



Guided Home

By Tammy Borden ©

Migration is a mysterious thing. For us humans, it's somewhat easier to explain our tendency to want to venture away from the familiar. But what about those birds? Surely they are the masters of migration. Not all birds migrate: cardinals, woodpeckers, nuthatches, chickadees, goldfinches and blue jays are examples.

Scientists aren't quite sure *why* birds migrate, and *how* they migrate is almost as much a mystery too. For example, I have bluebirds in my yard each year. As I've done some research on bluebirds, I've learned that it's very common for a family of birds to return to the exact same nesting box year after year. This is despite migrating hundreds of miles to get there.

However, several birds that we see each summer travel much farther than bluebirds, which spend their winters in southern US states. Consider the Ruby Throated Hummingbird. It weighs the equivalent of a nickel, yet it flies thousands of miles from Central and South America, across the Gulf of Mexico, and as far north as Canada. The Baltimore Oriole, Rose Breasted Grosbeak, Indigo Bunting and many warblers also come as far. Like bluebirds, they will often return to the same neighborhood each year. Think about it; there are no mini GPS units strapped to their backs telling them to turn left in ¼ mile, at which time they'll arrive at their destination of the little brown ranch house on the edge of the woods. It's a mystery.

Something draws them home. Something compels them to keep going, to not be persuaded to go off course, despite the storms and blowing winds. It's as if they are fixed like a laser beam on their final destination. They are not influenced, swayed or convinced to follow a different path. There is an unseen force guiding them and they know where they belong.

Oh, how I wish I were as compelled and faithful. I confess that I often begin many journeys of life with my eyes fixed on the prize and determined to follow the right path. It may be something as simple as a commitment to exercise, or something of a more serious matter like a promise from the heart. I sincerely long to make the right choices, but as storms come and the winds of life blow, I'm often discouraged to give up or settle for less than the goal, less than home. Temptations and tangents can easily come. I've made many mistakes in my life, and through them I've learned, quite honestly, that left to myself I can be led astray and settle for less than what I know was intended for my life. I can't navigate life... by myself. My depth of sincerity isn't enough. My will power isn't enough. Even my best isn't enough... by myself.

I long to be like the bluebird who returns to my yard each spring, guided by an unseen hand, a force greater than my flawed self. My heart treasures those times, when taking the right path is an effortless journey, one where I'm guided by that unseen hand to where I belong. Left to my own defenses, my own efforts, and my own limited wisdom, I'd never find home. I'm so thankful that in the end, it's really not up to me to get there, and that I can rely on a mysterious power and strength greater than my own to guide me home.