legs. I was fascinated, because that was the sort of work I really liked. Then something happened that turned my life around.

A doctor showed us a video. It was about the thousands of people who had lost arms and legs when landmines exploded. The video was set in Cambodia after the war there, but the story was the same in many other countries. These people had no wheelchairs, no crutches, no artificial legs. And suddenly I saw that God's love reached out to those people too, and that maybe I could love these people as God had loved me. Maybe God could use me, as a physiotherapist, to show them his love as I helped them learn to walk again.

Tammy: Naomi asked Darren whether he had ever thought about serving overseas. I wonder what he said?

Carol: (laugh) Well, that was a problem! Let me read some more.

Darren said, 'Why would I want to do that? I'm happy here. I love my job, I have you, my friends, my sports, my life. No way.'

But you know, God changed Darren's heart, till Darren was just as sure as I was. That was probably the most important part - for us to really be willing to trust God and go wherever he wanted us.

Well, Darren and I became sure that God wanted us to go to the country of Nepal to work as physiotherapists. Nepal is a mountainous country between India and China. We found out that Nepal had 20 million people and at that time, only two qualified Nepali physiotherapists. And one of them was overseas! That left one very busy physiotherapist, we thought.

Here was a way we could help! One step at a time, God showed us how we could work with people with leprosy. In an amazing way we learned about a Christian hospital that worked with leprosy patients - people who had lost parts of their hands and feet because of this disease. We didn't know how we would pay to get to Nepal, or pay for the things we needed, but it seemed God had a plan, because lots of other people wanted to show God's love too, and they just sent us money. We never really knew where it came from, but we always had just the amount we needed, no more and no less. And this was even more special - people who didn't know us, but had heard about us, started to pray for us, and they prayed faithfully for years. Darren

and I felt so sure that God had called us to love and serve people in Nepal, people who God loved, just as much as he loved us. We were so excited!

So the day came at last, and we got on a plane in Australia and set off for Nepal.

And then, flying halfway across the big, deep, black Indian Ocean, we realized we were hurtling away from everything and we knew, and everyone we loved, at 800 km per hour. That's fast. We had no return tickets. We suddenly felt scared; we needed comfort.

At the airport some friends had put goodbye cards into our hands, so we opened them, and found words we needed to hear. Someone had written out part of God's word, from Psalm 139 (9-10). Listen to what it said:

'If I rise on the wings of the dawn, if I settle on the far side of the sea, even there your hand will guide me, your right hand will hold me fast.'

I read those words, and I looked past the wings of the plane until at last I saw in the distance the lights around the coast of India. The far side of the sea was there. We were almost at the place we would settle, the place where we would be held fast by Almighty God and the place where he would guide us. I sat still and firm within his hands. The scary pictures in my mind were still there but they no longer frightened me. They no longer held me. The Almighty God did.

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Carol: I'll stop reading there. I hope you enjoyed Naomi's story. Did *you* understand why Naomi and Darren left their home country to help people they had never met?

Tammy: I think it was because they wanted to show God's love. Hasn't it been good to hear how God loves people, wherever they live, whatever they need? And I need to remember sometimes, that God wants to use me, with all my weakness, to show his love to others - perhaps especially to those who don't know him. He loves you too, and he'll show his love *through* you if you are really willing to follow when he calls you.

God doesn't always ask us to go to another place. Do *you* have any ideas about how you can show God's love? I think we can always start where we are, with the people nearby. We can try to put the words of Jesus into practice: 'love one another as I have loved you.'

Carol: Though God called Naomi and Darren to go to another country, he also called other people to help them with their gifts and their prayers and their encouraging words. How is he calling you?

Tammy: And let's remember those words of faith that comforted Naomi: 'your hand will guide me, your right hand will hold me fast'. As we hear more of Naomi's story, we'll see that God did guide her and hold her safely, time after time.

Tammy: So I hope you felt encouraged as you listened to Naomi's story. If you love God, you can ask him to show *you* how you can pass on his love to others.

Naomi's story doesn't stop there, and we're going to read some more about her life, some other time on Women of Hope.

Carol: We need to go now. We'd like to hear about your life too, and maybe a bit about your garden!

Tammy: Goodbye, and God bless you.

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