**Perseverance**  
  
I didn’t expect the hike to be as hard as it was.  
  
I was at Tent Rocks in New Mexico with a leadership team last year when I thought I could go no further. The trail guide said it was an “easy” hike…and I suppose to most hikers it was easy compared to the other trails they usually take.  
  
At every turn I thought we were almost there. I eventually grew very weary and just wanted to sit and wait for the group to come back down. I did find that place to sit but it wasn’t long before one of the guys showed up. He started visiting with me and then asking if I was ready to go. I was hesitant but had rested enough to go a little farther. He gave me his hand to get up and I found myself back on the trail. I complained a few times and he listened patiently and when I needed a hand he extended his.  
  
Isn’t our faith walk very similar? There will be times when we just want to sit out for a while. James 1:4 says, “Let perseverance finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything.” We need people to be with us as we persevere through this walk of faith. It makes those hard times way more bearable when we have people to walk with us that will listen and give us a hand when we need it.  
  
It’s amazing how much those people that God places in our lives mean to us. I’ll personally never forget those that walked with me in my days as a single mom. There was a guy named Steve who was my singles minister but even more than that he believed in me and encouraged me to use my spiritual gifts that I barely knew I had. There was a Bible teacher named Beth who showed me a great passion and love for the Lord like I had never seen before. There was a lady named Marge who called me friend and showed me how to laugh again but to work through the hard stuff too. There were friends like Gina and Paige who would listen to me read Elisabeth Elliott to them until very late at night. I needed all those people and appreciate all the influence they had on me.  
  
Who are those that walk alongside you and who have spiritual influence in your life? Look around and see who God has placed in your life.  
  
If we have not met, I want you to know that I walked into this church 23 years ago with a 5 year old daughter and a 2 month old son in tow. This church embraced me but bigger than that the gospel and what God did in my life changed this common girl forever! And I know He will do the same for you! He will! Enjoy the SPF ministry and the newsletter and get excited about what God has in store for you and your children!

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