

Title: Upwarped Mountains  
Date: March 5, 2023  
Subject: God wants Christ followers to be mature not infants.  
Scripture: Ephesians 4:7 - 16

Poon Lim spent 133 days on an 8 by 8 foot life raft during World War II. A German submarine had sunk the British merchant ship on which he served as a steward. 43 crew members went down with the ship and eleven were rescued by other ships. Poon was left by himself. Complicating matters was Poon didn't know how to swim and feared he might fall off. He tied a rope around his waist in case he fell over. Though the raft had a small amount of rations he understood he needed to fish. He fashioned hooks from wire and nails dug out of the raft. He sun-dried extra fish so he'd always have a supply in case weren't biting. He used the life jacket to catch and strain water. Sometimes storms swept away his food and water so he had to start over -- catch fish and collect rainwater.

Once he thought he was going to be rescued as a plane spotted him and dropped a buoy but a storm washed it away. He saw another German submarine which he thought saw him as they practiced gunnery drills by shooting at seagulls but they left him alone. He was in danger from sharks, the sun and the sea.

When he was rescued he'd lost only 20 pounds and was able to walk ashore unaided. He spent a month in a Brazilian hospital before returning to Britain. When asked about what he'd done, he simply said, "I hope no one will ever have to break that record" (source: [inaraft.com/blog/a-remarkable-story-of-survival-at-sea-poon-lim/](http://inaraft.com/blog/a-remarkable-story-of-survival-at-sea-poon-lim/)).

Let's change the situation. Put on infant on the raft. I know, it's a horrible thought isn't it? The child, alone, helpless, at the will of the sea, the sun and the other dangers. I hesitated to bring it up unless you think I'm some sort of ghoul. Infants are warm, cute, cuddly. How dare I suggest that horrible situation?

We can soften the image. Think of a baby on a cruise ship being rocked by strong headwinds and giant waves. The baby is seasick and puking. Still not terribly pleasant.

God addresses the spiritual counterpart in our text this morning.

Read Ephesians 4:7 - 16.

There are four types of mountains: volcanic, fault-block, folded and as pictured from Utah's Uinta Range - upwarped. They resulted when forces in the earth caused the crust to arch up, bending it into broad folds. While all mountains point up, this kind has up in its name. Upwarped. It can remind us, while all people are warped in some way, followers of Christ are to be warped, changed, in the proper direction.

I. What God doesn't want. V. 14

God doesn't want us to be spiritual infants who are tossed back and forth by the waves and wind of teaching. That should be a horrible and terrifying scene. Immaturity is dangerous as it makes a person more susceptible to deception by devious people, the cunning and craftiness of men in their deceitful scheming.

The philosophies, teachings and views of the world system opposed to God have a way of creeping into the church. There's postmodernism which teaches truth is subjective. Everybody has their own truth and one version is just as good as another so everyone should be tolerant of everybody. This is appealing because people want to be in control and don't want to be thought to be wrong.

Another deceitful scheme focuses on self, a person's experience and existence with a heavy emphasis on their biological needs, desires and wants. "If it feels good, do it." It's closely connected to hedonism -- living for pleasure. The teaching says there aren't limits or boundaries on what a person can do or experience in their existence. This appeals to the desire to feel good.

Another false idea is humans will be able to figure out the major questions of life by themselves. They have the mental capacity and skills. Just need to ponder and think to find the solution.

Then there's belief that people are basically good. The Bible says people are sinners filled with all sorts of evil who need to be delivered and this can't be accomplished by ourselves. Some people may seem to be pretty good, but it's a veneer of goodness as we're all sinners.

The winds and waves of teaching brought by cunning and crafty people is at the center of many of the cults. They show love and use Christian terms but deviate from what the Bible teaches. Sadly, cults get most of their recruits from those who've had some Christian background. They claim they have a better way, a new and improved aspect of truth when it's really the old lies.

College campuses are hot beds for cunning and craftiness of men in their deceitful scheming. Some professors are overtly anti-Christian while others are sneakier in their approach. They try to get people to doubt and question God and wonder if they should hold to the biblical truths.

V. 14 is the siren warning about getting into hazardous territory. The sharks are circling the raft. They're waiting to take a bite. The winds are howling and the waves are roiling. We aren't to operate by impulse, appetite or whim. God doesn't want us to be in danger by remaining spiritual babies. No one should remain a spiritual infant, and it's worse when the person has been a Christian for 20 years.

