

Patterns of Grace and Gratitude Week 5

Friday, May 21



Photo Credit: Terry Troutman "Nestlings"



Photo Credit: Travis Polamalu Philo. "Northern Parula"

Love never fails. But where there are prophecies, they will cease; where there are tongues, they will be stilled; where there is knowledge, it will pass away. For we know in part and we prophesy in part, but when completeness comes, what is in part disappears. When I was a child, I talked like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child. When I became a man, I put the ways of childhood behind me. For now we see only a reflection as in a mirror; then we shall see face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I am fully known. And now these three remain: faith, hope and love. But the greatest of these is love. **1 Corinthians 13:8-13**

The baby birds and the beautiful adult Northern Parula are different species of birds. But the process of their growth and development is similar. The pictures of the nestlings were taken just hours apart.

As humans we were created to make judgments that keep us safe and also allow us to be productive in the world. But as with anything, a strength can also be a weakness. If we come upon any of the situations in the pictures above, we will make determinations about what is happening and what we think about it. The beauty of God is that God knows the whole process from the birds nesting to get ready for the eggs to be laid, so that the parent might keep them safe and warm so that they will hatch. When they hatch they are defenseless and unable to provide for themselves. The next stage is their ability to demand to be fed and cared for. And as they grow they will learn things they need to know, like how to fly from the nest and how to find the food and shelter they need. And finally, they are part of the larger kingdom, beautiful and singing and interacting with the world around them. God's grace allows for all of this. In fact, created the process and provides when the creature needs the provision. Our ability to hold back judgment and allow growth and discovery to unfold is key in our world today.

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We have been recipients of God's grace and provision also. And we were allowed to grow and learn. We must extend that same grace to others, and be willing to mentor them along the way.