



## Chicken Chickens

Of all the strange family pets my children wanted chickens. They and their mother went down to CAL ranch and over the course of the summer we wound up with six chickens, a henhouse, and a backyard full of chicken droppings.

One January afternoon I took a break from my work and walked to the back patio door. It was a beautiful day. Our backyard was blanketed with about 4 inches of glistening white snow. A pathway led directly from our back door to the chicken coop across the yard. Someone had let the chickens out of their coop. Instead of wandering all over the yard all of them were on that pathway. They would not go out in that snow but instead moved up and down the pathway picking and scratching in the barely exposed grass.

Someone had placed an object across the path leading out to the chicken coop. It was about 15 feet from our back door. It was a piece of yard art only about 5 inches high and just wide enough to block the path. This was meant to keep the chickens from coming up on our back patio and leaving gifts. What struck me as odd was that all the chickens were lined up at that obstruction and staring at the house. Then I realized what they were looking at. I have a wild bird feeder hanging on our patio. The sparrows and finches had feasted and dropped a considerable amount of grain on the patio floor. Those chickens could see that grain, and they wanted it.

I stood and watched them as they stared at that grain. They bobbed this way and that, but they would not walk out into that snow, nor would they step over that little obstacle. A couple times I thought one of them might make the venture, but they never did.

What makes this behavior so puzzling is that I've seen those chickens roost several feet off the ground and fly halfway across the yard. That obstruction was only an obstruction in their minds. They could have had what they so much wanted if they were just willing to try, but my chickens were too chicken.





As I studied them I thought, how many of us are like those chickens. The Lord once said “Fear not to do good, my sons.” Now why would anyone be afraid to do good? Because some of us can’t bear the discomfort or inconvenience of getting our feet wet or the exertion of climbing over a dinky little obstacle. It takes courage and sacrifice to get good, do good, and be good, and when it is all said and done—it is well worth the price we pay.

**Email Text:**

“Courage and toughness are essential qualities in a disciple of Christ. This world is no place for wimps and cowards. The fearful will always struggle to be faithful. Courage is a gift of the spirit, given to those who seek. A lesson taught, in part, by my children’s pets. Have a wonderful holiday week”

