

.t.is my Shepherd

The Lord is my Shepherd, I shall not want.



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HIS MYSTERIOUS WAYS

My younger sister, Jennifer, and I were born only 13 months apart. We shared everything growing up—clothes, toys, friends. We got married and moved into our own houses, but that didn't keep our connection from growing even stronger. Our daughters were born two days apart. Jennifer is the first person I call whenever I need help. And she knows that she can always count on me.

One day last July, Jennifer and I were at our aunt's house for a birthday party. No one noticed Jennifer's two-year-old, Reagan, playing dangerously close to the swimming pool. Not until it was too late.

We pulled Reagan out and laid her beside the pool. She wasn't breathing. Jennifer rushed to her daughter's side. A neighbor performed CPR. "She's going to be okay," I told my sister.

Sirens blared and the paramedics rushed in. Jennifer climbed into the back of the ambulance. Without asking, I climbed into the front beside the paramedic. He took one look at my face and decided not to argue.

The whole ride to the hospital I watched Jennifer through the little window in the ambulance cab. Reagan had an oxygen mask on and a paramedic was leaning over her. My sister looked so scared. *Lord, I wish I could be back there with her.*

Reagan spent seven days in the hospital. By the time she was released, she had completely recovered.

A few weeks later I drove to my sister's house to see Reagan. *"I've never been so scared,"* I told Jennifer as I held Reagan in my lap.

"Me neither," Jennifer said. *"The ambulance ride was the worst part. Thank God you were there to hold my hand."*

"What do you mean?" I asked. *"I was sitting up front with the driver."*

Jennifer gave me a puzzled look. *"No, Jana. You were right next to me. You kept patting my knee and telling me that everything would be okay?"*

My sister and I stared at each other—speechless. I guess we're even closer than we knew.

Guideposts-June, 2004

REFLECTIONS

THE OLYMPIC'S

By Stan Manley
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The Olympics. The finest spectacle of human endurance, courage, grace, commitment and fortitude is ours to witness every few years. In thinking about the Olympics it brought back an old memory that I had forgotten about. A memory of the time when an imaginary Olympics were held in a small town in Western Kansas – in my backyard.

My main interest has always been the track and field events, especially the high jump. I had built my own high jump pit with crude standards and an old cane pole as the bar, more tape than cane. In this fantasy Olympics of mine, at the age of 11 or 12, the entire Olympics had come down between the Russian favorite and myself. He made his first jump and failed. He also failed the next two attempts. Since I had passed my attempts I now had three opportunities to make the jump and win the Olympics for the United States.

It was time, my first try. I had never cleared this height before. You could feel the tension run through my fantasy audience as I took my mark. I started my approach and as I reached the bar, I hit my mark and almost cleared the bar.

As I lay there I quickly figured out my error. I needed to be lighter; I had come so close. As I went back to my starting place, feeling the eyes of the audience following my every move, I quickly pulled my shirt off and my shoes and socks. I could already feel the power begin to build in my legs. I once again approached the bar. I hit my mark perfectly but once again I failed. Almost, but not quite! Once again, I lay there. The pressure was intense. This would be my last chance. If I failed, Russia would win.

As I slowly walked back to my starting position, I didn't know if I could do it or not. The commitment was too strong to deny or even compromise. As I stood there with my shirt, my shoes and socks lying at my feet, I quickly looked (Cont.)

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(Continued) around to the neighbor's houses. I didn't see anyone. Nobody but my fantasy audience cheering me on. Standing there with only my jeans on, glaring intently at the bar I had failed at so miserably, I decided it was time. I quickly pulled off my jeans leaving me only in my underwear. I took off as fast as I could, hit my mark and sailed over the bar. I had done it!

I had defeated the Russians. As I lay there, it suddenly hit me that I only had on my Fruit of the Looms. It didn't matter I had won.

Confidently I walked back to my starting place, got dressed and walked off the field. Triumphant! Don't ask me what I would have done if I had failed that jump. Would I have tried it without my Fruit of the Looms, we'll never know.

Commitment. Nothing works without it. Not even your Christian life. As you approach the hurdles in your life, you can approach them with confidence born out of commitment and be the winner for all eternity!

Stan Manley-Editor

GOD'S HANDS

P *You can almost see them.*

Picture God as having hands? Maybe yes, maybe no. Still, the Bible speaks of many ways God uses his hands.

Jacob gathered his boys around him and prophesied concerning the future of each. Joseph, he said had been "*made strong by the hands of the mighty God of Jacob.*"

So God's hands are strengthening hands but probably only for people who acknowledge their own weakness.

God has strength to spare and is not miserly with it. He stretched out his hands over Egypt and delivered his chosen people. Isaiah declares God's hands laid the foundation of the earth and spanned the heavens. Those who rest their case in the capable hands find them not only strong but also generous.

And they are good hands. Ezra (continued)

**MISSION STATEMENT:
TO ENCOURAGE THE FAITHFUL
TO SAVE THE LOST**



**FOR GOD SO LOVED THE WORLD
THAT HE GAVE HIS ONE AND ONLY
SON, THAT WHOSOEVER BELIEVES
IN HIM SHALL NOT PERISH BUT HAVE
ETERNAL LIFE. JOHN 3:16**



IT'S YOUR RESPONSIBILITY, DO IT TODAY.

(Continued) and Nehemiah testify that God's hands dispense judgment when necessary. Those hands delivered Ezra from his enemies.

Daniel determines it is the Father's hands that keep us alive. To him, our very breath is in God's hands. But then, Daniel knows more than most of us, since he read God's actual handwriting.

Job sees them as teaching hands. To David, they are searching hands and upholding hands. Israel's noblest King is quick to acknowledge God's hands control his very life.

Amos knows he can count the hands of God as a leveling force when all the world seems askew. He reports a vision of the Lord standing on the wall of Jerusalem with a plumbline in his hand.

Yet those attributes are not the total picture. Samuel warned Israel the hands of the Lord would be lifted against a rebellious people. We need that reminder to make our picture complete.

The writer of Hebrews exclaims, "*It is a fearful thing to fall in the hands of the living God.*" In Christ's atonement, those hands are forgiving-creative and redeeming. But when it is necessary for the fulfilling of Gods purposes, they can also be Hands of awesome judgement.

Tom Watson Jr.

The Christian Reader

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**HAPPY
FATHER'S
DAY.**