

Text: 1 Timothy 6:1-11

Title: HEROES: Ordinary People Living Extraordinary Lives

Part Two: George Washington Carver

Introduction:

When George Washington Carver was an infant, he, a sister, and his mother were kidnapped by Confederate night raiders and sold in Arkansas, a common practice for the times. His owner Moses Carver hired John Bentley to find them. Only Carver was found, orphaned and near death from whooping cough. Carver's mother and sister had already died. This episode caused G.W. Carver a bout of respiratory disease that left him with permanently weakened health. Because of this, he was unable to work as a hand and spent his time wandering the fields, drawn to the varieties of wild plants. While outdoors he learned about trees, shrubs, insects and liked to paint and draw them. He became so knowledgeable that he was known by Moses Carver's neighbors as the "Plant Doctor."

The life of G.W. Carver is not known by one decisive act like we saw last week with Cassie Bernall; but his life from beginning to end shows us a man that one humble, compassionate, and sacrificial. His life is an example to us today of one who was content with the simplicities of time. He was not out to gain recognition or fame; and fortune and riches were not his goal. Tonight's hero is George Washington Carver, from slave to scientist, from humble ways to a heroes walk. What is it that we can take from his life and apply them to our very own?

1. His Christ

a. Through his Salvation (conversion)

While George Washington Carver is most widely recognized for his scientific contributions regarding the peanut, he is also often recognized as devoted Christian. God and science were both areas of intrigue, not warring ideas in the mind of George Washington Carver. While contemporary scientific endeavors may practice methodological naturalism, an approach which believes the universe to be unguided or chaotic, Carver reasoned that the God who created the universe also created the rules by which it was governed, Biblical creationism.

George Washington Carver became a Christian when he was ten years old. He heard about Sunday school from a neighborhood boy while working in a barn. When he was told that they sang songs and prayed at Sunday school, he followed suit and prayed to God for the first time in the loft of that same barn.

1.) REALIZE YOU'RE A SINNER – Rom 3:23, Rom 3:10

2.) RECOGNIZE THAT CHRIST PAID THE PRICE – John 3:16, Romans 5:8, Romans 6:23

3.) REPENT OF YOUR SINS – Romans 10:9-10

4.) RECEIVE CHRIST AS YOUR SAVIOR – Romans 10:13

b. Through his Spirit (character)

Dr. Carver also felt that character building was the key to success. His hope was that his students would carry his honorable teachings of the following throughout their lives:

- **Be clean both inside and out.**
 - *Proverbs 4:23-27* Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life. Put away from thee a froward mouth, and perverse lips put far from thee. Let thine eyes look right on, and let thine eyelids look straight before thee. Ponder the path of thy feet, and let all thy ways be established. Turn not to the right hand nor to the left: remove thy foot from evil.
- **Neither look up to the rich or down on the poor.**
- **Lose, if need be, without squealing.**
- **Win without bragging.**
 - *Proverbs 16:18*, "Pride goeth before destruction, and an haughty spirit before a fall."
- **Always be considerate of women, children, and older people.**
- **Be too brave to lie.**
 - *Proverbs 6:16-18*, "These six things doth the LORD hate: yea, seven are an abomination unto him: A proud look, a lying tongue, and hands that shed innocent blood, An heart that deviseth wicked imaginations, feet that be swift in running to mischief, A false witness that speaketh lies, and he that soweth discord among brethren."
- **Be too generous to cheat.**
- **Take your share of the world and let others take theirs.**

2. His Commitment

a. To his Savior

"My discoveries come like a direct revelation from God," he said in explanation of his attitude toward his work.

*Dr. Carver's faith was foundational in how he approached life. He viewed faith in Jesus as a means to destroying both barriers of racial disharmony and social [economics]. **{{Pause for Discussion on Social Economics – lower, middle, upper class – white, blue collar, etc.}}** For Dr. Carver, faith was an agent of change. It increased knowledge rather than competing against it. The greater his faith increased, the more he desired to learn. The more he learned, the greater his faith became. In attempts to teach his students, he defaulted first and foremost to the proclamation of Christ. He taught that knowledge of God through the Bible and devotion to Jesus were paramount (supreme) to what he could teach them through numbers and formulas.*

→ **What is our commitment level to the Savior? On a scale of 1 to 10 what would you rate yourself?**

b. To his Studies

He graduated with the degree of Bachelor of Science in Agriculture in 1894, at the age of 30 and was immediately made a faculty member in charge of the college greenhouse and the bacterial laboratory work in systematic botany. Two years later he had earned the degree of Master of Science and made the acquaintance of Booker T. Washington, who then was bringing the Tuskegee Institute in Alabama to notice.

At the end of his undergraduate career in 1894, recognizing Carver's potential, Joseph Budd and Louis Pammel convinced Carver to stay at Iowa State for his master's degree. Carver then performed research at the Iowa Agriculture and Home Economics Experiment Station under Pammel from 1894 to his graduation in 1896. It is his work at the experiment station in plant pathology and mycology that first gained him national recognition and respect as a botanist.

→ His level of commitment and dedication paid off for him. He did not wallow in any pity for the years of slavery; he did not stay defeated when he was turned down acceptance into colleges and universities. No, he used his adversities to make him stronger and more determined than ever to succeed.

c. To his Students

Dr. Carver often quoted one of his favorite poems to his students. "Figure it out for yourself, my lad, you've all that the greatest of men have had, two arms, two hands, two legs, two eyes and a brain to use if you would be wise. With this equipment they all began, So start from the top and say, 'I can!'"

A less known side of Professor Carver's activity was his Bible class at Tuskegee, started in 1906, when his office boy and seven other students asked him to teach them the Bible on Sundays. He taught the Bible by impersonating the characters himself. On one occasion he astonished his class when it reached the story of the manna-fed Israelites by producing a variety of the original manna, which he had gathered in the woods about Tuskegee.

3. His Contentment – vs. 6-11

a. With his Status (Position)

He developed more than a hundred different products from the peanut, including milk, ink, flour, breakfast foods, wood stains, face creams

and, latterly, a medicinal peanut oil which was found helpful in the treatment of infantile paralysis.

He became such an authority on cotton, the peanut and the sweet potato that he ended with a place among important white men. His name is in "Who's Who in America," and he was accorded a membership in the Royal Society of London.

b. With his Salary (Possessions)

A man who would decline an invitation to work for a salary of more than \$100,000 a year (almost a million today) to continue his research on behalf of his countrymen.

Dr. Carver, paying no attention to his clothes and refusing to make money on his discoveries, simply devoted his life to scientific agricultural research, to enable his colored brethren to make a better living from the soil in the South.

Conclusion:

The statement printed on his grave states:

"He could have added fortune to fame, but caring for neither, he found happiness and honor in being helpful to the world."

George Washington Carver was a man truly satisfied and content with the simplicity of life.

I Timothy 6:6-8, "But godliness with contentment is great gain. For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out. And having food and raiment let us be therewith content."