

Expect the Mosquitoes

Recently I attended a prayer retreat with the prayer team at my church. For the first hour we met to discuss a book we had been reading, and then we split up to spend the rest of the time in solitude with God. We were free to go into the chapel, into private rooms, or we could also wander the grounds outside. I headed out into the sunshine, deciding between a trail through the woods, the flower gardens, a prayer labyrinth or the stations of the cross.



My feet led me down a trail into the woods, a cool, peaceful refuge from the heat of the summer day. I settled on a bench and quieted myself, tuning into my surroundings and the Lord. Birds called back and forth to each other and a light breeze ruffled my hair. A ray of sunshine penetrated the trees and landed on me, warming my skin. "Thank you, Lord, for this beautiful place," I prayed. "Help me to hear you clearly today."

I closed my eyes and breathed deeply. Then I felt it. The irritating bite of a mosquito. I slapped it away and refocused my thoughts on God. Zing. Another bite. And then another. I snapped my eyes open to see mosquitos swarming around me. Flies soon joined the mosquitoes. Under the bench I saw beetles and a centipede. Ugh! So much for focusing clearly on God. Sheepishly I remembered that before I left that morning, I had slathered on peach lotion. Good grief! The sun was

warming my skin, broadcasting the peach scent on the morning breeze to every nearby insect.



I was going to have to move along and find a spot free from pesky insects. I gathered my things when the thought hit me: **“Isn’t this what our lives as Christ-followers are to be like?”**

The Scent of Jesus

The more we become like Jesus, the more we will emanate the scent and lusciousness of Jesus to everyone, just like a ripe piece of fruit advertises its scent to all who walk by—people and mosquitoes alike. We may sometimes feel that we attract the wrong kind of attention—people antagonistic to our faith may frequently cross our paths. If you’re a person who always seems to be attracting antagonistic or needy people, maybe it’s because you’re doing something right, and they’re being drawn in by the Jesus they sense in you. As God gives you the opportunity, you can then point them to Jesus.

That’s what happened to Jesus. Everywhere He went, people flocked to him. And He loved them all—the tax collectors, the adulterers, the lepers, the little children. All the people groups that society said were outcasts or unimportant, Jesus took the time to love and bring life to.

God impressed upon me that day how important it is for us as Christ-followers to have patience, grace and love with everyone we meet. He allowed me to see that at many different stages in my life, I myself have been a “mosquito” to a believer—and may even be right now!

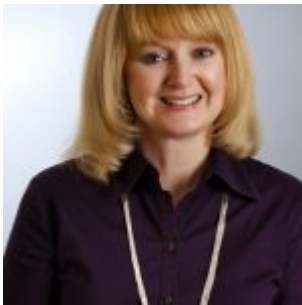
I think through this little analogy God was telling me we need

to expect the mosquitoes in life, and that if we don't have any, then maybe that's the real problem, because that means we don't smell any different from anyone else in the world.

What do you think?

Pray on!

Jane



Forest image courtesy of the following:

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