

Blackberry Cobbler

It's blackberry-eating time in Tennessee, which also means it's that part of the year when my favorite dessert – you guessed it, blackberry cobbler – is most available and is at its tastiest. Well, I had waited too long since Independence Day to pop those juicy morsels into my mouth. Last evening, to my delight, I noticed blackberry cobbler posted on the menu board at Countryside Café, located in a rural area between Ooltewah and Georgetown, where Lola and I had gone to dine.

The desire for blackberries had to be satisfied; it had been building for awhile – especially since being vividly reminded of the passion for this fruit of the briers. It began to build the other day, when Lola and I were driving along an interstate in Tennessee and noticed that another motorist, a woman, spotting a lush brier patch, could not resist the urge engendered by her appetite. She drove her automobile off the edge of the highway and, toting a plastic bag, plunged into the briers to pluck the succulent fruit.

Now, that's a brave woman. Not only was she willing to risk the heat of the sun, the scratches of the briers and the nearly always present snakes, but also – and even worse – she defied the likely infestation of chiggers in order to secure some plump, juicy blackberries. It just goes to show the lengths to which avowed blackberry lovers will go to satisfy their cravings.

I completely understand, and applaud, her actions. To me, there is no better dessert than a hot, steaming dish of blackberry cobbler, topped off by a couple – that's right, a couple – of scoops of vanilla ice cream. Part of my fascination for this culinary delight most likely has to do with my childhood, since I learned at an early age the price that had to be paid for blackberry cobbler. Customarily, my family spent some part of July the Fourth in the brier patches. We did so for two reasons: (1) that's when the berries are typically ready for harvest, and (2) my father had a holiday from work. We defied the weather elements, the insects, the plant and animal life, including reptiles, to pick blackberries. And when that was done, nobody made better blackberry cobbler than my mother.

Well, the blackberry cobbler served up at the Countryside Café was worth the drive. And I am grateful to the unidentified individuals who waded into the brier patch to make my meal so enjoyable. The challenges they faced to pick the fruit – and receive money for their labor – remind us that the things worth having in life come with a price tag. A college degree is achieved only after endless hours of study. A successful career demands loyalty, hard work and perseverance in pursuit of goals. A good marriage is one that requires diligence and sacrifices from both parties.

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In the spiritual realm, eternal fellowship with God – for you and me – demanded the best that Heaven had to offer, God's only begotten Son. He voluntarily laid down His life so that we who believe in Him can be part of the kingdom. We can be forever grateful that He was willing to pay that price.

--Beecher Hunter