

Learn by Your Experiences by Don Bailey

When I was growing up my patrol leader would always say, “Eat your greens; they’re good for ya!” We scouts would wrinkle our noses, look to heaven in a pleading prayer for divine intervention, hope no one was looking, and dump the dish behind a convenient stump.

You see, in the 60s when I was a Boy Scout, one of the requirements for First Class Rank was Edible Plants: “Find at least four different edible wild greens, roots, buds, shoots, nuts or fruits. Prepare and eat one (or more) of them selected by your leader.” Maybe I should explain that the “greens” we’re talking about consisted of tender tops of lamb’s quarters, stinging nettle, the young stems and leaves of marsh marigold, purslane, the young leaves of curled dock, black mustard, chicory, dandelion, watercress, sheep sorrel, milkweed, and pokeweed, just to name a few.

What was the purpose of this requirement? Not just “torture” from an older scout who would say, for example, to eat the stem of the dandelion instead of the leaves. These requirements were preparing us for any future emergency. I have read countless stories of soldiers or sailors or just everyday ordinary people who, for one reason or another, found themselves in unfamiliar country and had to find their own way back home.

I am reminded of Proverbs 24:13-14: “Eat thou honey, because it is good; and the honeycomb, which is sweet to thy taste: so shall the knowledge of wisdom be unto thy soul: when thou hast found it, then there shall be a reward, and thy expectation shall not be cut off.” God has a handbook for us; it is called the Bible and in it are instructions about many things we can safely “eat” and many things to avoid. As with the Scout handbook, until you can readily identify something as edible or not, you better have that book in your hand!

That first time I ate a dandelion I thought I would be sick . . . but I found that it wasn’t that bad, and yes, I could survive on it. The first time you study God’s Word you think that you’ll never find enough of what you can “eat” and you won’t survive . . . but you’ll find that the “edibles” are plentiful and good and yes, you will survive.