



DAY **HEBREWS 12:5-11**

1

Marine Corps boot camp is a challenging experience. You get up before dawn, learn to shoot a gun, and march ten miles carrying a heavy pack. The drill instructors push you to your limit and try to make you quit. But you learn to follow orders. This hard work prepares soldiers for what's ahead. God told Jonah to save Nineveh by preaching a message of repentance, but Jonah didn't obey His instructions. He didn't want to do the hard thing. He ignored this call from God and boarded a boat going the other way. Soon he was tossed overboard where he expected to die, but God used a big fish to save him. God did not give up on Jonah. He rescued him from his own disobedience and gave him another opportunity. Do you ever feel like quitting? Or maybe you need another chance to do the hard thing. God can prepare a way where you least expect it.

DAY **PSALM 139:7-12**

2

Did you ever hear the term "My mother has eyes in the back of her head?" How come my mom always seemed to know when I was trying to get away with something? It was like she had a sixth sense. ESP. A crystal ball. Or maybe she just loved me so much that she was intuitive about who I was, where I was going, and who I needed to become. God knew who you were before you were a twinkle in your parent's eyes. He delighted in who you were then and in who you are now. He knows what path you are on. Do you need to change direction? He knows that too, and eagerly waits to help you get where you're supposed to go.

DAY **PROVERBS 14:12**

3

Do you remember the Disney movie about the puppet, Pinocchio? He had a big dream. He wanted to become a real boy. His father sent him to school so he could have an education and learn the discipline of hard work. However, a sly fox and cat sidetracked him with empty promises of ease and pleasure. After he suffered the consequences of his actions, he learned to honor his father and work hard. As a reward, the blue fairy turned him into a real boy. Has God given you a dream? Don't put your hope in winning the lottery to get it. God-given dreams take labor and sacrifice with help from the Holy Spirit.

DAY ROMANS 5:1-5

4

As a second-string quarterback, Nick Foles never dreamed he would take the Philadelphia Eagles to the Super Bowl last Sunday. Drafted in 2012 as a backup for the Eagles, he replaced an injured Mike Vick for the 2013 season and became the MVP of the Pro Bowl. He was traded to the Rams the next year, failed miserably as starting quarterback, and was released the following year. He thought about quitting football. He decided to follow his dream instead. His former Eagles coach, Andy Reid, gave him another chance, signing him as a backup for the Kansas City Chiefs. From there he, once again, signed with the Eagles to back up Carson Wentz. After Wentz was injured, Foles played five games that took them to the Super Bowl. His perseverance paid off despite many disappointing seasons. As the apostle Paul says, "Tribulation brings about perseverance; and perseverance proven character."

DAY PROVERBS 29:2

5

Remember Custer's Last Stand? Historians speculate that General George Custer made some strategic errors when he led the 7th Cavalry into battle against the Sioux and Cheyenne Indian tribes. He refused an offer of Gatling guns, believing they were too cumbersome. He turned down the 2nd Cavalry's offer of help saying that the 7th "could handle anything." Custer's mistakes affected not only him, but also all of his men. Sixteen officers and 242 troopers died that day. Likewise, Jonah's disobedience affected not only him, but also the sailors aboard the ship. Our decisions, good or bad, have an effect on those around us. As Proverbs says, how we live our lives can make people rejoice or make people groan.

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