

STEADY AS SHE GOES

Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith.

Hebrews 12:2

Bonus Reading: Hebrews 12:1-3

“Are you *sure* y’all want to go on *that* ride?” I asked my group on the school field trip.

“Yes, yes! It looks like so much fun!” my daughter and her two friends answered.

I looked up at the rockets orbiting a planet. As they flew round and round connected to the globe by only a thin metal bar, my stomach started turning. Glancing at my watch, I noticed it was almost time for everyone to return to the school bus. *If I get sick, at least my whole day won’t be ruined.*

“All right,” I sighed. “I’ll have to ride with you because you’re not tall enough to go by yourselves. Then we *must* leave.”

We got in line for our last ride at the amusement park. I noticed each rocket had its own control for moving up and down as it followed the others around the planet.

Please, God, don’t let me feel nauseous after this ride, I prayed as we boarded our rocket.

I had been prone to motion sickness since I was a child. As we settled ourselves securely in the rocket, I remembered what my mother always told me during long automobile rides: “Look straight ahead. Don’t look to the side at the cars or scenery passing by.”

The rockets blasted off and soon we were cruising around the planet, each at a different height off terra firma. I focused my eyes on the rocket directly in front of me, but the make-believe spacemen inside took great pleasure in jerking their rocket up and down repeatedly in rapid succession. My stomach began to churn. I switched my eyes to the next rocket, whose astronauts controlled their ship on a steady course around the middle of the planet.

Meanwhile, my little spacegirls took turns flying their rocket all the way up and all the way down in gradual sweeping motions. I kept my

eyes focused on the steady ship in front of me. It seemed to stay perfectly still as the rest of the amusement park whirled by.

At the end of the ride, all the rockets touched down to earth. The girls hopped out easily as I slowly arose, grasping the edge of the rocket to steady myself. Surprisingly, I felt neither dizzy nor sick! I breathed a prayer of thanksgiving to the Lord.

“Let’s go, girls!” I called as they tried to get back in line.

Sometimes life takes us on a ride we don’t like, and our problems and activities whirl around so fast that we get queasy thinking about them. But if we keep our eyes on Jesus, the steady and unchanging One, He will take us through and give us power to sort through our problems and prioritize our activities to give us a sense of order, peace, and equilibrium in our lives.

Immutable God, help me to always put You first in my life and keep me from getting overwhelmed by my problems. Show me what is important and give me the “peace which transcends all understanding.” I let you order my life.

I'VE GOT CONFIDENCE

Put no confidence in the flesh.

Philippians 3:3

Bonus Reading: Philippians 3:3-11

Brad volunteered on the church audio-visual crew. Ever since grade school, he had been interested in electronics, gadgets and computers. A hardware engineer by profession, he fit AV perfectly. When the church needed to buy new equipment, Milt, the head of AV always consulted Brad, the “electronics whiz.” Whenever the equipment malfunctioned, Brad handled it effortlessly—until one fateful Sunday when the soundboard blew out.

Right in the middle of Pastor Jim’s sermon there was a loud “boom” and then silence. The congregation saw the pastor’s mouth moving, but heard nothing. Five hundred people began murmuring and turning their heads back and up toward the sound booth. It looked empty! After what seemed like an eternity, Brad’s head popped up, his face sweaty, but controlled as he attempted to hide the panic in his heart.

Think, Brad, think. No smoke. Good. No fire. Check the wires. Fine. The switches. Okay. The connections. Great. The wireless mike. The usher’s bringing it back here. Looks good to me. What was I doing just before it blew? Nothing out of the ordinary. I don’t know what else to do. God, I can find nothing wrong with the equipment. Please make it work.

Brad pressed the “on” button. Nothing.

Pastor Jim cleared his throat and shouted, “I guess I’ll have to finish the sermon without a mike.”

The service continued without incident, although Pastor Jim asked for water twice. After the last “amen,” Milt walked up to Brad outside the booth. “What happened in there today?”

Brad related all the steps he took. Milt assured him, “It seems like you went through all the correct procedures.”

“I guess God was just reminding me that I have to rely on him and not on myself or my own knowledge,” Brad said.

“Let’s check this out together and ask God for his wisdom,” Milt said as the two headed inside the booth.

We may be very gifted in our volunteer areas, but we must never rely on our talents alone. In Philippians, Paul writes that out of all the Jews, he could be considered the most “Jewish” and could have relied on his own righteousness for salvation, but instead he chose to rely on Christ alone.

Gracious heavenly Father, You have given me many talents, but I can do nothing without you. Enable me to use my abilities for you, not with self-confidence, but with God-confidence that you will bring glory to your name through them.