



SOS!

Allegory of a Hike

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EIGHTY-THREE hikers went in search of a waterfall deep into the forest. They were unprepared for the heavy rain. To get the group of young hikers out of the densely forested area, the guide needed to take them across a rough river. During the treacherous crossing, eighteen people were separated from the group. The hikers made an SOS. Darkness caused their rescue to become more difficult. Late into the night, all except two were accounted for . . .

How could a perfectly-planned hike end with tragedy? The guide must have known the terrain, drawn attention to the weather signs, and communicated to his young charges the rules for the journey. Without such knowledge, certainly one would not be crazy enough to venture on a hike! My dear youth, we too are venturing out on a journey. We are blessed with a Guide who not only knows the terrain, and rules, but also created them! Jesus is our guide on this rough journey. His rules are not meant to spoil our fun but to ensure our safety.

Let's have fun as we contrast the literal hike with our spiritual journey, which is sometimes just as arduous and can end in tragedy if we are not aware of the basics:

1. Dress for the occasion
2. Observe the signs
3. Consult the map
4. Obey the guide

Dress for the occasion! I can't help but smile at the memory of one of my first hiking experiences when I was just a teenager. I wore slacks, comfortable, sturdy shoes, and a hat. Yes I was a brand new hiker obeying all the rules. I couldn't believe it when my eyes connected with a young lady in a wedged-heel shoe, with an umbrella, a well-made-up face, and a handbag. "Is she going on the hike?" I whispered to my friend. My friend laughed as she responded, "If she is, she certainly won't last long." She didn't. Fashionable clothing and glamorous shoes have no place on a rough hiking trail. Is there also a special dress for our spiritual journey? The answer is "yes." Our guide specifically states that we need to have our **feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace** (see Ephesians 6:15). We need to have our **loins girded with truth, and we must have on the breastplate of righteousness**; (see Ephesians 6:14). A nicely made-up face and fancy hairdo will degenerate in quick time. Hot sun and scorching heat will make a mockery of them. For our spiritual journey a **helmet of salvation** covers a pretty face (Ephesians 6:17). The beauty that matters is not physical but spiritual. It is developed through daily prayer, Bible study, and a relationship with God.

In future articles, we will discuss observing the signs, consulting the map, and obeying the guide.

Until next time, make sure you dress appropriately!

Blessings to you. ☺

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