

LEARNING FROM THE BUCKS

If it is possible, as far as it depends on you,
live at peace with everyone.

Romans 12:18 (NIV)

During my father's time as a taxidermist, his showroom was always filled with completed trophies, tanned hides, leather coats, two-headed calves, and many other items of interest. Among the most spectacular were two deer racks hanging over the windows. These two sets of whitetail glory were unique because they were tightly locked together. One of the two bucks was a nice ten-pointer and the other was an even larger eight. Any hunter would have been tickled to bag either of them.

Some hunter came across the two animals locked in a death duel with one buck already dead and the other nearly so. Out of compassion, the living buck was killed and the two sets of still-locked horns ended up in Dad's shop where they hung as a silent object lesson for the next fifty or so years.



What led these animals to their untimely demise? A desire to be dominant. Males of most deer species engage in these battles every year. Each fall, bucks become frisky and although they may have shared the same bachelor group all summer, as mating season approaches those bonds are left behind. Hunters sometimes witness this fighting, as I occasionally have, but I've never seen two lock together. I have, however, seen locked antlers and I've even seen a photo of three tangled bucks all of which drowned in a nearby stream.

Because they were both strong, each of these two massive giants in my father's shop was convinced he could bully the other into submission and the fighting commenced. How long it lasted we do not know but that day, they both lost.

How many times we think we can intimidate others into submission or chase them off only to become embroiled in bitter battles that no one wins. If either of those bucks had simply walked away, or if they had agreed to disagree, or if they had settled on clearly defined boundaries, they both could have passed their genes along to many fawning

offspring. But their desire to have it all forced them into premature death and they both missed the opportunity to ever mate again, much less eat or drink.

I'm not advocating cowardice or foolish compromise, but while some causes are worth fighting and dying for, there are times when it is certainly advantageous to go separate ways without either party having to surrender. Before we clash with someone, let's be sure the possible outcomes are worth the risks. Let's search the Scriptures for similar situations from which we can draw wisdom and guidance. Ultimately, let's ask God to reveal the best strategies for given situations and then follow His leading and Jesus' example. Before we lock horns with someone, let's seek other means to resolve the conflict that might enable both to walk away with dignity and respect. Let's learn a lesson from the bucks.

George Bowers

Weekly Prayer Point

"He has shown you, O mortal, what is good. And what does the Lord require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God." ***Micah 6:8 (NIV)***.

Lord, thank You for revealing what is good and for graciously making Your will known through Your Word and the work of the Holy Spirit.

Teach us to act justly in our words, decisions, relationships, and service to others.

Give us hearts that love mercy and extend to others Your compassion and kindness, patience, and forgiveness.

Help us walk humbly with You each day, depending on Your wisdom rather than our own understanding.

Please pray for these congregations and pastors:

- Bashan Congregation in the Democratic Republic of Congo, Africa and Pastor Buturi Majeru Alphonse
- Bayamón Congregation in Bayamón, Puerto Rico and Pastora Lillian E. Reyes Ramos
- Beaver Creek Congregation in Alcoa, TN and Pastor Jeff Jones
- Beaver Creek Congregation in Floyd, VA and Pastor Marvin D. Wade

CBC Prayer Committee