

“Can you bind the chains of the Pleiades? Can you loosen Orion’s belt? Can you bring forth the constellations in their seasons” (Job 38)

About ten years ago a friend and I had the opportunity to camp out in the Sylvania Wilderness which is located in the Upper Peninsula of Michigan.

We began with a 3 hour kayak/canoe trip (including 2 portages) to arrive at our campsite. After unloading our backpacks and equipment we set up camp and made a nice fire (using a flint to ignite it of course). After dinner, we left the campsite and made our way out of the tall trees back to the shoreline and looked up. WOW! I was reminded of the scriptures:

*“Look up at the sky and count the stars--if indeed you can count them.” (Gen 15:5).
God determines the number of the stars; he calls them all by name.” (Ps 147:4).*

The Milky Way was shining brightly from one edge of the horizon to the other edge of the horizon. As for counting the stars, we might as well have sat down and tried to count the grains of sand by the canoe—the sky was simply alive with stars! And to think that Abraham once looked at those same stars and that one of them had been lit for me, and one for each of you...again, WOW.

After a good night’s sleep with only waking up to a couple of animal noises by the tent, we enjoyed breakfast and took a 5 mile hike, surrounded by some of the most majestic trees I have ever seen - tall, healthy, huge trunks and the colors...it was beautiful.

The real surprise came from the Ranger Station, where they advised us not to carry a lot of water into our campsite, but to simply use the lake water...use it to clean, to put out the camp fire, to cook with, and...to drink! Really, we drank the lake water! It was crystal clear, no smell (like most lakes), no green stuff floating on the water (like most lakes), no oil on the surface (like most lakes). The lake had never had a gasoline engine on it, nor fertilizer because fields were over a dozen miles away!

I reflected on the trip and thought about God’s creation. And what a creation it is. When used and respected rightly, it is pure, clean, sustaining, and beautiful. And to me, that sounds like stewardship. Using and honoring the gifts that God has given us for the purpose they were given...and God’s beauty and blessing covers them.

Each of us is a creation of God, and at our creation God wove certain talents, abilities, passions, and gifts uniquely into each of us. Time, talent, treasure, these are all gifts from God. We enjoy each of them differently from one another, but for each of us our time, our talent, and our treasure is a gift from God. None of it belongs to us, we are simply caretakers of what God has entrusted to each of us.

I wonder, how well are we using them? How well are we honoring them? I encourage and invite each of us to take a moment and reflect upon our stewardship. Time...do we respect this gift as God allows us? Talent...do we employ this gift as God leads us? Treasure...do we invest this gift as God enables us? If our time, talent, and treasure were stars, trees, and water...would our lives reflect the beauty and majesty of the Sylvania Wilderness?

This month you will hear several invitations to examine the stewardship in your own life. May each of us intentionally consider the gifts and blessing of God in our lives and determine how we can best honor God by using them to His glory.