

The Lowedown

October 19, 1997

An Uphill Climb

"You can't turn back now, we're almost there!"

A few hours earlier, the idea of turning back seemed unthinkable. We'd been talking for months about how we were going to conquer Half-dome, the solid granite picturesque peak of Yosemite.

It wasn't long before I realized that it was going to take more than just cheap talk and a macho attitude to make it to the top.

The first two hours of the hike I was still nauseous from the winding drive up to the Park.

And now that we were four hours into the hike, my legs were in so much pain from the burning that I didn't think I could take one more uphill step.

My friend Dave also began to feel the pain. Together, we formed an alliance to try to persuade our friend Kunjan that we should all turn back.

We had several good arguments.

"If we turn back now, we can get back to the car pretty quickly and we'll be home in

time for dinner."

"We're in too much pain, and we still have a lot farther to go."

"We'll never make it."

Yet Kunjan had one response that we could not neglect. "We came here to climb to the top. We can't quit."

For a split second, Dave and I thought about turning back ourselves. We

even got the keys to the car from Kunjan. Kunjan's reply was simple:

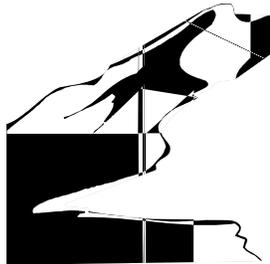
"You can't turn back now, we're almost there!"

"Do you really think that we're almost to the base of the rock?", we asked.

"Yeah. It's probably just around that next bend. C'mon, you gotta keep going. If you turn back, you'll regret it later."

Deep down, we knew he was right. And even though each step up was a new sensation in muscular pain, we kept going.

About 30 minutes later



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Jennifer and Tracy decided to take the opportunity to share the gospel with Linda.

A Divine Opportunity

"This Generation just doesn't commit to anything."

That's a statement that Jennifer and I have heard too many times. The sad fact though is that it's true. Over and over again, students fail to follow through on commitments that they make.

This is most obvious when students fail to keep appointments with us on campus. For some reason, it doesn't seem to bother students when they fail to show up at an agreed upon time. Most students don't think it's a big deal, and rarely will a student apologize for blowing you off.

It can be very frustrating when students fail to show up to meet with you or when no one comes to the Bible study for which you spent valuable time preparing.

This was the case for Jen and Tracy, who desired to start up a Bible study in one of the campus dorms. Though many women had expressed an interest, only 3 or 4 women showed up.

A few weeks ago, Jennifer and Tracy were disappointed when, after waiting for 15 minutes, no one showed up to the group. Jen and Tracy were just about to leave when Linda showed up.

Not knowing where Linda was at spiritually, Jennifer and Tracy decided to take the opportunity to share the gospel with Linda.

It turns out that Linda was not a Christian. After hearing the gospel for the first time, Linda decided to put her trust in Christ.

Jennifer is now meeting with Linda weekly to help her get established in her new relationship with God.

Fortunately, even when we think no one is interested, God is always working in people's lives. We simply need to continue to be faithful to minister to others.

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we encountered some hikers who were on their way down. We were sure that we must be close, probably only 20-30 minutes away. But we asked them how much farther it was just to confirm it.

“No, the base is about a two hour hike from here. But, it levels out just up ahead.”

No way! Dave and I were demoralized and once again, we thought about turning around.

“We’re closer to the top than we are to the bottom”, Kunjan said. “You can turn around if you want, but I’m going to the top. I’ll meet you back at the car.”

We knew that we could not be outdone by our friend, and we took solace in knowing that it would level out just ahead. So we kept going.

It never did seem to level out, but in a few hours, we made it to the base of the rock. To our dismay, the hardest part of the hike was still in front of us.

To get to the top, one has to climb what seems like hundreds of steep granite steps. Then, to make matters worse, the last part of the climb is made by pulling yourself up the backside of the rock by two steel cables.

I was beginning to wonder if it was even worth it. But by the time we got to those cables, I knew that there was no turning back. I had to make it to the top. And I did. When I pulled myself up to the very top of the rock and saw the majesty of the view before me, I was glad that I had kept going. Looking out over Yosemite Valley from the top of Half-dome, I wondered how I could have even considered turning back.

The hike was not over. There was still the long walk down the mountain.

By the time I finally made it back to the car, I could barely walk.

My right knee had locked up with 2 miles left, and I had developed blisters under most of my toenails.

But I didn’t care. I had made it. I waited in the car while my two friends went in search of some food. When they returned, they presented me with a trophy for my accomplishment—a shirt that said, “I made it to the top!”

A few days later, after I was beginning to walk normally again, I thought about how the Christian life is similar to my hiking experience.

First of all, in the Christian life, we need to be prepared. I had done nothing to prepare myself for the hike that was before me. In fact, I had done no physical exercise whatsoever. And I paid the price.

Secondly, the Christian life is long and strenuous. It’s often much tougher than we think it’s going to be. That’s why we need others in our lives who will encourage us to move forward when things get tough.

Finally, the rewards for persevering are greater than we can imagine. The results outweigh the hardships. In addition, we will be rewarded in heaven for enduring hardships here. And the rewards will be far greater than a T-shirt that says “I made it.”

My hiking experience was a memorable one. My friends and I talk about doing another hike sometime in the near future. Though I don’t know exactly when that will be, I’m already preparing for it.

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Praise & Prayer Report

- ◆ One of the most exciting developments this fall is the start of a new ministry to Fresno Community College. During the first week of school, Dave handed out over 1,000 Spiritual interest questionnaires. The result is about 25 students who are now in 5 different Bible studies.
- ◆ At the end of September, Andre Kole, a world-renowned illusionist, came to Fresno State to give two performances. Not only is Andre’s show first rate (see brochure insert), but Andre gives a very clear presentation of the gospel during his performance. About 450 people attended Andre’s two performances with nearly 115 people indicating a decision for Christ.
- ◆ Jennifer and I were able to purchase a second vehicle which has allowed us to minister on two different campuses.
- ◆ We have a new staff woman, Shawnda, who has just arrived in Fresno. Jennifer will be responsible for training Shawnda. Having another woman on campus full-time should relieve some of the work-load that Jen alone was assuming.
- ◆ Pray for Linda, Daniel, and John, all new Christians who are growing in their new relationship with Christ.
- ◆ Pray for us and for the students in our ministry. Pray that we would be whole-heartedly committed to Jesus Christ, and that He would be the Lord of our lives.
- ◆ Continue to pray for the Lord’s blessing on us as we minister for Him. Pray that He would continue to provide for our every need. Pray