



REFLECTIONS

November 15, 2015

Though he slay me, yet will I hope in him;

Job 13:15

Spirit Filled Courage

Every day Billy awakened to challenges that faced him. Indeed, we all do; but there was nothing routine about those confronting him. Some might view them as insurmountable. But instead of insurmountable barriers, conquering those challenges served as Billy's motivation—motivation enough for him to strap on a heavy leg brace to support disease weakened bones and charge out to give all he had to overcome them. Doctors believed diseased bones would prevent him from walking. Billy shared none of those thoughts. Lameness slowed his pace, but it heightened his determination to live a normal life—to be one of the guys.

And Billy's mind moved almost as slowly as the legs that carried him. Homework often took him hours longer than his friends, but learning challenges did not dampen his resolve to make a difference in the world around him. God gave him a life to live and a purpose to serve. Learning challenges only conditioned his will to prevail, and his desire to help others rise above their physical and mental handicaps to live meaningful lives.

A high school diploma did not satisfy Billy's achievement goals. A college degree ranked high among his desires. And as with his other endeavors, he struggled to make it. Then, degree proudly in hand, he landed a position in special education and coaching. The job fit Billy's ambition to help and encourage young people to face the challenges that had confronted him. But with each success a new obstacle seemed to follow.

The loss of his sight came unexpectedly; but even when darkness struck him, he tackled the challenge with proven courage just as he had faced all the other adversities before. He learned to read with his fingers and to move about his residence without assistance. Independent living became his goal and he achieved it. Even in blindness, he continued his mission. The church became the platform for his cause to set an encouraging example to young people facing physical and mental adversity. Conditions may slow them down, but whatever the test, with faith, hope, and love, they can rise above it. It became the lesson of his life. Life in darkness was just another condition for Billy to conquer.

So, I remember the life of Billy Fleming. I remember him as a boy growing up with our children. I remember him as a man struggling through his adversities. But I remember him more for the example of spirit filled courage he had to face them.

The passage from Job reads, "*Though he slay me, yet will I hope in him.*" It may have been the undeclared motto for Billy's life. From his life is a lesson that it's not so much about overcoming the adversities of this life. The more enduring legacy of life is in the spirit filled courage to face them just as Billy did.

You are the light of the world,

Richard +

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