

## **Real Life Allegories**

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This is a collection of short true-life stories and lessons that I learned from them; as well as other observations that I have made over the years. The sources of these stories range from the Boy Scouts to Sports, from random occurrences to other people's behavior and even from classroom settings. Our day-to-day lives are full of lessons that are just waiting to be learned.

### **The River Crossing**

I hiked the Wind River Mountains in Wyoming with my Boy Scouts troop back when I was 14. During the hike, we came to a river that we would have to wade across. My Dad, who was volunteering to help out on the hike, found a spot that was shallow enough for us to wade across safely. We were given clear instructions before we started, "cross against the current." But as I look up stream, I saw how fast the current was and thought to myself, "that looks too hard." I tried picturing myself trying to push myself, one foot at a time, against the force of the river. It seemed like it would be too hard to do. I looked down stream and knew that crossing with the current would be a mistake. Then I looked straight across, and the current just did not seem so strong. So I decided to ignore the orders of my Dad, Scout Master and all the other adults with us that day.

When my turn came, I started to take a straight path across the river! As I did, everybody on both sides were yelling for me to cross against the current; but I thought, "I will show them, this is so much easier." Just before I got out to about waist high, my foot slipped; but I quickly regained my balance. I thought to myself, "hah-I caught myself!" But everyone continued to yell for me to cross against the current! Then I took the next step; actually I tried to take my next step. As I extended my left leg, the force of the current pushed it down stream of right! At that time my legs were crossed! Everyone continued to yell to me and then I thought that maybe I should listen. I quickly repositioned my right leg to regain my balance; but before I could find a good spot to set it, the force of the river pushed my left leg down stream again! Quick I tried to reposition my right leg; but then the force of the current did it again! This time I had no chance to recover. The force of the current pushed me over side ways and began to carry me down stream. One of the older scouts jumped in immediately and pull my to shore.

Two or three days later, we had to cross another river. Again my Dad found a spot shallow enough for us to cross at. Again we were instructed to cross against the current. This time I followed directions. It was strenuous pushing one foot at a time directly into the force of the current; but it did not take me long to realize something. Crossing against the current put my body in a Poisson that give me the stability to stand my ground. I finally crossed the river, I was a little bit fatigued in my legs; but I was dry from the waist up.

When we confronted with adversity in life, we try our hardest to avoid dealing with it head on. After all, there is just so much stress involved in dealing with such situation. So we try to find what appears to be an easier route. But the adversity keeps coming and our attempts to avoid it have left us in a position to where we cannot take steps to alleviate them. We wind paying the price in the end in the form of the weakening or even total loss of our family relationships, friendships, goals, dream, joy, serenity, sobriety and even our sanity. Then we turn around and blame the people and circumstances involved in the adversity for all our misery. Or we act like we are bullet proof, "it is all water under the bridge," we tell ourselves and others. But this is far from accurate; it is actually water over our heads!

### **Swimming Lessons**

I took a survival swimming course shortly after graduating from high school. We were taught how to do the, "survival bob." If we were ever stranded in the water and needed to buy time for help to arrive, we would go through repetitive cycle of relaxing our arms allowing ourselves to sink below water for a few seconds so we can rest them, and then paddle our way back above water for a few seconds to get more oxygen. By doing this, you are supposed to be able to survive out in the ocean for several days.

I am to this day a poor swimmer, so my instructor and I thought it would be good for me to spend my free time practicing basic swimming. So while he would be busy with someone else or just relaxing, I would push myself as far out as possible from the side of the pool in front of him at the deep end and practice swimming back. I did this several times in a row and then decided to do it just one more time. That was one more time than my arms had the strength to pull me back.

I quickly calmed myself and went into the "survival bob" routine that I had just been taught. I rested my arms, and after being underwater for a few seconds, I started paddling myself back above water. The instant my head broke the surface, I calmly called out for help; but my arms were fatigued again. And so I rested them long enough to get some strength back in them and then shot back to the. This time I knew my instructor would be there for me.

