

## Christian Perspectives: Small struggles in my spiritual journey

My grandchildren stayed with us for a few months while their housing was in transition. Since they had always lived in the country but were moving to a much more urban setting, I thought it might be helpful to teach my 7 year old grandson Silas how to pick up the mail by himself, since it is about 4 blocks away in our country subdivision. He could learn about road safety and it would give him confidence, since he'll soon be having to walk to school in a new town.

For the first few days I walked with Silas down to the mailbox. I showed him the route, which box was ours, and we talked about safety on the streets. He did very well. The second day I let him carry the key himself, and the third day I let him try opening the box alone. It was a proud moment for him when we had a stack of mail (very unusual) and I asked him to carry them back to the house himself. We turned onto my street, and started up the long hill towards my house. As I walked, I noticed Silas was starting to lag behind a bit. That's not unusual; he notices birds and flowers and sometimes will stop to watch a butterfly. I kept going, and as I got to the second block I turned around to see how he was doing. I was surprised to see he was quite far behind me, clutching the mail like it weighed 20 pounds and labouring to step as if he were climbing one of the Rockies (he's very melodramatic). I called to him to come on, and continued to watch him as he walked painfully slowly towards me. When he finally reached me he breathlessly asked, 'Why do we always have to climb this big hill??' Without laughing I answered him, 'Because Nana's house is at the top!'. (I must confess, there are times when my legs hurt climbing that hill too; especially when I haven't been exercising very often)

It wasn't until the next morning, when I was journaling about the current struggles in my spiritual journey, that I realized a parallel to my walk with the Lord. Many times Scripture talks about 'walking' with the Lord, and we are never promised that it's going to be a straight path. There are many times when it seems uphill, and I don't feel like I can keep going. There are obstacles that seem insurmountable to me at times, and at other times I feel like I'm in a dark tunnel with no light at the end. Can you relate to this?

At these times, it's important to remember that God promised, 'never will I leave you, never will I forsake you?' (Hebrews 13:5) and that He's always with us even when we don't feel like it. It's also important to remember where this journey is headed: to our Father's house! We know that our ultimate destination will be heaven, where we will live with Him forever. There will be no more pain or sorrow once we're there.

I think it's also important that we remember to keep walking. In Psalm 23, David says 'even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil?'. We have to keep going, especially when we don't feel like it. We know God won't leave us, and that He will give us strength for the journey. Have faith in Him and rely on His promises. Psalm 121 was written for the pilgrims travelling to Jerusalem, who ascended the hill to worship at the temple. 'I lift up my eyes to the hills ? where does my help come from? It comes from the Lord, Maker of heaven and earth. He will not let your foot slip- He who watches over you will not slumber.? Trust God to guide you and protect you on your journey to the home He has prepared for you.

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