God has something better. We're to be grounded in the truth and hold firmly to it.

II. What God wants. V. 15, 16

The phrase in v. 15 - "speaking the truth in love"- causes confusion. Some think it refers to being honest, but that isn't the point in the context. The contrast is between the deceitfulness of false teachers and whatever is meant by this phrase. "Speaking" isn't the best translation. The idea has been expressed: "trusting it in love." Truth is the truth as revealed in God's word, the teachings about Jesus Christ and God's plan throughout history. We're to share truth through our words and lifestyle in a loving manner.

God wants us, all who've placed their trust in Christ to save them from their sins, the totality of the body of Christ, to grow up into Christ. We're connected with him and are to become the body that's fitting for

Christ the head. This is to encompass all of life - emotions, thoughts, how we go about business or being a student, attitudes, the use of our resources like time, money and possessions.

Growth happens in several ways. It occurs through numerical growth. The analogy of a body might sound a little weird if we think about physical bodies adding a third arm or more toes. It's better to think of getting taller or more cells. There's also spiritual growth – increasing in knowledge of Christ and wisdom – more muscle mass. Each part needs to do its work.

M. R. DeHaan (Our Daily Bread, 4/2/2000) was driving on a seldom-traveled road when his car slowed down, sputtered, gasped, and died. He had a screwdriver, a pair of pliers and “what I know about car engines you can put in your eye.” Still he lifted the hood and looked around because that’s what you do. A friend drove up. He also looked under the hood, but he jiggled the carburetor. "Plenty of gas." He placed the screwdriver across some electrical connections and exclaimed, "Aha—no spark!" A little screw had come loose on a wire which caused the engine to stop running.

DeHaan applied the experience to the church: “Just as little parts of an engine are vital to keep it running, every member of the body of Christ, the church, is important. Failure to do your part may hinder the whole body from functioning properly. Your failure to pray may result in loss of power. Your failure to witness may be the reason that someone doesn't hear the gospel. Your failure to support your church financially may curtail the work of evangelism or missions. Your little part, if neglected, can result in big problems. The work of every member of the body, however small, is needed. Are you doing your part?”

Each of us has something to contribute - a gifting from God, an intended role and a responsibility to use the gifting. No one can fulfill your role. If you don't do it, no one else will. God needs you and me to do what he has created us to do. Our growth is dependent on one another.

An independent missionary dropped in on the pastor of a local church. The missionary was seeking support for his work. The pastor asked, “What group are you associated with?” “I belong to the invisible church.” The pastor put it another way, “Well, what church are you a member of?” “I belong to the invisible church.” The pastor was getting suspicious. “When does this invisible church meet? Who pastors it?” The independent missionary became irate. “Well, your church here isn't the true church. I belong to the invisible church!” The pastor replied, “Well, here's some invisible money to help you minister to the invisible church!”

There is a universal church which consists of all who have ever or will ever place their personal trust in Jesus Christ to enter into a right relationship with God. The universal church finds its expression in the local church. All members of the body of Christ are participants in the universal and local church.

### III. How God’s goal is achieved. Vv. 7 - 13

Jesus Christ gives grace to all who are in his body. Grace is the gift of God’s undeserved favor which includes eternal life and forgiveness of sins. Grace is the privilege of a special calling in the service of God. It's linked to the gifts Christ gives. We'll get back to them in a moment. First we have to look at the giver.

Vv. 8-10 are based on Psalm 68 which portrays God's victory and ascension to his throne in heaven. Paul applies this to Christ who ascended after he descended. Someone can ascend only if they've descended. Jesus left heaven and came to earth. Jesus referenced his incarnation in his conversation with Nicodemus: "No one has ever gone into heaven except the one who came from heaven - the Son of Man" (John 3:13).

There are three ways descended is understood. One is into his grave after dying. The second is into Hades, spoken of in another place (1 Peter 3:18 – 20). The third is from heaven to earth. This last one seems a better fit for the context and as an all-encompassing idea that could include the other two.

Jesus descended to earth so he, as the One who is fully God and fully human, could offer the perfect and complete sacrifice for the sins of people. Then he ascended, returned to the place he came from "higher than all the heavens." The purpose is so he could fill the whole universe from bottom to top.