As soon as I broke the surface, I heard him say, "Jason, over here!" I could not see him because of all the splashing I was doing, but I heard where the voice had come from. I reach out in that direction and then felt my wrist being grabbed and then me being pulled. After I was back holding the side of the pool, my instructor commended me for my efforts.

Life is full of growth and challenges. God is pleased when we step out and take risks that will improve our relationship with Him and all that He has created. God wants us to strive for these noble goals that He has placed in our hearts. This is how He transforms us into the image of his Son. And when we fall short, He will always be right there to get us out of our jams. He will not condemn us for not meeting these goals; but instead He will commend us for our obedience and courage.

### **The Candle and the Flashlight**

During a power outage one night, I made an observation that I found to be interesting. We had out both a candle and a flashlight. The flashlight, the high-tech tool that it was, could only provide light for a small area. Meanwhile, the low-tech candle could provide light for an entire room. True, the flashlight had its advantages for the one or two individuals using it for specific tasks, but the candle was a benefit to everyone in the room.

Sometimes we think we are just so smart. We go and educate ourselves with new and “improved” knowledge. And some of this can help us to a limited degree. But there is a lot to be said for the simplistic and timeless truths. Sometimes by trying to be too smart, we get confounded by the simplest of problems requiring the simplest of solutions.

### **Clouds Over the Northwest**

I was flying from Phoenix to Seattle in March 1990. As we crossed over the area of the California-Oregon border, we came across a solid wall of clouds that we flew above all the rest of the way. After we had landed in Seattle I looked up at that wall of clouds and realized that even though we were having a cloudy day, the Sun was still shining. We were just on the wrong side of the clouds. If we could just live above the clouds, then there would be no cloudy days.

Life is full of cloudy days. Situations occur, mistakes are made by us as well as those around us that result in consequences, etc. that make our stress level go through the roof. But we can take comfort in this: above all of the clouds of our lives, the Sun is still shining. God's Son is still reigning at the right hand of his father and is interceding on our behalf.

### **The Gun of God**

As the son of two hunter safety instructors, I would hear my Dad's speech on proper gun handling year after year. He taught that firearms need not be feared as far as being paranoid of them; but must be respected. Firearms do not just go off by themselves; someone must do something to make them go off. This could be done deliberately or in an act of blatant stupidity. If you treat them like they are loaded at all times, then you will not have anything to worry about. If you handle them carelessly, then you stand a chance of blowing out your brains or someone else's brains. Firearms are not toys; they are a means of provision and protection.

God has given us his word to show us his ways. It is filled with love and grace towards the creation that He redeemed with the blood of His Son. And it is also filled with warnings for those who are still following their corrupt nature. There are many such people who want to impose their corruption on the Bible. They want to continue in their sin and will look for loopholes in God's Word in order to get for themselves a license to sin. They misuse the passages about God's grace as if they say that God look the other way will let them get away with murder. All the while they ignore the very clear warning from God's word to not do so. And sooner or later, they will pay a price for their sins.

### **The Sky Harbor Drag Strip**

The name of Phoenix's major airport is “*Sky Harbor*”. The posted speed limit for the main boulevard is 15 mph. But adults do not seem to follow directions any better than their children. (I wonder where these children get this from?) I was working the security checkpoint when terminal 4 was opened. Some people got so upset at the design of the terminal claiming that there were no signs to tell them where to go. I knew that was not true at all. I saw a series of three large overhead signs when I drove in earlier that day. And because I was obeying the posted speed limit, I was able to read all the information on those signs and had no trouble finding where I need to go. But these people, ignored the posted speed limit, and just came racing into the airport. Then when they got lost, they blamed the design of the airport for something that was their own fault. The Word of God gives us the instructions that we need to live the most awarding lives possible. When we disobey his word, there will be consequences.

