

Facing Adversity Over and Over

by Alan Smith

Pray
"Without Ceasing"



Did you hear about the teacher who was helping one of her kindergarten students put his boots on?

He asked for help and she could see why. With her pulling and him pushing, the boots still didn't want to go on. When the second boot was on, she had worked up a sweat. She almost whimpered when the little boy said, "Teacher, they're on the wrong feet." She looked and, sure enough, they were on the wrong feet.

It wasn't any easier pulling the boots off than it was putting them on. She managed to keep her cool as together they worked to get the boots back on-this time on the right feet. He then announced, "These aren't my boots."

She bit her tongue rather than get right in his face and scream, "Why didn't you say so?" like she wanted to. Once again, she struggled to help him pull the ill-fitting boots off. He then said, "They're my brother's boots. My Mom made me wear them."

She didn't know if she should laugh or cry. She mustered up the grace to wrestle the boots on his feet again. She said, "Now, where are your mittens?" He said, "I stuffed them in the toes of my boots ..."

As I read that, I thought about how many of our frustrations come about as the result of having to do something over and over. Let me give you an example.

A number of years ago, I was having some back trouble and the doctor told me I needed surgery. I counted down the days until I could find some relief. The surgery went well (in fact, I went home less than 12 hours after surgery), but the recuperation didn't go as planned. Instead of getting relief, I found myself back under the doctor's knife six weeks later.

I remember that the greatest source of frustration wasn't the surgery itself. It was the fact that I thought I was getting better, but then I had to go back and start all over again. Just when I thought I was making progress, I encountered a

setback. I was able to easily muster the emotional strength to face the first surgery, but it was much tougher the second time.

I've seen the same thing happen in a number of different areas. I suspect you have, too. Maybe you were hoping to get bills cleared up, only to be hit with an unexpected dentist bill or car repair. Maybe its harsh criticism you're dealing with, a situation at work that's making it difficult to maintain your Christian standards, or perhaps the struggles of dealing with a rebellious child. You think, "I can handle the difficulty I'm going through as long as I can see the light at the end of the tunnel." Only just when you're about at the end of the tunnel and you've taken about all you can take, you then realize that there's more adversity ahead and the light is barely visible. I understand; I've been there.

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The Christian life is sometimes difficult. There are times when we feel we just can't take it anymore and we want to give up, especially when we've had to face the same adversity over and over and over again. May this passage serve as a source of comfort and strength to you:

"He gives power to the weak, and to those who have no might He increases strength. Even the youths shall faint and be weary, and the young men shall utterly fall, but those who wait on the LORD shall renew their strength; They shall mount up with wings like eagles, They shall run and not be weary, They shall walk and not faint." (Isaiah 40:29-31)

I pray that your strength will be renewed this day as you wait upon the Lord. Hang in there ... its Friday, but Sunday's coming! Trust me, it always does!