

## Contending With Gravity

On a recent doctor's visit, my doctor said, "Try exercising with gravity involved." When clarifying, the doctor explained the resistance involved would be beneficial to health." It has been several days since the visit, but I keep reflecting back to what was said and how the spiritual application is too similar to not make some comparable applications. The world in which we live has gravity to keep us on the ground. And the devil with his cohorts is dedicated to keeping people locked into the dominion of darkness. We must develop the fine art of defying gravity and not succumb to the pull of the world. The Bible says, *"For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world"* (I John 2:16). The pull is strong; therefore, to maintain our ability to withstand evil and stay obedient to God's voice, like combat-ready soldiers, we must stay fit. *"Thou therefore endure hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ. No man that warreth entangleth himself with the affairs of this life; that he may please him who hath chosen him to be a soldier"* (II Timothy 2:3,4). We are contending with the element of gravity. We need to stand tall, walk on and not give in to the pull. What will contending with worldly gravity do for us?

### **1. We will build spiritual strength.**

*"But ye, beloved, building up yourselves on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Ghost"* (Jude 20). We need to be *"...continuing instant in prayer"* (Romans 12:12). The word "instant" is from the Greek word: "proskartereo," translated: 1. continue instant 2. continue steadfastly 3. attend continually 4. give (one's) self continually 5. to be devoted or constant to one 6. to give unremitting care to a thing. I think the phrase; "to give unremitting care to a thing" truly says it best. Never slacking, always staying faithful to this matter of prayer. The very resistance to the world that says prayer is unnecessary or doesn't help will build spiritual muscle! But we must stay with the exercise program, lest atrophy sets in. The more constant and consistently we pray, the more answers we see, the greater our faith becomes. Let us be "cut and buff" in the spirit!

### **2. We will have an improved posture.**

I often kid my wife to leave me alone when she admonishes me to stand up straight. I have noticed as I age, she has been saying it more. Although I joke with her about it, in my heart, I appreciate her encouragement. It's true as we age, it's almost as if our bones and muscles are saying, "Relax, don't resist, just "hang loose." In our early marriage, one of the finest compliments ever given to me came from my wife, who said to me, "I like the way you stand tall in the pulpit." I have often given thought to those words. I am not tall, but I can and should stand tall. Standing tall gives the presence of authority. Standing tall says I shall not be dominated.

George Washington said, "America is great because she would rather die on her feet than live on her knees." This was said in reference to the crown. I would make the point that if we live on our knees to God, we will have the strength to stand tall and not live under the dominion of this world and the ungodly pull! *"Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. Stand therefore..."* (Ephesians 6:13, 14a).

### **3. We will eliminate wrong influences.**

My doctor told me exercising which involves gravity will raise the good HDL and compensate for the bad cholesterol. We must walk about in an evil world, but we must realize that nurturing a spiritual regimen that resists gravity will compensate for the temptations that beset us. The Bible says, *"...let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us"* (Hebrews 12:1). Our Lord is beautiful in the way He can turn the tables on Satan. The very thing that would bring us down, instead becomes the object that when properly resisted makes us go further into God's will and plan for our life. *"Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you..."* (James 4:7, 8).

It had not been long since a fellow classmate of mine in college had returned from Viet Nam with incredible war injuries that carried the sad promise of the loss of his legs for the rest of his life. I can see him now on crutches unable to walk without the aid they provided. It took him a long time to go from class to class. In the early morning hours I recall hearing a shuffle and there he was without his crutches pushing his shoulders back in defiance and literally throwing one foot in front of the other. I never asked my friend what was the new determination. But I did notice simultaneously with his new drive to walk (which he ended up doing quite well) was the appearance of young lady that would sit with him in chapel. A new love seemed to help him straighten his shoulders and step out in style. Jesus said, *"And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength..."* Loving the Lord with all our strength will spur us on in contending with gravity. *"And Jacob served seven years for Rachel; and they seemed unto him but a few days, for the love he had to her"* (Genesis 29:20). May we like Jacob be so in love with the Lord Jesus that we will not be always complaining and "wimping out," but rather standing tall and resisting all the influences that pull us away from Him and holy living!

- Pastor Pope -

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