

Talented chicken just couldn't handle the pressure anymore



America's Heartland
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"All I had to do was wave a cloth in front of that chicken, and she'd lay an egg the color of that cloth," the chicken farmer bragged. "It worked well until someone waved an American flag in front of that hen. She committed suicide."

I suppose it would be a difficult thing for a chicken to lay a red, white and blue striped egg with 50 little stars intermingled.

Perhaps you've felt at times that you've faced responsibilities beyond your capability, and you really didn't know where to begin. What I've learned to do at a time like that is to humble my heart and pray for the Lord to enable me. I expect you do the same thing.

One of my favorite Bible verses tells us that our God

"is able to do exceeding, abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us" (Ephesians 3:20).

Another of my favorites, Philippians 4:3, tells us, "I can do all things through Christ which strengthens me."

I can't begin to tell you how many times over the years those verses and other similar ones have given me the encouragement I needed to press forward, even when I felt like I was treading waters way over my head. And I can tell you, the Lord came through every single time.

I have talked with Christian mechanics who tell me that, when they come to a puzzling problem with an engine or accessory that they just can't

figure out, they simply ask the Lord to help them, and, just like that, the answer comes to them. Those mechanics testify that our Lord is the Master mechanic.

I've talked to Christian journalists who, facing writer's block and sitting there with no idea what the next line ought to be, bow their heads and ask for the Lord's help. Those journalists testify that the Lord is the greatest of all writers.

No matter your vocation, the Lord is right there on the job with you, just waiting for you to ask for his help when you have no idea what to do next. If you'll ask, He'll show you.

I don't want to overpromise what the Lord will do for you on the job. Sometimes that has

to do with how closely we're walking with him. But I feel sure he loves for us to ask for his help when we get stuck or when things just aren't going so well.

I've been amazed time and again by what he has done for me. I've learned to rely entirely upon him.

You'll likely face times in your life when you're facing puzzling circumstances at work – so puzzling, perhaps, that you feel like that chicken who thought she needed to produce an egg in the colors of an American flag. In those times, I challenge you to call on the Lord and see if he doesn't come through for you.

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Kitchen Diva by Angela Shelf Medearis Deep-Fried Chicken Is Finger Lickin' Good

I don't know why fried chicken tastes better when it's served on a picnic table. The beauty of deep-fried yard bird is that if it's cooked properly, you don't need silverware, a plate or a napkin. Licking one's fingers after taking an extra-large bite of beautifully fried, crispy chicken is the highest complaint a cook can receive.

This recipe for Finger Lickin' Chicken is a combination of my mother's, my friends' and my own fried-chicken recipe. Cook up a batch, whip up some side dishes, grab your family and friends, and find a picnic table. It's the perfect summertime meal.

FINGER-LICKIN' CHICKEN

The brining and chicken prep steps shouldn't be skipped for the most flavorful chicken and the best results. These steps can be done a day in advance or before leaving for the day, if you want fried chicken for dinner.

- 2 tablespoons table salt
- 2 tablespoons poultry seasoning
- 2 tablespoons hot sauce
- 3 bay leaves
- 1 quart low-fat buttermilk
- 1 whole chicken (about 3 1/2 pounds, giblets discarded, washed and cut into pieces -- breast pieces in half)
- 3 cups all-purpose flour
- 1 tablespoon poultry seasoning
- 1 teaspoon baking powder
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1 teaspoon black pepper
- 1 teaspoon paprika
- 1/4 teaspoon cayenne pepper
- Refined peanut oil or vegetable shortening (about 12 cups)

To Make the Brining Mixture:

1. In a large zipper-lock plastic bag, combine salt, poultry seasoning, hot sauce and bay leaves. Shake the bag to mix the spices thoroughly. Add 3 3/4 cups of the buttermilk into the bag, reserving 1/4 cup. Stir or shake with the bag sealed until the salt is completely dissolved.

