November Newsletter -

Essay on the Woodpecker and the Acorns



A Devotional Thought by Kendra Williams, Gold Country Campus Life:

“I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the growth.” — 1 Corinthians 3:6

There is a fascinating bird called the **acorn woodpecker**.

Unlike many birds that simply find food and move on, the acorn woodpecker has a remarkable habit: it gathers acorns and stores them in the holes it pecks into trees, telephone poles, fence posts, and other wooden surfaces. Some of these storage places can contain thousands of acorns.

One of their most interesting behaviors is that they **continually maintain their acorn stores**. As acorns dry and shrink, the birds move them into tighter holes or replace them, essentially managing a communal food pantry.



If you've seen one around an oak tree in California, there's a good chance that tree is part of a much larger **acorn woodpecker territory providing food for 100's of birds.**

Think about that for a moment.

One bird. One acorn at a time. One hole at a time.

And over time, those individual acts become something much bigger.

That sounds a lot like YFC.

As YFC staff, we can sometimes look at our ministry and wonder, *Is what I'm doing really making a difference?* >We run the club. >We show up at the game. >We answer the late-night text.

>We pray with the student who is struggling. >We have the awkward conversation.

>We remind them that God loves them. >We open Scripture again.

>We encourage them when they feel like giving up. >**We tell them about Jesus—again.**

And sometimes, it feels like we're just making another hole in the tree and placing another acorn.



But **that's the ministry. Every Hole Represents a Student.**

The acorn woodpecker doesn't know what each acorn will eventually become. It simply does what it was created to do: **gather and plant.** In the same way, God has entrusted us with students. Every student has a story. Every student carries questions, wounds, dreams, doubts, gifts, and potential. And every time we invest in one of them, we're creating a place for truth to take root.

>One conversation may seem insignificant. >One Bible study may feel ordinary. >One prayer may seem small. >One ride home may not feel spiritual at all.

But we don't always get to see what God is doing beneath the surface. **Our responsibility is faithfulness. God's responsibility is the growth.**

Paul reminds us of this in 1 Corinthians 3:6: "I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the growth." >We plant. >We water. >**God grows.**

Every Acorn Is a Seed

The acorn may look small, but it carries the potential for something much larger. **That's what a student can be.** When we look at a teenager, we aren't simply looking at who they are today. We're looking at who God may be forming them to become...*a lifelong follower*. That student sitting quietly in the back of the room may someday lead a church.

The student who asks a hundred questions may someday teach others how to love Scripture. The student who has walked through deep pain may someday sit beside someone else and say, *"I understand. God met me there, too."* The student who doesn't seem interested today may remember something you said ten years from now.

We don't know what every seed will become. **But we know that seeds are worth planting.**

Part 2: Don't Despise the Small Work



Working with teens can tempt us to measure success by what we can see.

How many students came?

How many raised their hands?

How many went to camp?

How many said YES?

How many have started going to church?



Those things can matter, but the kingdom of God has always involved a great deal of work that happens quietly.

Jesus talked about seeds.

A farmer scatters seed and then waits.

He doesn't stand over the soil every morning demanding, *"Why haven't you grown yet?"*

He trusts the process.

And sometimes, that's what YFC staff have to do.

Plant the seed.
Water the seed.
Pray over the seed.
Trust God with the harvest.

You may not see the fruit this year.

You may not see it while that student is in your club.

You may never know the full impact of a conversation you had in the bleachers

.

But heaven may know.



Keep Pecking

The acorn woodpecker keeps going.

Hole after hole.

Acorn after acorn.

It doesn't quit because the first hole wasn't impressive.

It doesn't say, *"I've already planted enough."*

It keeps working.



YFC staff, **keep pecking.**

Keep showing up.

Keep opening God's Word.

Keep praying.

Keep calling students by name.

Keep creating spaces where teenagers can encounter Jesus.

Keep believing that God is working even when you can't see it.

Because every student is an opportunity to plant something eternal.

Every conversation can be a seed.

Every prayer can be a seed.

Every Scripture can be a seed.

Every act of love can be a seed.

And someday, by God's grace, those seeds will bear fruit.

A Final Thought

Maybe the next time you see an acorn woodpecker, let it remind you of your calling.

See the hole—and remember the student.

See the acorn—and remember the seed you're planting.

See the bird returning again and again—and remember that faithfulness matters.

You may feel like you're simply putting one more acorn into one more hole.

But God sees the whole tree.

You don't have to produce the harvest.

You just have to be faithful with the seed God has placed in your hands.

"**I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the growth.**"

So keep planting.

Keep watering.

Keep praying.

Keep loving.

Keep pointing students to Jesus.



Because you never know which acorn will become a mighty tree.

Prayer

God, thank You for entrusting us with the lives of students. Help us not to become discouraged when we cannot see immediate fruit. Give us the patience to plant, the faithfulness to water, and the humility to trust You with the growth.

Remind us that every student matters to You. Help us see them not simply for who they are today, but for who You are shaping them to become. Give us opportunities to plant seeds of truth, grace, hope, and the gospel into their lives.

And when the work feels small, remind us that nothing done faithfully for You is wasted.

Help us keep planting until You bring the harvest.

In Jesus' name, amen.



Ed Kaczmarek, Executive Director

559-355-7243 ed@yfcsacramento.org