

A close-up photograph of a desk. In the foreground, a pair of black-rimmed glasses sits on a white surface. To the right, a white mug is partially visible. In the background, several books are stacked vertically, their spines showing various colors and textures. The lighting is soft and natural, creating a calm and studious atmosphere.

Guideposts

3-Minute Devotions for Men

Introduction

Each devotion in this collection has been carefully selected to fit into your busy life and help you enrich the special time you spend with God. We hope you'll consider this booklet as an invitation to invest in your spiritual life.

These selections are from the pages of Guideposts best-selling devotional, *Daily Guideposts*, where best loved authors share their personal stories of blessings and wonders found in ordinary moments. Through life's ups and downs, challenges and successes we are reminded of the marvelous truth that we are always in the hands of God.

Get ready to relax, recharge, take a break from the busy world and connect with God.

And follow this link for more inspiration
<http://bit.ly/DG2018Men>

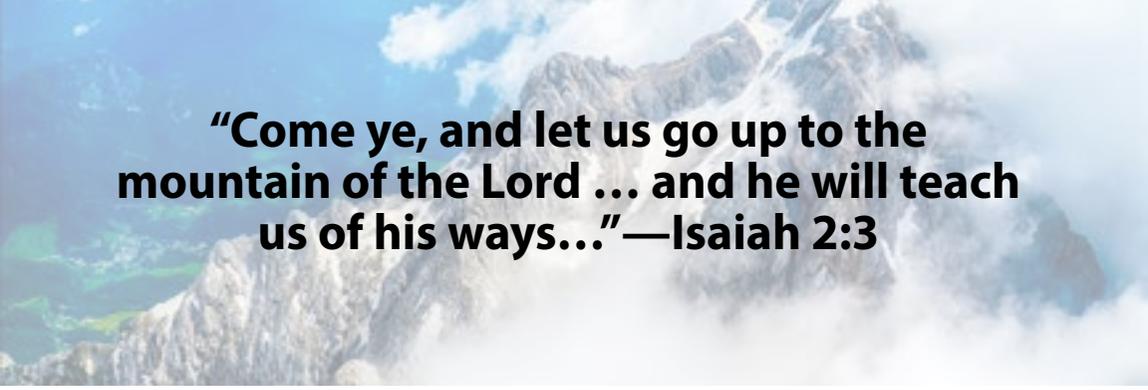
“Be strong and of a good courage; be not afraid, neither be thou dismayed: for the Lord thy God is with thee whithersoever thou guest.”—Joshua 1:9

Every time I have a dark day, I meet a kid who cheers me right up again with her or his crazy grace and thorny courage. This morning, for example: I met a girl who told me a story so amazing that I asked if I could take notes.

“I was born in a little town in the woods,” she said, “with a mom and a dad. After a while my mom left, leaving me with my dad. My dad gets killed by a tree—he was a logger—and I go to live with my granddad. My granddad dies and I go to live with my youngest uncle, who gets married, and then he gets killed in the woods—he was a logger too. “By now I’m sixteen, and it’s clear that the new wife and I are not going to be real close, so I study like crazy and get the best grades I can get and come to college. But oddly enough, you know what I want to study now that I’m here? Forest biology and the science of the woods and stuff like that. I realized the other day that I want to spend my career in exactly the places that killed my dad and my uncle. Is that weird or what? But I figure the best way out is through, you know what I mean? You can’t run away from what hurts. You have to walk right into it. Do you think that’s so?”

Oh, dear Lord, yes, I think that’s so. It’s easy to run away, isn’t it? And not so easy to walk right into the storm, the deep woods, the country of pain. But You are there; I know You are; I will welcome Your kingdom as this child reminds me to...

—Brian Doyle



“Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord ... and he will teach us of his ways...”—Isaiah 2:3

Once a year I make it a point to climb Monument Mountain in Great Barrington, Massachusetts. The views are impressive, and so is the lore connected with the rocky summit.

