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Clownfish and Anemones

“That they all may be one, as You, Father, are in Me, and I in You; that they also may be one in Us, that the world may believe that You sent Me.” John 17:21

No doubt you have seen pictures of clownfish before. Many of them are brightly colored, but what’s most interesting about them is where they live—among the tentacles of a sea anemone.

Now this is very amazing, because sea anemones use their tentacles to sting and capture food that they will eat. But the sea anemones and clownfish have a special relationship. By living among the tentacles of the sea anemone, the clownfish is protected from its predators, who don’t want to get stung by the sea anemone. And the clownfish, in turn, protects the sea anemone from butterflyfish, who like to eat sea anemones.

Two very different creatures—and yet they are able to live together and help each other. If only it were always that way with people! No two people are alike; there are so many different combinations of personalities and strengths and weaknesses. And very often, people who are very different find themselves working together—in a family, at school, at work, or at church. Unfortunately, though, people don’t always work together nearly as

well as the clownfish and the sea anemone do. They may want everybody to be just like them and think just like they do. But would that be best? No. When people with different strengths and weaknesses work together, the result can be much better than what any one person could do, because of the combination of each person’s strengths.

In the 1840s, the working relationship between William Miller and Joshua Himes was a good example of this. William Miller was an older man, a farmer, and calm and quiet. Joshua Himes, on the other hand, was a younger man familiar with the big cities, and daring and bold. The two could have easily become irritated with each other and accomplished nothing together. But instead, the strengths of each were a help to the other, and together they accomplished a great deal in spreading the Midnight Cry.

What about you? Can you think of someone with whom you have a hard time getting along? Why not think about their strengths and see how you both could be a help to each other?



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