Christ's ascension marked his triumph over all his enemies – devil, death, sin, the curse, world. He rescued humanity who'd been prisoners held by Satan and made them a part of his heavenly victory parade.

When Jesus was about to ascend, the disciples had all sorts of questions - what was going to happen, what they'd do and what life was going to be like? Jesus assured them he wasn't going to leave them alone as orphans. He'd send the Holy Spirit as the comforter who'd teach, guide and apportion gifts to the church.

Victorious earthly kings of the time returned from battle and gave spoils of war as gifts to soldiers and citizens. Jesus is the victor and gives out gifts that are to be used and not buried.

Part of these gifts are people in leadership positions. The offices of v. 11 were present in the beginning of the church age but also have continuing aspect. The first is apostle which means "one sent" (with an S). Jesus' first followers were the 12 apostles. Their unique role died out with them. Other Bible people referred to as apostle were sent by God with his message to help establish churches. Today people like international workers are sent with a similar responsibility. It's best to not refer to somebody today as an apostle because they don't have the same kind of authority as the men who were part of Jesus' inner circle.

Next is prophet. Old Testament and New Testament prophets received direct revelation from God. At other times they expounded upon what God had already revealed. We have the prophetic books of the Old Testament as well as men like Elijah and Elisha. In the New Testament we have the Book of Revelation.

God no longer gives new revelation to people. Therefore, prophet isn't in the sense of bringing forth new revelation or foretelling the future but in forth telling the truth. It's those who proclaim the message.

Evangelist is person who presents the gospel to those who aren't believers. They have the ability to make the way of salvation clear. We can think in terms of missionaries though not all missionaries are gifted in evangelism. There are also people like Billy Graham and Ray Comfort.

Next is pastors and teachers. Some view these as separate offices while others connect them. One thing all agree on is all pastors need to be teachers but not all teachers are pastors. Words used interchangeably for pastor are elder and overseer and are directed at men. The role is to shepherd the flock, care for it, preserve it and protect it from wolves. They feed it through teaching. Be an example.

The purpose of these positions is to prepare God's people for works of service so the body may be built up. The Bible uses the analogy of an athlete for followers of Jesus Christ. When football players show up for the opening day of practice, they could immediately play another team. They have ability and motivation, but to do well they need to get in the game shape and learn the playbook. There were some exercises at football practice I didn't mind - arm rotations, trunk rotations, neck rotation, toe raisers. It wasn't the same with leg lifts or up downs. The purpose of exercising was to build strength, stamina and the mind as to what the body can accomplish. There was also the learning of the plays. Players were assigned positions. The coach used other techniques to motivate players. The purpose is to be prepared.

God's people are to be prepared. They need to learn the playbook. This is done through training, teaching and guiding. They need to be told God's truth and reminded of it. There's the practicing of what learned. There's growing in understanding the responsibility that comes from being part of God's family.

The first week Stuart Briscoe was the pastor of Elmbrook Church a woman asked him if he'd find the answer to a technical question she had about a Bible text. Briscoe replied, "No, I will not." The woman was shocked. She wasn't sure she'd heard him correctly. "What?" Briscoe repeated, "No. I will not find the answer to your question." She looked at him as if to say, "Then what are we paying you for?" He continued, "Here's what I'll do. I'll show you how to find the answer for yourself." And he proceeded to do so.

The purpose of preparation is for works of service. Ministry is to take place. There are places in China where a new believer is welcomed into the body of Christ with these words: "Jesus now has a new pair of eyes to see with, new ears to listen with, new hands to help with and a new heart to love others with."

The end game is presented. It's so the body may be built up. Each Christian is to understand they're a body builder. Each person has their role and responsibility.

Some of us used door frames to measure our kids as they grew taller and a scale to see if they were gaining weight. What are God's measurement tools to see if the body is being built up? First, reaching unity in the faith and knowledge of the Son of God. Unity is coming to the place of agreement about the body of truth, the essentials about Christ and his teaching. We're to know well Jesus Christ, be intimately acquainted with him. Second, become mature and stable. We're no longer to be like infants who are swayed and deceived by this, that and every other doctrine. We're to be able to verbalize what the Bible teaches. Third, attain to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ. This is being Christ like in character and life. The process won't be completed on earth but it's not an excuse for a failing to attempt to achieve God's purpose.

