

Story: Visible

March 15, 2026

1 Samuel 16:1-13

Ephesians 5:8-14

‘Apapane depend on finding flowers for their nectar, and also to find the bugs that they eat, because those bugs tend to like eating the nectar. For an ‘apapane, a grove of ohī’a in blossom is like a long buffet table with all the variety they could ask for. When the trees where they are aren’t blooming, they’ll search about to find some that are.

One ‘apapane turned out to be really good at finding trees in blossom. His friends and family grew to depend on him. He’d fly about early in the morning, find a grove of lehua, and summon the rest of the flock. They’d all descend on it and merrily feast on nectar and bugs until they set off to find another good spot.

One day, as this ‘apapane was making his morning search for nectar, he found two places before he headed back to his family and friends. One of the spots was barely okay. It would do if nothing else was available. The other spot was amazing. Every tree was just dripping with blossoms. A flock could spend a couple days and not visit every flower.

He could just about taste the nectar. He started flying back, and as he did, a thought crossed his mind. What if he led everybody back to the first spot, the one that was just okay? If he did, he could go to the second spot and have it all to himself.

He got back to the flock and said, “I’ve found something! It’s not great, but it will do until something better comes along.” So they followed him – to the first little grove.

As they settled in to sip nectar and hunt bugs, he quietly flew away to the second spot and drank nectar until he overflowed.

The next day he did it again. He found two spots, and led his friends and family to the one that wasn’t as good, while he snuck off to the better one. The next day he did it again. And again.

One of his friends noticed that he wasn’t finding good groves the way he had before, and then also noticed that he went missing shortly after leading them to iffy trees. So when he slipped away she followed him to the heavily flowered grove he’d found and not shared. As he took his first deep sip of an ohī’a blossom, she landed next to him.

“Is this what you’re doing now?” she asked. “Being selfish?”

“How do you know what I’m thinking?” he demanded.

"I don't know what you're thinking," she said. "I do know what you're doing. What you're doing is showing your friends middling spots while you save the good spots for yourself."

"What are you going to say to the others?" he wanted to know.

"That depends on what you do tomorrow," she said.

Early the next day, he flew off to seek for ohia groves. His friend watched him go, and she watched him come back. The flock followed him to a stand of ohia trees, and they were covered in bright red blossoms.

He perched next to his friend.

"Better?" he asked.

"Better," she said. "I'm glad to know you're not selfish at heart."

"How do you know that?" he asked. "Can you read my heart?"

"Of course not," she said, "but what you do reveals your heart. When you act selfishly, you show a selfish heart. When you share, you show a sharing heart."

"Of the two," she added, "I prefer the sharing."

by Eric Anderson