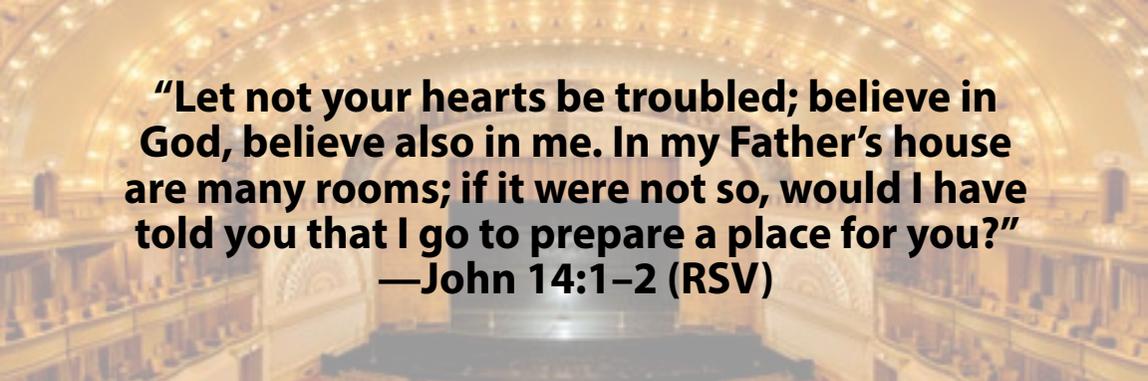
In 1850, two great American writers met there for the first time. Nathaniel Hawthorne hiked up the north side and Herman Melville ascended the south trail. They celebrated their rendezvous with a picnic lunch that was rudely interrupted by a tremendous summer thunderstorm. The authors took shelter in a cave, where they passed the time vigorously debating the great ideas of the day. Was mankind doomed to sin? Did science and technology offer a better future or were they to be feared? Could one man ever be allowed to oppress another?

The other day I made my annual pilgrimage. It was a hot, sticky day, but conditions improved a bit when the trail wound into the tree cover. I stopped to fill my water bottle from a quick-moving stream running down a crevice, then pushed on. Finally, I scrambled up some boulders to the top, where I could look out over the Berkshire Hills.

Melville and Hawthorne must have sat very near here and enjoyed their abbreviated repast. That reminded me. I pulled a sandwich out of my pack, ate slowly and thought about the two writers. They had debated the great ideas of the day, and those questions hadn't changed very much in a century and a half. We still struggle with sin, science raises as many questions as it answers and men continue to oppress other men, often horribly. And maybe that's what I needed to know: We continue to battle those ancient human failings, hoping that we become not a perfect race, but a better one in the sight of God.

Lord, I climb mountains so my ears can be a little closer to Your lips. Please help me to find answers.

—Edward Grinnan



“Let not your hearts be troubled; believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father’s house are many rooms; if it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you?”
—John 14:1–2 (RSV)

We stood at the cemetery by my father’s open grave. The day before, we’d had the memorial service at church with hymns and eulogies and hundreds of people bidding Dad a fond farewell. Now it was just family and that aching sense of loss.

Our friend Rick Thyne led the graveside service. “At church when I was a kid,” he began, “we had a balcony that wrapped around the sanctuary. If I had to lead a prayer or read a psalm, I could look up and see the people who cared about me. They were my encouragers, urging me on. They believed in me and looked out for me. I thought of them as my balcony people.”

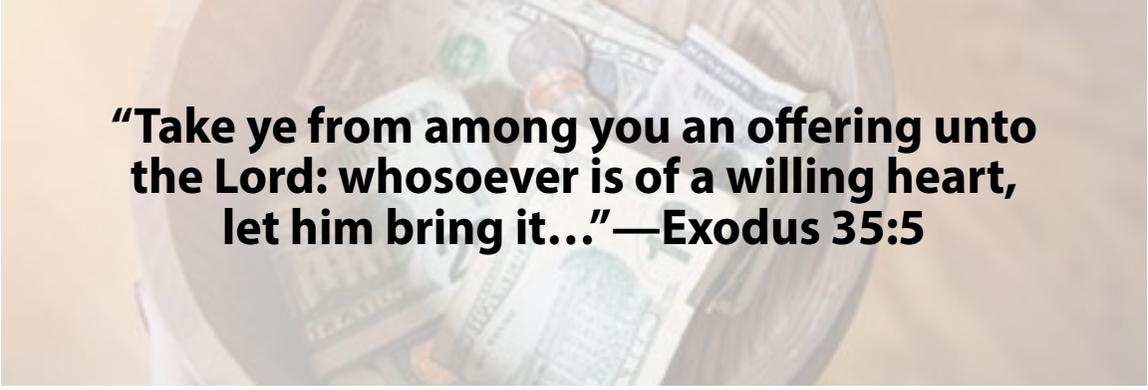
I thought of Dad, asking me about my job or school or the kids and then hanging up the phone with his standard line, “Love ya.”