Little kiddos are cute with their big eyes and little smiles. We don't like it when they get sick and seasickness would be. . . The same is true for spiritual infants. The Lord doesn't want us to be seasick - tossed by the wind and waves but to be strong, stable and mature.

Donald Driver, the great Packers receiver, had a commercial for Goodwill. "Alone I can do nothing. Alone there are no passes to catch, no touchdowns to score. Alone there are no victories. But with a team..." We might modify the statement to say that alone we can do some things but with a team of believers...

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4:17ff

**August 5, 1997**

The story is told of an accomplished artist who was applying the finishing touches to a bronze sculpture. He kept filing, scraping, and polishing every little surface of his masterpiece. "When will it be done?" asked an observer. "Never," came the reply. "I just keep working and working until they come and take it away."

Much the same could be said of the children of God. We are saved by grace and declared righteous in Christ. Yet when it comes to the matter of Christlikeness in our everyday living, we must keep working at it until Jesus comes and takes us away.

Someone has observed, "The acorn does not become an oak in a day ... It is not one touch of the artist's brush that produces a finished painting. There are always months between seedtime and harvest."

Whether you are a new believer or have known the Lord for many years, "Grow up in all things into Him" ([Eph. 4:15](#)). Don't let setbacks and failures discourage you. Stay in touch with God through prayer. Then, as you feed on the Word of God and obey His commands, you too will become more like Christ through the power of the indwelling Holy Spirit. Remember, it takes time! --R W De Haan

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Lisa Whittle, 2/9/23. [familylife.com/podcast/familylife-today/your-life-less-complicated-lisa-whittle](https://familylife.com/podcast/familylife-today/your-life-less-complicated-lisa-whittle)

She wrote a book "Jesus Over Everything: I talk about everything from service over spotlight, steady over hype, commitment over mood. I think the last chapter that I inserted in this book was a chapter that I didn't want to write, but yet I felt the most compelled by. It was *holiness over freedom*. That chapter has continued to be the one that people ask me about the most, talk about the most, share about the most, because it is probably the most important chapter in this book.

I talk about my own choice not to drink alcohol in that chapter. I didn't really want to talk about that, because people have a lot of different opinions about that. But it was about the idea of holiness - and what I wanted people to understand that it wasn't this process of strict rules and regulations, that it was all about the better life. And it was all about having so much freedom in your relationship with Christ that you actually are choosing to do things that your freedom would allow, but at the end of the day doesn't make you more holy. So you forgo those things just because the better life is the freedom life of holiness over here.

2/10/23 [familylife.com/podcast/familylife-today/jesus-over-everything-lisa-whittle/](https://familylife.com/podcast/familylife-today/jesus-over-everything-lisa-whittle/)

**Lisa:** You know, my mom and I were always--we're very different personality-wise, so I'd never really understood my mom, growing up. I always felt like it was weakness in her that was her personality. I realized at a certain point as my mom and I talked through this through the years, that my mom made a choice to love my father through a lot of hard things.

It wasn't that she was blind or oblivious, but it was a choice - and that comes into play in a big way when I talk in the chapter about service over spotlight, which is just super compelling to so many folks that have read this, but also I tell this story in the Bible study. And it's so compelling. It was when my father died, my mother and I were there when he took his last breath.

He was lying there, and he had just passed, and she said—they came into—the hospice was there, and they wanted to change his socks. And my mother said, "I would like to change his socks if I could. I have been changing his socks for the last year" --or six months, whatever, because she had been his nurse in the last years of his life. She said, "I would like to change his socks." So I watched my mother change my father's socks for the very last time. He was already gone.

It was the most compelling thing I think I've ever seen in my entire life, because I watched my mother, who stood by my father through a lot of things faithfully through the years - and where I had judged her through her life for being foolish or being soft or being weak. I saw so much strength, which is what really it was. It was a choice to love, and it changed my perspective on her. I had changed my perspective on her through the years, but it crystallized in that moment, and I thought, "This has always been a choice to love. It was never about weakness; it was about a choice."

**Ann:** That's so similar to my mom. My parents were married 70 years, and I would have said the same thing, Lisa, totally judging her, like "Mom! You're a doormat. He's walking all over you. All you do is serve him. You're so nice to him." I'm different. I want to protect my mom, and I'm mad at my dad, but I'm totally judging her as being weak. Exactly the same. And she would do it. She would serve with total joy, like it was her privilege and honor to not only serve my dad, but she served all of us.

