

Falling Off a Cliff (Part 1)
by Kimberly Clarke

The pre-dawn August air was clear, cool, and crisp as we drove up into the Coastal Mountain Range east of Coos Bay, Oregon. My Aunt Arlene and Uncle Marty were taking me to special place they liked to go to enjoy the sunrise.

Just as the sky was beginning to lighten we pulled the car to a stop below a tall, rocky outcropping at the top of a mountain. It was a beautiful spot with fir trees all around, many of which reached nearly to the top of the rocky, 6-story cliff.

“Are we climbing that?” I asked. Doubt and fear both plain in my voice.

My uncle laughed and assured me there was an easy footpath among the jumble of rocks and boulders up the side of the cliff.

Relieved that I wasn't going rock climbing after all, I followed my uncle out of the car and up the stony trail. The path was narrow and in many spots there were small rocks and boulders that we had to scabble over to continue on our way. We stopped many times to catch our breath and enjoy the view as we zigzagged our way toward the top.

By now I could see fairly well in the pre-dawn light. My uncle was about 25 feet ahead of me on the trail. I climbed over a large mound of rocks and was continuing along a smooth part of the path when my uncle began to scale the next heap. He stepped on a large rock and dislodged it.

I could see the rock sliding toward me! There was nowhere to go! I stepped backward to escape it! And fell off the cliff into thin air.

Why, oh why, did I panic and fall? I had options. I could have stood my ground (a broken leg would have been better than certain death. The rock was sliding, not rolling, so I probably could have simply stepped up onto it and hopped over. And in reality the rock wasn't all that big, if I had braced myself against the cliff wall I very likely could have stopped it with my foot. But no, I panicked and ended up in a downward fall with slim hopes of survival and no way to help myself.

Isn't this what we all too often do in our lives: we find ourselves in trouble and instead of trusting God we rush off in our own direction and get into such a mess that we can't get ourselves out of it. We simply don't know what to do with the rocks in our lives.

God promises that he has a plan for our lives (Jeremiah 29:11). He promises that he will direct our paths (Proverbs 3:5, 6). He promises to take care of us (Matthew 6:25, 26). We believe this and yet, we don't trust Him enough to let Him handle the rocks. We insist on fixing things ourselves, going our own way...and falling.

God doesn't expect us to trust Him blindly. He has given us His Word as a representation of His character, a record of His leading and care in the past, a diary of His love, and a guidebook for our lives. It is through scripture that we can learn who God is and get to know Him enough to trust Him.

Go ahead, grab that Bible off the shelf, dust it off, open it up, read about who God is, and learn to *trust*.

As for God, His way is perfect; the word of the LORD is proven; He is a shield to all who trust in Him (2 Samuel 22:31).