“Your dad is not here,” Rick went on, “but he can become one of your balcony people. He’s there watching it all, taking it in.” I could see Dad’s smile, hear his laugh, remember his kiss on my forehead when he’d put me to bed. “You can let go of him in life as you hold on to all the good things he wished for you and made happen when he was here.”

The front row of my balcony. Still there. Love ya.

Thank You, Lord, for all the people who formed me. May I honor in life all they gave me.

—Rick Hamlin



“Take ye from among you an offering unto the Lord: whosoever is of a willing heart, let him bring it...” —Exodus 35:5

When I was a boy, my dad loved to take me to church, and I loved walking with him through the city streets. It was our time together, just the two of us.

One summer evening, a few blocks from church, I turned to my dad and said, “I need money for the offering.”

He stopped, put his hand in his pocket, pulled out a nickel and gave it to me.

“Five cents! Is that all?” I said. I wanted to give a quarter; the larger the offering, I thought, the more it meant to God.

Dad looked into my eyes and said, “God looks at the heart more than the gift. God understands that we don’t have a lot of money to give to the church.” My father earned very little to support his family of five and he, too, had only a small offering to give that night. “You don’t need to be ashamed of your offering. God will bless what you give. Remember, give what you can from what you have.”

At church, I couldn’t wait for the collection. When I heard the minister say, “Bring your offering unto the Lord,” I stood up as tall as I could, put my hand in my pocket, took out my five cents and placed it in the offering plate.

Now that I’m grown up, I try to give to God out of my talents, my time and my treasure. Often that seems little enough. But whenever I’m in doubt about the value of what I’ve given, I remember my father’s words: “God looks at the heart more than the gift.”

Lord, whatever I put in the offering today, let me give it with a grateful heart.

—Pablo Diaz



**“But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy,
peace, patience, kindness, goodness,
faithfulness, gentleness, self-control...”
—Galatians 5:22–23 (NAS)**

Last night, I uncovered several old cigar boxes filled with fading, yellowed photographs. Some were from my high school years; others were of Beth and me during our early years of marriage. Then I found a crinkled envelope amid the pictures. It was a card from a friend who has been dead for more than fifteen years. He was a young man when he died, successful, talented, and full of promise. Then cancer riddled his body.

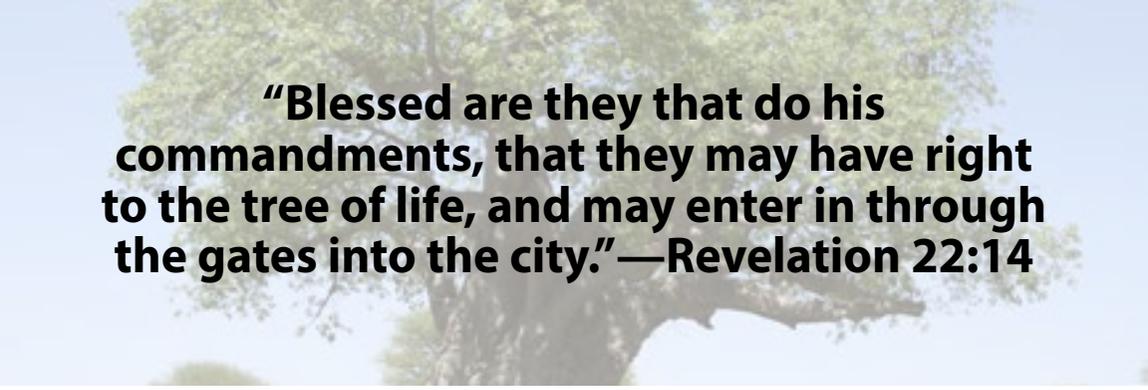
The card states: “Some people come into our lives and quickly go... some stay for a while and leave footprints on our hearts, and we are never, ever the same.” On the back of the envelope is a note he had scrawled: “This small card expresses my feelings and thankfulness for what you have done for me this past year.”

In the midnight dimness of my study, I swallowed hard as my eyes brimmed with tears. A memory reached across the years and touched me. I became intensely aware that at the end of our short day, all that really matters is human touch...those whom we have loved and who have loved us.

I look at my to-do list. Ironically, it is scratched on the back of an envelope too. Most of my day will be focused on errands; very little is directed toward caring for the needs of God’s children. Maybe I need to listen to the voice from my past who is softly saying, “Use tomorrow to walk into someone’s life and leave footprints on her heart.”