I'm sitting there thinking, "Mom, you need to protect yourself. You need to stand up for yourself." And I went through the same thing. The longer it went, I watched her and I thought, "Oh, that is strength." And when she passed before my dad, just a year before him, one of the things my dad shared that I never knew was he said, "Once in a great while my (Ann's) mom, would write him a letter and say, "Hon, I feel like you're being too hard on the kids," or "You've been too hard on me," and she would do it in this gentle, kind way.

He said, "That helped shape the direction my life took, of just her gentle words that she wrote down." I'm sitting there thinking, "Man, I need to glean some of that instead of judging her." She was strong, and she just did it in a different way. She had a different personality. But it was convicting to me, like "Oh, no. Her strength was in Jesus. Her joy was to serve. Who else was that? Jesus."

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It was a dangerous thing to be a follower of Jesus Christ in the 1st and 2nd century. Sometimes it was difficult to know who could be trusted. Your life and the lives of your family could be at stake. A code was developed to see if someone was on your side. It wasn't a secret handshake. One person would take a stick and draw half a fish on the ground. He hoped the other person would respond and finish the drawing. When the fish symbol adopted by Christians was completed they'd recognize each other as followers of Christ.

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Hearst's fear of death. It was a mark of a celebrity's true star status if they were invited to Hearst's castle for a weekend. When guests arrived they were informed of one very strict rule. They were warned if they broke this rule, they would be immediately escorted off the property and never invited to return. Whenever the guests were in Hearst's presence, there was one word they could never utter: DEATH. Hearst had a horrible fear of death. He was so afraid of it that when one of the palm trees at San Simeon died unexpectedly, the gardeners painted its leaves green until it could be replaced at a time when Hearst was gone.

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“It *is* true that we are chosen of God. In John 6, Jesus said... "No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him," (John 6:44 RSV). That's putting it plainly, isn't it? You can't come to Christ unless you are drawn by the Father. God has to initiate the activity. Ah, yes, but in Matthew 11 Jesus made his appeal directly to the will of the individual, saying, "Come unto me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest," (Matthew 11:28 RSV). And that means it's up to you. You can never become a Christian until you choose to come. So both of these facts are true.

“And though we can't reconcile them in our puny intellects, nevertheless we can accept them as facts and realize that it is true that we must choose. The good news is offered to us, but if we don't respond we will never obtain the benefit of it. But if we do respond, if we come to Christ, if we believe in him, then we discover a great fact: God began the process, it was he who chose us, and we have been drawn to him by his Spirit at work in our spirit.” ([raystedman.org/new-testament/Ephesians/the-foundations](http://raystedman.org/new-testament/Ephesians/the-foundations))

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Chad came home from school and announced to his mom, “I'm going to make a Valentine for everybody in my class.” His mom's instant reaction, “I wish he wouldn't do that.” Her son was sensitive and shy and she'd seen how he wasn't included by the other kids when they walked home from school. They laughed and talked with Chad just kind of following behind. She thought he'd be disappointed because he wouldn't receive many, if any, cards.

Chad was insistent on making Valentines. He painstakingly labored on them for three weeks. On Valentine's Day, he scooped up his cards and bolted out the door. His mom decided to make chocolate chip cookies for when he came home. Maybe the cookies would soften the hurt she expected he'd have.

She watched out the window as kids came home from school. The same group was talking and laughing with Chad following behind, but walking faster than normally. His arms were empty and she thought he'd burst into tears as soon as he got in the door. She had a hard time not crying. "I have some fresh chocolate chip cookies and milk for you."

Chad didn't seem to hear. He marched right past. All he said was, "Not a one... Not a one." His mom's heart was in her throat. Then Chad added, "I didn't forget a one, not a single one!" (adapted from Dale Galloway, *Dream a New Dream*).

Chad was a giver.

Chuck Swindoll gives insight that helps counter our strong tendencies of selfishness and conceit. They're thoughts that we determine ahead of time: "I care about those around me. Why do I always have to be first? I'm going to help someone else win for a change. Today, it's my sincere desire to curb my own fierce competitive tendencies and turn that energy into encouraging at least one other person. I willingly release *my* way this day. Lord, show me how you would respond to others, then make it happen in me" (*Improving Your Serve*, pp. 39, 40).

