

☞ Chapter One ☞

## Knocked Around

It was a breezy, sunny day as I sat on an old wooden bench beside the lake in Mt. Dora. I was fascinated by the struggling birds flying above the rippling water.

The birds flying against the wind were flapping like crazy. Even with all their flapping, they hardly inched forward. All that striving - yet they never got any closer to their destination. As tiredness overtook them and the flapping of wings slowed, they were blown backwards. One even did a nosedive for the water as he struggled to gain control of his wings and begin again the constant flapping.

Other birds were flying in the direction the wind was blowing. They barely needed to flap their wings. Most of the time they just spread them out and floated as the wind carried them along. There was no struggle, no

working and fighting, or plummeting downwards or being pushed backward.

How often are we like the struggling birds flying against the wind? - Constantly struggling, often feeling like we are working so hard but never seeming to get anywhere and watching our lives take nose dives. We begin to break down. Life becomes overwhelming. We don't know how to handle the problems that come our way. We start plummeting under the pressure, working harder to keep our heads above water.

The birds flying with the wind weren't struggling. They were just "going with the flow." In fact they were speeding forward at an accelerated rate without even trying. They were at peace, at rest, as they glided and soared above the problems going on beside them and below them.

The birds gliding, soaring and going with the flow above the turmoil below are like the higher thoughts and ways of God. Those birds flying and struggling against the wind are often like the thoughts and ways of men, leading into all sorts of problems.

Throughout the Bible, the God who formed the mountains and created the winds, reveals his thoughts and teaches us his ways. After accepting Jesus as your Savior and Lord, a transformation begins to take place as you read and hear God's word. You are transformed by the renewing of your mind. As you draw closer to him, you become more apt at understanding his thoughts and

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applying his ways to your own life. (References: Amos 4:13, Isaiah 55:9, Romans 12:2, and 2 Corinthians 3:18)

Let the wind represent the leading of the Holy Spirit; let it represent the ways of God. Do you want to continue struggling, plummeting, treading water, fighting the wind; determined to do your own thing, go your own way? Or do you want peace and rest, and the ability to rise above the problems that come and pass through your life?

Then flow with the wind; following the leading of the Holy Spirit, the ways of God and the example of Jesus. Find peace and rest, soaring above the problems of life as you go with the flow.

*Grace and peace be yours in abundance  
through the knowledge of God and of  
Jesus our Lord. (2 Peter 1:2)*

Do you have areas in your life where you feel you have been knocked around and can never seem to get it just right? And do you think to yourself, "I might as well give up and quit trying"?

This would be like a toddler who sat down and gave up, thinking it was impossible for him to actually walk without falling. With this response the toddler would have crippled himself for the rest of his life. He never would be able to accomplish and enjoy all he could have.

At this point it is easy to make assumptions, to make comparisons, to make prejudice remarks. Because of past

## Over the Bumps

experiences, prejudices and generalizing, we are often hindered from moving forward, from going on to accomplish what we really desire in life or from experiencing a full life.

Life includes ups and downs, bad times and good times. Instead of wanting to live in a fantasy world it is better to face reality. Life is not a straight road. It is more like a road filled with twists and turns. There are curves around obstacles. There are tunnels through obstacles. There are bumps and hills.

Make up your mind to accept the fact that life is not all good, but it is also not all bad. Then you will find that you won't be so upset when things do not go the way you expect them to. And, the stress of an upsetting event will be lightened. You will have the strength to get up again and move on. You will find out what you can learn from the negative experience and then go on to focus on the positive experiences.

Besides, how can you be victorious if you don't have anything to overcome? How can you have a miracle if there is no problem? How can you build strong character if you have no resistance?

Character cannot be developed in ease and quiet.

Only through experiences of trial and suffering  
can the soul be strengthened,  
vision cleared, ambition inspired  
and success achieved.

~Helen Keller