2. Immerse the chicken in the mixture. Place the bag of chicken pieces in a large baking pan to prevent leaks. Refrigerate 1 hour or up to 8 hours to allow the pieces to become fully seasoned.

To Prepare the Chicken:

Remove the chicken from the buttermilk brine and shake off excess. Place the pieces in single layer on large wire rack set over a rimmed baking sheet. This step will dry the skin slightly to allow it to become crispy when frying. Refrigerate, uncovered, for 2 hours. (After 2 hours, the chicken can be covered with plastic wrap and refrigerated up to 6 hours longer, if needed).

Coating and Frying the Chicken:

1. Mix together the flour, poultry seasoning, baking powder, salt, black pepper, paprika and cayenne pepper in a large, shallow dish. Stir in the remaining 1/4 cup buttermilk. Combine the ingredients with your fingertips. The buttermilk will make the flour mixture thick and slightly lumpy. Working in batches of 3, drop the chicken pieces in the flour. Press both sides of the chicken pieces into the flour and lumpy pieces to coat. Gently shake excess flour from each piece.

2. Adjust oven rack to middle position, set second wire rack over second rimmed baking sheet, and place on oven rack. Heat the oven to 200 F to keep chicken warm while frying in batches. Line a large plate with double layer of paper towels to drain the fried chicken pieces on after removing them from the oil.

3. Pour 3/4-inches of oil in a large, 8-quart, cast-iron Dutch oven with a diameter of about 12 inches or into a deep-fat fryer. Heat the oil to 375 F over medium-high heat. Place a few of the dark meat chicken

pieces, skin-side down, in the oil. Do not crowd the chicken. Cover with a heavy lid. Reduce the heat to medium, and fry.

4. After about 3 minutes, lift the chicken pieces with

tongs to check for even browning; rearrange if some pieces are browning faster than others. Check the oil temperature with a thermometer after the first 6 minutes of frying. The oil should be about 325°F, adjust the temperature by turning the heat up or down as necessary. Continue cooking for another 4 to 6 minutes, until the chicken is golden brown.

5. Turn the chicken pieces over and continue to fry, with the pan uncovered, until chicken pieces are deep golden brown on the second side, 6 to 8 minutes longer. Using tongs, transfer the chicken to a paper towel-lined plate; let stand 2 minutes to drain, then transfer to rack in warm oven.

6. Replace paper-towel lining on plate. Return oil to 375 F and fry remaining pieces, transferring pieces to paper towel-lined plate to drain, then transferring to wire rack. Cool chicken pieces on wire rack (outside oven) about 5 minutes and serve. Serves 4 to 6.

Angela Shelf Medearis is an award-winning children's author, culinary historian and the author of seven cookbooks. Her new cookbook is "The Kitchen Diva's Diabetic Cookbook." Her website is www.divapro.com. To see how-to videos, recipes and much, much more, Like Angela Shelf Medearis, The Kitchen Diva! on Facebook. Recipes may not be reprinted without permission from Angela Shelf Medearis.

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Time is Like a River

Wednesday, June 16th, 2021 Message
 Bro. Warren Rogers, Retired Baptist Minister

"For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope." Romans 15:4

As we grow older, we are more aware of father time creeping up on us.

An older lady was looking in a full-length mirror when her husband walked in. She says, "Look at me, my face is wrinkled, my arms are flabby, my hips are wide! Just look at me!" Husband just stands there silent. She says, "Say something, you big dummy. Cheer me up, give me something positive." He replies, "Well, there's nothing wrong with your eyesight."

Try as hard as we can, we can never regain our youth. We must accept what God has given us and look forward.

Roman Emperor Marcus Aurelius said, "Time is like a river made up of the events which happen, and a violent stream; for as soon as a thing has been seen, it is carried away, and another comes in its place, and this will be carried away too."

We can never return to the past, just as the waters can't return. But, if we look back at things God has allowed us to go through, we can see that He was preparing us for the future. God is always faithful in answering our prayers, but in His time. It might be a long time before we realize why He let us go through certain trials in our life.

