

# Unnecessary Danger

Joe Slater

While making our way home from a recent trip we were driving on I-44 in the Missouri Ozarks. We passed a pickup which was towing another pickup that had a trailer hitched onto it with a car on the trailer. So far so good. However, the lead pickup was towing the other pickup and trailer with nothing between them but a log chain about ten or fifteen feet long! There was no hitch to connect the two vehicles. You can just visualize that second pickup going down one of the steep hills and rolling out into the other lane or up beside the lead pickup. It was an accident looking for a place to happen!

What on earth possessed the driver of that first pickup to pull such a ridiculously dangerous stunt? I can think of only two possibilities.

1. Sheer ignorance. Maybe he truly didn't realize the perilous position in which he had placed himself and others.

2. Laziness. Obtaining and using an actual hitch would have taken time and effort, not to mention money. Ah, just use a chain. It'll probably be ok.

Ignorance and laziness can get us into trouble in matters of the spirit, too. When it comes to God's word, ignorance definitely isn't bliss! *"My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge"* (Hosea 4:6). Not less than fourteen times in the New Testament Jesus and the inspired writers challenged people with the words, *"Do you not know?"*

Laziness can also cost you your soul! The slothful one-talent man was cast into outer darkness (Matthew 25:30). And Hebrews 6:12 warns us not to be slothful, but to *"imitate those who, through faith and patience, inherit the promises."*

*"Wise people store up knowledge"* (Proverbs 10:14). *"The desire of the lazy man kills him"* (Proverbs 21:25). We face enough dangers, physical and spiritual, without creating additional ones through ignorance and laziness!

# Water

**"He reached down from on high and took hold of me; he drew me out of deep waters." (Psalm 18:16)**

Water is one of the most powerful forces on earth. It sustains life, cleanses, and shapes the world. But it can also bring destruction—storms rage, floods rise, and oceans swallow ships whole.

Scripture often uses water as a symbol of both danger and deliverance. When the Israelites were trapped between Pharaoh's army and the Red Sea, God parted the waters to save them. When Jonah ran from God, he was swallowed by the depths until repentance brought him back to dry land. When Peter walked on water toward Jesus, doubt nearly drowned him—until Christ reached out His hand.

Have we ever felt like we were drowning in life? Fear, shame, and regret can rise so high that we struggle to stay afloat. But Psalm 18:16 reminds us that God is not distant from our struggles. He reaches into our deepest waters, pulls us up, and sets our feet on solid ground.

Water is also a symbol of renewal. Through baptism, we are buried with Christ and raised into new life. The very element that can destroy also brings salvation. When Noah and his family were saved from a world of sin, they passed through water into a new beginning.

Who is praying for us? Perhaps our parents have whispered our names before God since we were born. Maybe a friend or someone we don't know has lifted us up in prayer. These prayers are spiritual lifelines, unseen currents that carry us toward the shore.

If we feel overwhelmed today, remember this: the same God who pulled Peter from the sea, who split the Red Sea, and who washes us clean in baptism, is reaching for us now. His hands are strong. His mercy is deep. His love will not fail.

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# SLOW IT DOWN

Philosopher, adventurer, and author Erling Kagge espouses walking, whenever possible, over faster methods of transportation. According to Kagge, slowing down our pace increases the quality of many facets of life. For instance, he argues that memory, meaning, and problem solving are increased because we employ more senses in the walk. We become more attuned to our surroundings because they don't whiz by in a 55-mph blur. And, counterintuitively, he says that walking can slow down time to get more accomplished, as opposed to rushing from place to place and never feeling like you have enough time.

There may be something to what Kagge is proposing. In Psalm 46:10 the psalmist extols the security found in God during the times of war and chaos. *"Be still, and know that I am God."* So much of our lives is spent running that we are not able to truly absorb what a walk with God has to offer. Think about the last devotional time you spent. Did you sit down and quickly read through a few verses only to speedily jump up and run to the next thing on your schedule? How much of that reading did you soak in? Probably not much.

Yet, being still to know God goes beyond slowing down a daily devotional. It also means slowing down to use more of our senses in experiencing life. Allowing all the interactions with people and creation to remind us how powerful our God is and how much he loves us. If we can learn to do that, it will bring about results very few people in this world ever enjoy. Our connection to God will strengthen. Our stress will begin to drop. Our ability to think through struggles and listen to God's instruction will deepen.

We are approaching graduation time, the end of a school year, planning for summer trips, etc. It is one of those seasons that is going by so quickly! Consider what steps you could take now to intentionally slow down your life. (And don't tell me it's not possible, because it is!) What could you trim away? What could you rearrange? What new habits could you include? Slow it down so that you can be still and know God to the fullest.

--Author unknown (via Mt. Carmel CoC, Athens, AL) adapted