Father, shape my day to achieve Your priorities of love and mercy. Amen.

—Scott Walker



“Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city.”—Revelation 22:14

I was in a small Botswana island camp called Jacana in the water plain of Okavango. It was September, early spring in southern Africa, and the waters had yet to recede; about two feet remained among the reeds, papyrus and lilies that grew everywhere. Travel was by mokoro, a canoe-like boat with a flat bottom. It held only two people and a native guide who stood and propelled it, gondola-style, with a long pole forked at one end.

One morning five of us and three guides set out, our binoculars ready as ever for anything that luck would bring. Godfrey, my guide, glided the mokoro through the water soundlessly. We pulled ashore on an island. “You will like this especially,” he said, “for its Three Sisters.”

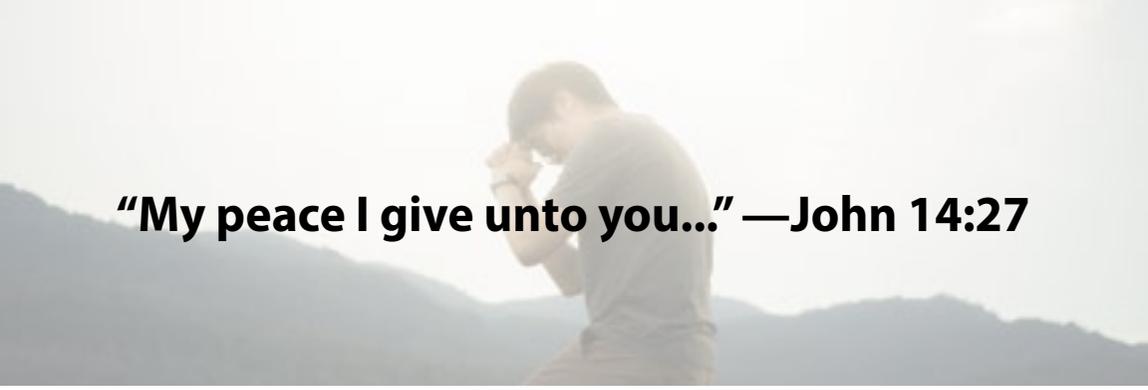
I was unaware of what he meant until I trudged up through the sandy footing. “What a strange sight,” I said. The Three Sisters had merged into one enormous tree, a baobab, not very high, but hugely fat. Its bark was gray and smooth, and its leafless branches were disproportionately spindly, as if they did not belong to the same tree. It was, I thought, ugly.

“This tree is four thousand years old,” Godfrey said.

“And it’s still alive,” I marveled. I was standing before something that was already old in the time of Jesus. I wanted to touch it, to feel its texture, but I wasn’t able to do so, for suddenly, an elephant came laggardly through the brush and we hastily retreated to our boats.

But, Father, I was, and am, closer to You because of that baobab tree.

—Van Varner



“My peace I give unto you...” —John 14:27

Near the door to the garage at the apartment complex where we now live stands a rust-pitted old bicycle. It's covered with dust, its tires are flat, its handlebar askew. And on it some wit has hung a sign: rust in peace.

I didn't think the joke was funny. All right, this is a retirement community, nobody here younger than sixty-two, but that didn't mean we'd come here to rust. I was twenty-five years older than that minimum age and going strong—still working, still traveling.

Then I had quadruple-bypass surgery and was put on a strict regimen. No driving, no lifting anything over ten pounds, no raising my arms above my head—all kinds of irksome restrictions. It would be six months or longer before I'd be back to normal. Well, I, for one, was not going to start “rusting.” I'd astonish everyone! I'd be walking a mile a day by the end of the month! I'd try lifting twelve pounds, fifteen, twenty...