Sometimes we dwell in the past with no results, trying to hang on to something that we can never change. We can't undo our actions or words.

"But I say unto you, That every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment." Matthew 12:36

"For thy name's sake, O LORD, pardon mine iniquity; for it is great." Psalm 25:11

A river starts as a small stream, gaining width and depth as it starts its journey. At the start, it is very pure and clean but as it grows it starts to grow muddy and impure. We should always look upstream for good things to come. Just as we can never see the waters that pass by again, we can never take back life that has passed.

We get upset when things go wrong or when they don't happen the way we want them to. We cannot control the future, but we can live a life for Christ that when something happens, we can go to Jesus for comfort and help in time of need.

"Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." Matthew 11:28

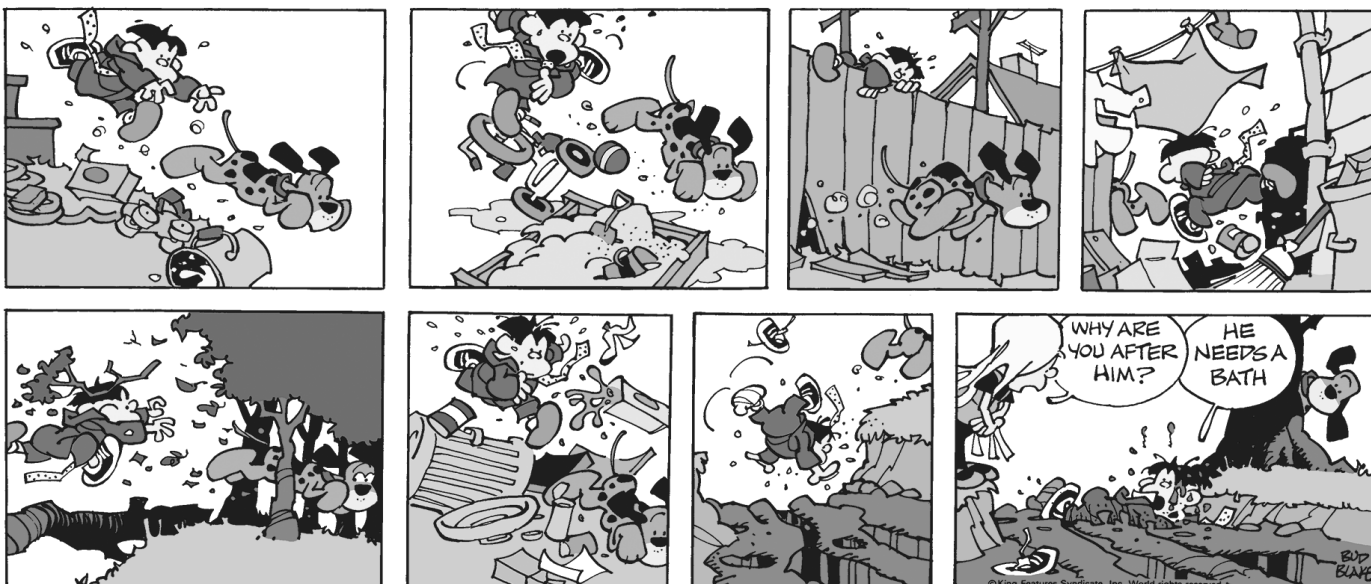
"Finally, brethren, farewell. Be perfect, be of good comfort, be of one mind, live in peace; and the God of love and peace shall be with you." 2 Corinthians 13:11

Friends, in closing today, I want to thank you for reading my columns. And I hope you enjoy them. Please let your local editor know that you like what they are printing. May God bless you is my prayer.

Bro. Warren Rogers, Baptist preacher

TIGER

by BUD BLAKE



Americanisms



"Daddies don't just love their children every now and then, it's a love without end."
 — George Strait