

Story: Nest Rest

June 22, 2024

Deuteronomy 5:12-15

Mark 2:23-3:6

Among the 'apapane, both members of a couple, both the father-to-be and the mother-to-be, work together to build their nest. They collect some twigs and some grass, but mostly they roam the forest to find mosses that will be both strong and soft to hold the eggs while they wait for them to hatch.

As you might think, first time 'apapane parents can get rather anxious about things. It's like anything else: if you haven't done something before, you probably have a lot to learn. You'll do some of that learning while you do things, of course. It's how an 'apapane learns what moss will be strong and soft and how another moss dries up and crumbles. Those crumbly moments, however, can make them feel pretty upset. They get really keyed up about what isn't working, rather than realizing that they're learning as they go.

'Apapane and people, too, can learn a lot from things that don't work.

One first-time father-to-be got very excited about building his first nest. He and his wife worked hard to get all the pieces together, and to poke and weave them into place. They got up early in the morning and they worked until sundown. And they made a lot of progress.

But he couldn't see it.

At first it was just a bit of moss or two, but somewhere on the first day he found a set of mosses that just didn't hold up in the nest, and on the third day that part was coming apart. A big portion of the nest had to be redone. He started to panic.

That night he worked an hour, and then a second hour, after sundown, when there just wasn't enough light in the forest to show him what mosses were what. Inevitably, the next morning they had to replace some of what he'd added. He panicked some more.

"We won't have it ready on time!" he moaned.

"Of course we will. Don't worry so much," said his wife, but I'm afraid he didn't listen.

That night, and the next, he didn't work an hour or two after sunset. He worked all night long, with only a brief nap on the second night. The results were... uneven. Some parts of the nest showed great progress. Other parts of the nest suffered from poor materials. And other parts of

the nest just didn't look right, because he'd been trying to place pieces of moss without a good idea of where they should go.

Truthfully, it was kind of a mess.

That's when his mother showed up.

"Don't look! Don't look, Mom!" he called. "I know it's not much to look at, but we're fixing it." (In fact, his wife was quiet fixing the things he'd got wrong in the middle of the night.)

"I'm not worried about that," his mother said. "I'm worried that you haven't slept. Now have you?"

"I slept a little," he protested.

"Enough?" said his mother.

With his spouse looking on he couldn't lie, and lying to your parents is a bad idea anyway. "Not enough," he said.

"Night is for resting," Mother said, "not for guess-and-place nest building. You can't find the right materials when you're tired, and you can't put them where they belong, either. Go get some sleep before you go back to it again."

"I can't leave her to do this all alone!" he protested, and mother-in-law and daughter-in-law looked at one another, then back at him.

"You won't be helpful until you've slept. Go do that. I'll fill in for you today. Tomorrow you can do it again, and do it right."

So he did, and the next day he came back, and sure enough: well-rested and together, he and his spouse did it right.

by Eric Anderson