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Christian Perspectives: A nudge along the path

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Towards the end of February, when we had a few days of mild weather, I decided to take a spiritual retreat day and return to Inglis Falls, a place I often hike in the summer.

I knew I wouldn't be able to do any serious hiking at the top of the falls, but I at least wanted to walk the trails and talk to the Lord while it was mild enough to be outside.

Beside the falls there's a ledge at the very top of a cliff, with an old dead trunk sticking out of it.

I like to sit here on the edge and during the summer I've gotten into the habit of meeting the Lord at this spot on a regular basis.

When I arrived at Inglis, I noted that the stairs were closed off, but that the snow wasn't too deep along the stone wall on the other side of the falls and I could walk easily.

I could not believe the fast and heavy flow of the water; I had never seen anything like it here. I actually thought it was raining, but realized it was the mist from the falls. The noise was deafening. As I walked along, I noticed that some of the crevices had barely any snow, and the fence meant to keep people away from the edge had been bent up so that there was a space underneath it. I felt a nudge to crawl under the fence to the cliff edge and immediately dismissed it ? there's no way the Lord would be asking me to do that!

?That's dumb and dangerous?, I said (out loud) and I turned away from the fence and out to the trails.

I knew I could get around to the edge another way if I really wanted to. I followed the trail as best I could, but a fallen tree blocked the path so I turned back.

Again, as I neared the fence, I felt the Lord was beckoning me to crawl under. ?Really?? I thought, ?Could this actually be You, Lord, calling me there? It's snowy. It's icy. Not to mention the cliff with the 60 foot drop. It's dumb and dangerous. But, here I go, because a spiritual retreat is supposed to be about listening to You.?

I crawled under the fence, and, clinging to the trees, I stepped slowly down towards the edge of the cliff. I waited for the check in my spirit to confirm I was being ridiculous, but it never came.

The opposite happened, actually; I felt the Spirit encourage me forward. I gripped the rocks and I stepped onto the narrow ledge that would lead me to my prayer spot. Slowly, one foot in front of the other, clinging for dear life; with the words ?dumb and dangerous' constantly running through my mind. I could now see the place I usually sit; the ledge was covered in snow except for the final six inches before the cliff.

The familiar dead tree leaning out over the ravine sat in the midst of bare, wet rock. ?Our spot, yes, but the way there is treacherous right now Lord,? I prayed. ?It's snowy and narrow. I have to step over roots and rocks, skinny footholds. You know how clumsy I am.? But still, the Lord beckoned. ?Dumb and dangerous,? I muttered, and down I went.

Clinging to the thinnest of branches, stepping so carefully, and finally reaching the rock I always sit on with the Lord. The falls are roaring. The water is flowing freakishly fast, the mist is like Niagara! I am still about four feet away from the cliff, noting the mere

six inches of exposed rock at the edge.

?Come and sit,? I hear the Lord whisper. It was too much for me. ?No, Lord,? I said, ?that's too far. Too dumb. Too dangerous. I'll just stand over here and take pictures.?

And that's what I did. I took a few pictures of the snow-covered rocks at the bottom of the ravine, the rapid flow of the falls, the breathtaking view of the valley. I left, climbing out through the crevices and trails that lead away from the ledge; the ?safe way.?

It wasn't until the next day that I realized how often my Christian walk is like this event on the cliff. How often does the Lord beckon me forward, asking me to relinquish my hold on my own life and trust Him? Do I follow, thinking I'm going to give Him my all and then turn aside, much preferring my comfortable position where it's safe?

?That's alright, Lord, no thank You. I'll just stand back here and take pictures.?

I am reminded of the Parable of the Two Sons in Matthew 21, where Jesus compares a son that says ?yes' but then doesn't do it; and the other son who says ?no' but then changes his mind and obeys. Too often I think I am like that first son, quick to say ?yes' to the Lord but then reluctant to follow through when the going gets tough.

I am thankful for my lesson that day, and how God has shown me that His work in my life will never be complete unless I fully trust Him and continue in obedience, doing His will His way. Do you see yourself in my story? Where in your life is God nudging you, asking you to fully commit to Him? Don't refuse Him today if He's holding out His hand to you, asking you to come to the edge and trust Him.