

The Chicken Story

I had been living in West Bay, Grand Cayman only a few days, and I had noticed that there were chickens running *everywhere!* It seemed like *everybody* had chickens – the folks next door, the people behind me; *everybody!*

“You know,” said I to myself, “I think *I’D* like to have some chickens, too! I could get a little coop, grab fresh eggs each morning, pluck a fresh chicken for cooking every now and then. *I want me some chickens!*”

After church my first Wednesday evening I got to talking with one of the ladies about the chickens. I asked her if she had any herself.

“*Sure* I do,” she said. “*Everybody’s* got chickens.”

“Well do you have a couple of peepers you could let me have?”

“No, I don’t have any peepers. But my son has some in his yard.”

“Do you think he can give me a couple?”

“Naw, you don’t want any chickens!”

“But you have chickens. Your son has chickens . . .”

“Honey, *everybody’s* got chickens.”

“Well, if *everybody’s* got chickens, then *I* want chickens, *too!*”

“You don’t want chickens.”

“I don’t? Why not?”

“Because you don’t *need* any.”

“But everybody *else* has chickens! And if *everybody* has chickens, then *I* want chickens, *too!* Maybe your son can give me a couple of young chicks.”

“He can’t give you any chicks.”

“But I *want* chickens! Everybody *else* has chickens, and *I* want chickens, *too!*”

“Honey, you *don’t* want chickens.”

The conversation continued going nowhere, and I was confused. I *thought* I wanted chickens. So why couldn’t I have some? As the lady had said, “*Everybody’s* got chickens.” Her son had chicks, but he couldn’t give me any?!

Here I was, on an island where everybody had chickens, and I wasn’t going to have any chickens! And it wasn’t because I didn’t want them!

The next morning, the lady’s son came over. She had talked with him about our “chickens” conversation.

“Momma said she said she couldn’t make you understand about chickens, so maybe I can explain. . .

When Momma said, ‘Everybody’s got chickens,’ what she meant was, ‘*Nobody’s* got chickens!’ All those chickens that are ‘everybody’s’ are really *nobody’s*.

You see, before Hurricane Ivan struck (in 2004), people all had chicken coops. But Ivan blew the coops away, along with everybody’s houses.

After the storm, people spent all their time and energy cleaning up and fixing up their houses and the chickens had to fend for themselves.

By the time the houses were fixed up the chickens had become accustomed to running wild, and they’ve been running wild ever since.

So that’s what Momma meant when she said, ‘Everybody’s got chickens.’ The truth is everybody’s got chickens, *because* nobody’s got chickens. And *that’s* why I can’t give you any chickens, and *that’s* why you *don’t* want any chickens.”