

Duane Robert Fugitt
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The door opened and I saw a man walk in the door with a beard under it separated by glasses. I was sitting at the computer watching him come across the room. He had come to mow our lawn. He worked hard - very hard. He liked to mention that he did it not for himself but for God. In time we gave him more work to do, he always accepted it graciously and with a thank you. When he was paid, he kept track down to pennies - I think he enjoyed being exact. Duane was a cloud watcher.

He liked to take things that other's would discard or discount and try to find as much value in them as he could. Like the Bicentennial cardboard lettuce boxes he wanted to sell. On a seemingly regular basis he would find unusual things that he would want to sell or market. I found it amazing that he ever came across them, like the 11 35/70 mm manual film winders. What Duane would do is bring me one of the items, or a picture and I would research sales prices and look for buyers for the items. I learned a lot about things I would never have thought to research. That is what made Duane special. He was always looking for clouds.

He treated situations the same way. He was in a car accident and the insurance company was very forcing about the amount they were going to pay and things. Instead of hiring a lawyer, he had me look up on the internet the Oregon state laws about insurance and put them on a cd for him. He read and studied the laws and tried to use them to fix the situation. When it did not go like he wanted it to go, he just said he was thankful for what he learned and what he got. He accepted that it was not God's will and let it go. He took what he learned as being the silver lining and went looking for the next cloud.

Duane was always wanting to teach me things and I was always wanting to teach him things. And we often would disagree. In time I did learn to listen more and more. So did he. I think he was looking for my silver lining all of the time I knew him. He found it. Then he showed it to me. He had to look past my anger to see it.

One day he came to my office to discuss editing some of his latest manuscript. I made a comment about someone and he looked at me. The discussion led to him explaining to me about how forgiveness works and allows God's spirit to act. I had to think a lot about it. Instead of reacting like many others have, he taught me something that has radically changed my life. Maybe it was just good timing. Maybe it was God's will. But I think it was because Duane was looking for my silver lining and I struck gold.

He even taught me a bit of how to be a cloud watcher. It took him a while, but he taught me about thankfulness, gratitude and appreciation. I will never look at another cloud the same way. Thank you Duane. I will always miss you.