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Ray Stedman, "Years ago, in Virginia, I met an old man who was the rector of an Episcopal church. He had been converted in D. L. Moody's meetings in Cambridge, England. When Moody came to the center of English culture and education in Cambridge, the students were very much in rebellion against him. They felt he was a backwoods American who could not even speak the English language properly -- and he couldn't! They were affronted by the idea that this coarse, crude, vulgar American should be asked to speak to the cultured students of Cambridge. The man I met in Virginia was one of those students opposed to Moody. A band of them had agreed that, when the meeting began, they would break it up with catcalls, hooting, and mockery, and refuse to allow Moody to continue with his message. Sounds rather up to date, does it not? But when the meeting began, his associate, Ira Sankey, sang a beautiful number that greatly moved the hearts of those students. As soon as the song ended, Moody strode to the front of the platform and, in his characteristic blunt fashion began, "Young gentlemen, don't ever let anybody tell you that God don't love you, for he do." It arrested them. They were so startled by this ungrammatical beginning that they all paid attention. Again he came back to the theme and said, "Don't ever let anybody tell you that God don't love you, for he do." This student said that as he left the meeting that phrase ran again and again through his mind and he thought to himself, "Why do I fight a God who loves me? Why should I be in rebellion to such a God?" Later that day he sought out D. L. Moody, and Moody led

him to Christ. As he told me that story, he looked back across the years to recall the time when he first came to realize the love of God” ([raystedman.org/new-testament/1-john/the-path-of-love](http://raystedman.org/new-testament/1-john/the-path-of-love))

A man once told D. L. Moody he was worried because he didn't feel saved. Moody asked, “Was Noah safe in the ark?” “Certainly he was,” the man replied. “Well, what made him safe, his feeling or the ark?”

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What would become the Olympic motto was first used by a priest during an opening ceremony for a school sports event in 1881. The man who would become the founder of the modern Olympics in 1894, Pierre de Coubertin, was present. He adopted the words he heard to motivate athletes to give their best.

Three Latin words: Citius - Altius - Fortius. The motto was changed in July, 2021 when the International Olympic Committee added Communiter to recognize “the unifying power of sport and the importance of solidarity” and express “the aspirations of the Olympic Movement not only in its athletic and technical sense but also from a moral and educational perspective.” The four words: “Citius, Altius, Fortius - Communiter” in English are “Faster, Higher, Stronger – Together.” They remind participants, officials and watchers that athletes should strive for improvement, giving ones best, more.

The words in the Olympic motto are a fitting challenge for believers. They show the idea there's more that can be accomplished and the necessity of coming alongside and participating with others to achieve more. Do we have the hunger and thirst? What's in our heart?

Jesus talked about a man who just wanted to kick back and coast through life. “The ground of a certain rich man produced a good crop. He thought to himself, “What shall I do? I have no place to store my crops.” Then he said, “This is what I'll do. I will tear down my barns and build bigger ones, and there I will store all my grain and my goods. And I'll say to myself, “You have plenty of good things laid up for many years. Take life easy; Eat, drink and be merry.””

Jesus used the story to talk about people who may have been rich in the things of the world but not rich toward God. In the story God spoke to the man and called him a fool because that night his life would be demanded of him. He wouldn't get the chance to enjoy his things. At first the man worked hard but then he got to the point when he was going to put it in neutral and coast.

There's no coasting in the Christian life.

I hadn't had my driver's license for that long. I was taking my younger brother to his freshman basketball game. It had snowed and the plows hadn't made it to county road C. I wasn't driving that fast... then it happened. The car started doing what it wanted and the next thing we knew we were nose first in the ditch on the opposite side of the road. We couldn't get out by ourselves. I sent Denny to the neighboring farmer, a

half mile away, to ask him to get his tractor to pull us out. While he was gone, a guy who'd graduated from high school who had a bad reputation, stopped and offered to help. Mr. Garbrecht came with and pulled us out.

Winter driving is... how do you say it?... interesting? At times, more like for the brave of heart. Slip sliding away.

Controlled sliding downhill, when you want it, like on a sledding hill is fun and exhilarating. But in a car, going backwards, when you should be going uphill, not so much. It's not what's intended.

Followers of Jesus Christ aren't to be sliding downhill but are to be moving uphill.