### **Bump and Run**

One night when I went alone to Pioneer Park in Mesa, Arizona, I came across some guys that needed one more person so that they could have even teams for a game of football. And I gladly joined in. It had been quite a while since I could find group to play football with. On the opening kick off, it became very apparent that there was one guy on the opposition that was by far faster than anyone else who was playing that night, and I was asked to guard him. I positioned myself in a

way as to create a large cushion between us when I lined up across from him on the line of scrimmage.<sup>1</sup> The idea was based on the assumption that he would try to use his superior speed to blow right by me down the field. Me lining up a little further down the field would almost be like giving myself a head start on him. And unless the quarterback was able to throw the football that far with pinpoint accuracy, the guy I was covering would have to break his stride in order to catch the football. This would give me the opportunity to make my move and break up the reception or to tackle him on the spot.

But this guy was an unusually smart football player. Instead of trying to out run me down the field, he would run across the field. In this way he turned the cushion that I created to give myself a head start into a head start for himself instead. So I was no where near him when he caught the ball and did not have enough speed to catch him from behind except on one play where a teammate manage to get himself in front of the guy and force him back to me. As a result, he was scoring touchdowns on just about every play that he touched the ball. So one of my teammate suggested that we go to a zone defense.<sup>2</sup> That style of play was far more difficult to perform then it sounded. As a result, all of the opposing receivers were scoring touchdowns on almost every single play. So we abandon that game plan rather quickly. My teammate told me to just do the best I could and they would try to back me up the best that they could.

When I looked across the line of scrimmage as they broke their huddle, I decided that I had no choice but to try a bump and run style of cover.<sup>3</sup> Normally I would consider this to be an act of suicide considering that this would require me to use a tight coverage against opponent was so much faster then me. My only hope was that he, like a lot of other receivers that I have gone up against, would be bothered by this form of harassment. I usually use this technique in order to give me a slight edge against an opponent with roughly the same speed as me, but I was using it this time as a desperation attempt to stop someone who was twice as fast as me. If he blew off my feeble attempt to play head games with him, then he was guaranteed to score touchdowns at will. But that really did not matter considering that he was doing that anyways. This seemed to be a night where my only choice was to choose the method by which I would be executed.

As everybody line up to start the next play, I positioned myself as close to the line of scrimmage as I was legally allowed to. When the ball was snapped, I rammed into him as hard as I could and then gave him as big of a push backwards as I could. As I did, heard him mutter, "What the...?!" Then he ran past me to the spot that the quarterback was to throw him the ball, and he dropped it! This was the as close as I had come to stopping him all game long, but was it me or was it a fluke? I did it again the next play, and he dropped the ball again. I knew I had done it; I had taken him out of the game with a cheap little head game tactic. I watched him go back to his huddle. Although I could not hear what was being said, I could tell by his demeanor and him pointing in my direction that he was upset of my new tactic. The quarterback was obviously trying to calm him down and explain that what I was doing was perfectly legal. On several plays after that, he would make little "trash talk" like comment during our collisions that seemed to be an attempt on his part to convince me that my tactic did not bother him. He could tell me that all that he wanted to, but the fact of the matter was that he dropped every single ball thrown to him for the rest of the game without a single exception!

Satan hits everybody with a lot of cheap tricks that are targeted at our character flaws. A lot of people, including Christians, try to deny that them, but the results of our character flaws are just too obvious to everyone. Many Christian get into what amounts to "trash talking" to Satan. Tell him about the power and authority that we as Christians have over him because of the work that Christ has done, binding him, casting him out, loosening his hold over them, pleading the blood of Jesus over themselves and that his games are not working. The first of list is absolutely true and the last on that list is a lie. You can spend all day long telling Satan just how ineffective his tactics are, but all he has to see is the repetitive consequences of your actions to know better. The scriptural soundness of using the items in between on a day-by-day and temptation-by-temptation basis is questionable. One thing the is without question is that many Christians would rather spout them off all day long then to work on their character flaws that Satan exploits at will and take responsibility for their own choices.

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<sup>1</sup> An imaginary line across the field where the ball is placed at the start of a play.

<sup>2</sup> This is where everybody covers an area on the field rather then one certain receiver.

<sup>3</sup> Rule allow for a defender to hit an opposing receive as hard as you want one time within five yards of the line of scrimmage. Only one defender per receiver per play can do this.