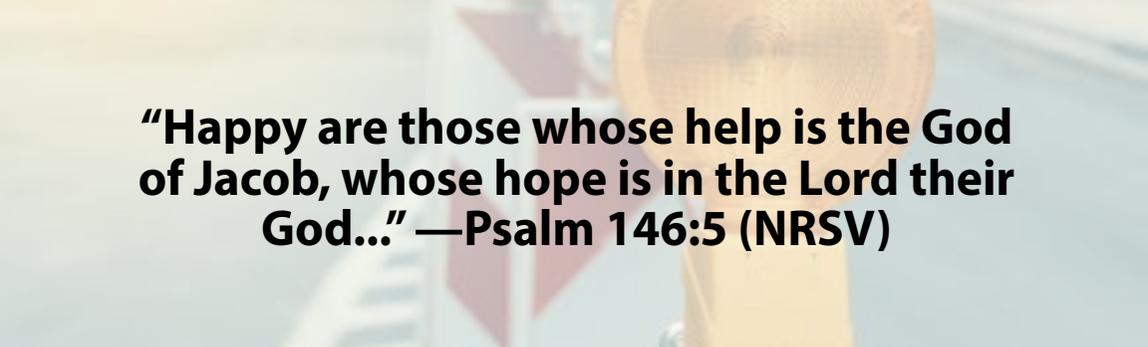
And, of course, I pushed myself too hard. My chest ached, my breath was hard to catch. Instead of speeding my healing up, I'd set it back.

That was when a different word in the sign on the old bike began to speak to me. I'd bristled at rust, but peace... Maybe that was something I needed to pay heed to. Some amount of rust, I was beginning to concede, was inevitable as bodies age: Bones get brittle, arteries harden. What wasn't inevitable was the attitude I took toward these inescapable changes.

What if instead of chafing at them, I acknowledged them with grace and humor? What if peace, instead of battle, was my response to the gift of years?

Give me that peace, Father, that passes understanding.

—John Sherrill



“Happy are those whose help is the God of Jacob, whose hope is in the Lord their God...” —Psalm 146:5 (NRSV)

One of the most spectacular places I’ve ever been was the place I nearly missed. About a half-mile into a hike, there was a sign that said, “Caution: Creek May Flood.” My friend and I kept going. A mile later, “Warning: Steep Terrain Ahead.” We thought about that but kept going. And, finally, a sign that said, “Warning: Black Bears in the Area.”

“If I had known at the beginning of the hike about all these warnings,” I said, “I might not have come.”

To which my friend replied, “Maybe it’s a good thing that we don’t always know what we’re getting into, because we might never take the risk.”

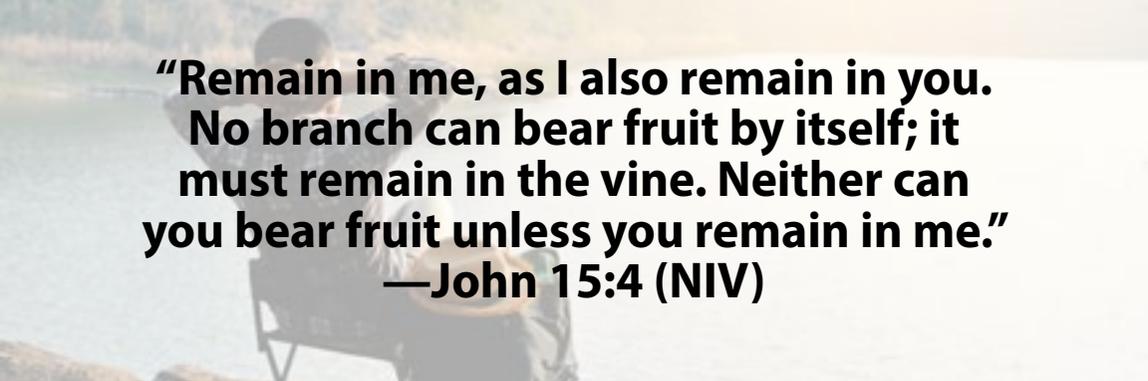
And then we rounded the next bend and stepped out from the trees into a wide meadow, alive with wildlife and exploding with wildflowers. It stretched out before us, stunning in its beauty.

I keep pictures of those warning signs to remind me: they can keep us from danger, but they also can make us fear the obstacles and undermine our ability to overcome them. *What if I don’t have the right words for my grieving friend? Can I make that hard but ethical choice at work? Will I be able to accomplish that new assignment at church?* The sign says, “Warning! Be Careful! Don’t Go On!” And often I am tempted to play it safe, avoiding any risk.

But God hasn’t placed those warning signs; my own fears have. If I’m brave enough to take the risk, to trust that God will be where He is calling me to go, I’ll likely see things I never imagined.

Give me the courage, God, to follow Your desire for me so that I might see the glory of Your work.

