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## Our "Rocks"

Written by Bree Russ

With a sitter in place and some friends in tow, an overcast summer morning found us venturing through the mountainous Great Falls Park in Virginia, beside and along the stunning Potomac River. While enjoying the fresh air, with a sense of growing accomplishment as we tackled the trails, we relished in the beauty of the breathtaking views, which certainly helped propel us through our adventure. But today, as I think back over our trip, the one image that I can't shake is of a small, albeit very noticeable, tree sprouting out of the middle of a large rock perched on the cliff-side. Among a landscape of rushing waters, towering trees, jagged cliffs, etc., that small and seemingly unimportant tree caught the attention of those who passed by simply due to the fact that it had grown through the middle of a large boulder, standing alone surrounded by the rigid surfaces of shades of gray, black and white rock.

As I ponder that tree, and how, despite the initially unfortunate location its seed would've started to grow, it continues to persist and grow through and on its rock (undoubtedly placed there by God), I can't shake this feeling that God is calling me to evaluate areas that I may view as a "rock" in my life, any seemingly unfortunate circumstance or situation that I may see as an unbearable obstacle. What has God placed in my path, that I may view as a burden, but which God wants to use for me to grow through?

God doesn't always take away our "rocks" (our hurts, struggles, scars, circumstances, etc.), but He will provide the provision for us to grow in and through them. Then, when we have persisted through our "rocks," they will be a part of who we are and of our stories, not to be hidden or ashamed of, but for others to see that with God we can overcome and thrive in and through unfortunate situations, as part of our testimony of His plan and provision and to give others encouragement, that they, too, can overcome. For others to notice in us – to see that it was there, it did not move, and was not taken away, but that God grew us through AND in spite of it. And what a powerful testimony that is! For others to look at you and not see some whitewashed and unattainably perfect person, but to still see your "rock" (your scars, your story, your thorn, your circumstances) and for them to see you STILL GROWING and still thriving with God through it! God uses our "rocks" to show others how we can overcome when we look to Him for our provision, EVEN, AND ESPECIALLY, IN very unlikely situations and circumstances. God uses us to show others HIS persisting and never-ending love for those who call on Him – to show our "rocks" as our testimony of His love and faithfulness.

Praise God for His love for our broken selves and for the seemingly unfortunate circumstances; for Him making us whole and complete IN HIM, with our "rocks," and ALL FOR HIS GLORY.

I found this online and wanted to share : "Throughout scripture, Rocks are commonly referred to as a symbol of God's reliability. The Bible advises that we build our houses and lives upon the stable rock that is God's love, wisdom, and salvation. Rocks are interlaced with the idea of refuge, a place to escape the tumultuous hardships of the earth."

Matthew 16:18

And I tell you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell will not overcome it.