

Climbing Out of Your Place of Despair and Discouragement

“Does your mother know you did that?” I said, with eyes wide and jaw dropped.

There he was in the video, an ice hook in each hand and ice picks for shoes, slowly climbing a frozen Montana waterfall. He just laughed at my question and said, “It was so fun!”

No, fun is starting a new book to read next to a fireplace.

On Christmas day of last month, my son-in-law went into the emergency room and came out a week later with a diagnosis of Crohn’s disease. Circumstances have been sobering for the last two months, as we’ve watched this young couple get slammed with the word “disease” and try to absorb the idea of new and severe food restrictions and long-term treatment.

It’s a new kind of suffering that doesn’t have an end date.

But I know what to do: Thrust ice hooks of belief into the solid ice of God’s promises and slowly work my way up from the bottom.

It’s a grunt and a thrill.

“God is good,” I groan. Reach and stab.

“God is watching over this hard path we’re walking.” Toe pick.

“Jesus carried this sorrow for us.” Reach and stab.

“Jesus is a healer and cares about sick people.” Toe pick.

Pretty soon, despair is starting to look like an ant down below, and I’m gaining a view from a higher and higher place.

There is joy in this extreme soul work, along with a good deal

of sweat dripping down the middle of my back. This is what it means to “love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might” (Deut. 6:5). We love God when we refuse to submit to anxiety, discouragement and hopelessness about our trying circumstances.

What hard situation are you experiencing right now? To quote that preacher of mine, we need decide “to believe God is who He says He is and that He’ll do what He says He’ll do.” Take time to list the promises of God and use them to climb out of your debilitating feelings. {eoa}

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