

# Elaine Bickel

Child of God ~ Servant of God's People

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## Daily Devotion



### Out on a Limb

One of the people I am most excited to meet when I get to heaven is a young man named Josh. While I never met him while he was on earth, his faith and actions have inspired me and I just want to thank him for that.

When Josh was just a little guy, just shy of the sharp old age of five, he was outside doing all the things he loved. He was wearing his favorite bright yellow hat, pushing around a little wooden cart and picking up things that fascinated him. Really interesting things like stones and sticks and any other interesting things he might unearth. His mom and grandmother were both working in the yard pulling weeds and cleaning up the huge yard. They were blessed to have a pond in their yard, but Josh knew that was off limits unless he had permission. From time to time his mom and grandma checked in on him and always discovered he was just quietly exploring. Later in the afternoon, when they were about to gather up the rakes and shovels and head into the house, they once again called for Josh, but this time he did not answer. That was very unusual for Josh. They quickly began searching every possible hiding place thinking he might be trying to tease them. He was nowhere to be found. Their hearts sunk as they thought about the pond. They couldn't imagine he would ignore their many warnings to stay from that pond, but where else could he be. They wondered how anyone could have possibly abducted him since they were both right nearby. After much searching and praying, a sense of urgency and panic led them to the decision to call the authorities. Just before that was able to happen, the mom thought she heard his tiny little voice. She wondered if she was hearing things since she still could not see him anywhere and then she spotted it. She noticed his bright yellow hat near the top of a huge evergreen tree. She momentarily wondered how his hat could have possibly gotten up in that big tall tree and then she realized that bright yellow hat was still on Josh's head! Somehow, this strong, athletic young man had made his way to the top of that huge evergreen. When his mom discovered him, she was both relieved and worried. He was up really high and totally out of her reach. If fireman were called, she feared they would never get there in time to rescue him and getting their equipment to this area would also be a challenge. She tried to stay calm as she called to Josh. In the most reassuring voice she could muster, his mom told him he could get back down the same way he had gotten up there. All he had to do was put his little feet on the branch below him. Josh did as he was told. He bravely and carefully began to descend the tree, one scary branch at a time. His mom and grandma continued to quietly encourage him. They both could hear that he was saying something every time he descended to the branch below. They both wondered what on earth he was saying but did not want to distract him by asking. Repeatedly, they heard his little voice speak, but he did not appear to be speaking to them. As he got within their hearing range, they were able to understand what he had said each time he carefully placed his little foot on the branch below him. With each step, he spoke the words, "Help me God." Amazed by Josh's faith, the faith that was bigger than his fear, Josh's mom and grandma, with tear filled eyes and thankful hearts, silently joined him in that prayer as he continued his God led downward climb. Eventually, after what seemed like an eternity, Josh was again on solid ground. I suspect there are many times in all of our lives when we feel as Josh must have felt that day.

We know we are in danger and sometimes we even know it was our less than wise decision that got us to that physically or emotionally dangerous place. We feel out of reach and out of touch, not exactly sure how we got to this point in the first place. We were just happily living our life and suddenly we discovered we were somewhere we didn't want to be. We wandered off. At those times we are likely to join Josh in that "God help me" prayer. And He always does. In the midst of our worries and fears, His calming voice reminds us of His presence and power as He gently guides and faithfully leads us. It is quite likely we have done this repeatedly. Most Christians have. King David must have found himself there as well since the Psalms are filled with such prayers. One of my favorites is Psalm 71:12, "O God, be not far from me; O my God, make haste to help me!" Whether we find ourselves, confidently climbing along or securely at the top of our game, if we feel out on a limb and alone and scared, this is always a safe and necessary prayer for we can do nothing without Him. Be at peace, He knows where you are, He hears your voice. He answers all your prayers and will faithfully lead you every day until you are safely in His arms. On November 16, 2003, Josh entered eternal life, just two days short of his 17th earthly birthday. A car accident cut short his earthly life; however, Josh lives on in those who were privileged to know him and even many of us who did not have that privilege here on earth. Today, Josh is in the highest possible place, thanks to the tree on which Christ died. As we put one foot in front of the other today, may we remember to also say, "God, help me."

By Elaine Bickel