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By Jim Langley

ARE YOU SIMPLY LIMPING THROUGH LIFE

Have you ever felt like you were simply limping through life? Some days will be tougher than others, facing challenges that can seem insurmountable. My insurance career has seen exceptionally good months and some very good years, but there have been lean times as well. A lackluster economy can take a toll on anyone who sells a specific product or a service.

Through experience I have learned these difficult times require true dedication to your profession and perseverance. To survive, you must work more diligently, meet daily goals and not get discouraged.

Most successful businessmen have had multiple setbacks in life. Success has required tenacious ability to cope with difficult times and rebound as opportunities arise. This can be done without deceiving others or taking unfair advantage of your competition. Hard work and ingenuity can pay great rewards in any field of expertise. Some allow circumstances to dictate their lives, but we don't have to limp through life.

In sports, baseball became my main focus during my boyhood and young adult years. As a lead-off hitter, my goal was to get on base as often as I could. I worked diligently on techniques that helped me reach base nearly half my plate appearances. Improving my understanding of the strike zone, developing good bat control and working on my bunting strategies helped greatly.

However, I recall limping through a portion of one baseball season with a torn hamstring, but that did not prevent me from playing every game that summer. I refused to let the injury keep me down.

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Over the past 30 years, I have discovered deep faith can make a great difference, whether at work, trying to acquire and develop a specific skill, or just getting through everyday life. That faith is strengthened by confronting trials and realizing God desires to reveal Himself through those difficult times. Like physical exercise, one's faith can only be strengthened through putting it to use.

A biblical account recorded in Genesis 32:22-32 describes Jacob wrestling with the angel of the Lord. Jacob's life was filled with struggles, but on this particular occasion he would not let go of God. Jacob asked Him to bless him and he got his wish. However, the Lord touched the socket of Jacob's hip, causing him to walk with a limp the rest of his life. Nevertheless, God did bless him, even giving him a new name, Israel. He became the ancestral father of the nation of Israel, which traces its lineage to him even now.

One of the best illustrations for all who follow Jesus Christ is the life of the apostle Paul. His tenacity in remaining strong through adversity has shown us what faith looks like when it is put into action. His teachings and personal example have inspired countless millions over the past 2,000 years to follow Jesus and surrender to Him.

The apostle suffered greatly for the cause of Christ, to the point of his eventual death. Most of us will not have to face death for our faith, but we must persevere for His sake and the sake of those He puts into our path throughout this journey of life.

Consider your life precious to our Lord, as it is, and realize that even if you must "limp" in some way, you can still hold your head high and persevere for the sake of Christ, experiencing the abundant life He has promised (John 10:10).

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Jim Langley has been writing for more than 30 years while working as a life and health insurance agent. In recent years, his passion has turned to writing about his personal relationship with God. His goal is to encourage others to draw near to Him as well. A long-time member of CBMC, he started writing "Fourth Quarter Strategies" in 2014.

Reflection/Discussion Question

1. Are you "limping" through life now, whether due to some physical malady or disability, or because of circumstances that are hindering you in striving to advance through life? If so, briefly describe what you are presently dealing with.
2. How easy have you found it to ignore the problems that cause you to "limp," or to persevere through those challenges? What poses the greatest difficulty for you?
3. Are you familiar with the story in the Bible about Jacob wrestling with the angel of God, His representative, to receive the Lord's blessing? Would you ever consider doing something like that? Why or why not?
4. What is your typical response to adversity, obstacles that can sometimes seem so formidable that you are tempted to lose heart and give up?

NOTE:

If you have a Bible and would like to read more about this subject, consider the following passages:

Genesis 32:22-28; Proverbs 24:16; Romans 12:3; Hebrews 11:21; James 1:2-4; 1 Peter 1:6-7

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