—Jeffrey Japinga



**“Remain in me, as I also remain in you.
No branch can bear fruit by itself; it
must remain in the vine. Neither can
you bear fruit unless you remain in me.”
—John 15:4 (NIV)**

I've always been a high-intensity, high-ambition kind of person. I got straight A's in school. I became a professional ski racer and went to the Paralympics. I own an electric toothbrush and scrub my teeth each day till they sparkle.

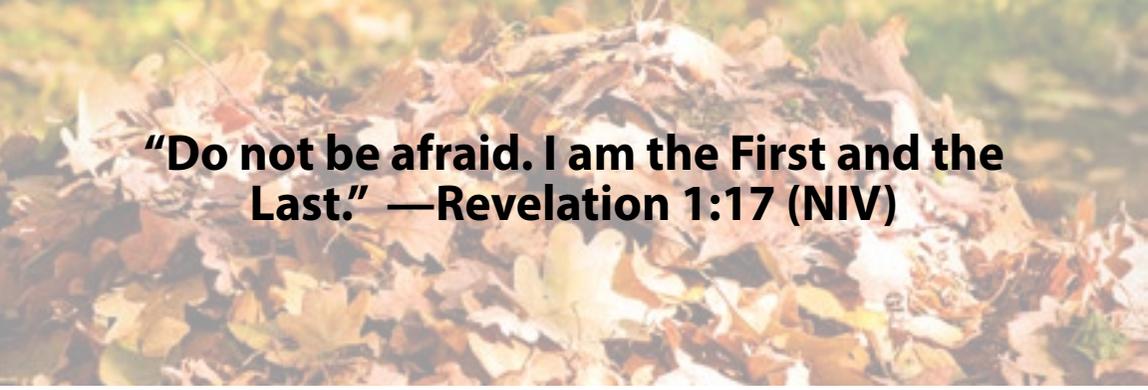
But to the extent that ambition and drive are good things, I'm also a textbook example of the fact that you can have too much of a good thing. I've recently been struggling with a debilitating stress-related illness—and I don't mean headaches. I mean not-getting-out-of-bed-for-days-on-end debilitating. Once I figured out, with the help of some doctors, that it was my personality and lifestyle that were to blame instead of a rare virus, I knew I had to change. But change is hard.

I discussed my situation with my brother Matt and told him I didn't know how to slow down. “It's going to be difficult,” he said, “because it will feel counterintuitive. Your whole life you've always been successful by being determined and persistent, by fighting hard. But this is a battle you can only win by fighting less hard.”

It is, indeed, counterintuitive, I thought, but Matt is right. And in giving my body the time and space to heal, I've learned there are a whole host of things that can only be achieved with less effort, not more: peace, patience, loving relationships. And that includes my relationship with God, because it's only through His efforts, not mine, that I can know Him. The best things in life are not earned; they are given. But only if I pause long enough to receive them.

Lord, please help me to know when to fight and when to slow down and abide in You.

—Joshua Sundquist



“Do not be afraid. I am the First and the Last.” —Revelation 1:17 (NIV)

In the South, the leaves turn color and fall from the trees a little later than they do up North. They may not be as colorful as they are in the Northeast, but they are beautiful and plentiful.

One day as I was raking some leaves, our grandson “Little Reggie” came running outside and asked, “Pops, can I play?” My instant answer was, “Boy, I’m working, and I don’t have time to play.” He sat down on a pile of leaves, and I piled up more leaves all around him. Each time I raked a pile, he would plop down on them and say, “Pops, can I play?” and I’d surround him with more leaves. Then he started to run and jump on the piles.

As I watched Little Reggie playing in the leaves, I began to feel fearful because there were small sticks in the leaves and I didn’t want him to get hurt. My fears were starting to snowball out of the here-and-now into the uncertain future when I remembered “Do not be afraid” from Revelation 1:17. God is “the first and the last.” Past, present and future are all known to Him, and I can trust that from whatever may happen, today or tomorrow, He will bring us good.

Lord, for Little Reggie, Rosie, Ryan and Danita, help me to keep on trusting You and Your Word daily.

—Dolphus Weary

ABOUT GUIDEPOSTS

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The challenges and obstacles we encounter in life can make it hard to know which path to choose. A “guidepost” is that welcome sign on an unfamiliar road. We’d like you to think of Guideposts as your trusted partner on your life’s journey.

Every day, people like you draw strength from their faith and overcome adversity. We invite you to connect with like-minded Guideposts readers, volunteers, and donors who share a sense of faith and belief in the human spirit.

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