

Variation on a Theme

It all started with a blue jay that flew in front of the window and settled on a pile of seed, mostly sunflower. I had gone out early and dropped handfuls of seeds in the back yard, around the birdfeeders. The blue jay is a ground feeder and squawked loudly before beginning to chow down on breakfast. More jays came, and soon there were five enjoying free food on a bleak December day.

This year there have been five squirrels that regularly attend my back-yard buffet. Two are adults and the other three seem to be siblings. I have studied that squirrel quintet for over a year now. Except for the differences in size, I still can't tell them apart, and as the three youngsters approach maturity, I won't be able to tell them apart at all.

As I gazed up at the bare trees I envisioned autumn's leaves that had been there a few months earlier - each one was unique and next year's leaves will all be unique too. This naturally carried my thoughts on to snowflakes, and I remembered my fifth-grade science teacher telling our class that every snowflake was different. The session absolutely captivated me – how could that be? My thoughts continued to wander as I considered my neighbor's twins, Jenny and Abbey. Supposedly they are "identical." Yet they demonstrate a myriad of idiosyncrasies, from their mannerisms to their fast-food preferences.

Endless variation. It never ceases to amaze me. In the summer, it's all the different kinds of lettuce, and each leaf is different from the ones I ate in yesterday's salad. In the fall, as the trees lose their leaves, I enjoy the endless shower of colors. In winter, it's the snowflakes. And then there's spring – oh my, spring flowers! Every petal is a wonder. It's more than I can fathom when I place each new season in the context of history and imagine that this process continues every single year.

I am immovably convinced that God can differentiate every blue jay, snowflake, lettuce leaf, tree leaf, squirrel and flower. I am certain that if all the petals from every flower were placed in a bin (which might have to be a container as large as the Atlantic Ocean drained of water), God could put them all back together like a jigsaw puzzle (which might cover the continents of the western hemisphere). Yes! And I believe that just as He knows and numbers the hairs on our heads, He knows each heart and ministers individually to each of us.

So this whole concept of infinity - the very idea of "endlessness" that boggles my mind: What is the central theme? Perhaps the Creator of infinite change and possibility has put all these demonstrations of wonderment before us as an object lesson of His eternal love. Perhaps it is to illustrate that in His desire for relationship there is no end to the lengths, nor depths nor heights He will go to in order to draw us close to Him. He will never, *ever* run out of ways to find us. This God who provides unending variation has perhaps given us His wondrous theme of infinite change to steadfastly demonstrate His ability to carry out His promises: to never leave or forsake us, and to disciple us with unique and perfect

lessons, carved out especially for our distinctive personalities so that we might know Him more fully.



Romans 1: 20a: For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead...

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