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The Point of No Return

"Come on. It's only thirty-five feet high. After all, you've been to the top of the Empire State Building and you've looked over the fruited plains from the top of Pike's Peak. You've walked on the bridge spanning Royal Gorge and have experienced the thrill of climbing out on the rocks which rest on the upper edge of the Grand Canyon walls." But no matter what thoughts I used to try to bolster my courage, there was something unnerving about the thought of rappelling down the side of that farm silo. It was on a different level, altogether.

Several years ago my boys and I were participating in a father/son campout and were enjoying a variety of outdoor activities. My sons were eager to try the activity of rappelling. I suggested that we do some other activity, but soon found myself standing in the rappelling line with them. (I had no desire to reveal my apprehension. After all, I did not want to lose respect in the eyes of my boys.)

"They will probably get cold feet," I reasoned. I watched the line of young boys and their fathers in front of me get smaller and smaller; and then it was my turn to receive the instructions, fasten on the harness, and don a hard hat. My apparatus was double-checked and as I began my ascent up the ladder to the top of the silo, I thought, *"What am I doing?"*

The members of the rappelling team at the top helped me thread the rope properly through my harness and then emphasized that the man on the ground holding the safety rope would not let me fall if I somehow messed up. Thirty-five feet above the ground looked a lot more ominous than it did when I was standing comfortably in line – down there.

I heard the leader say, *"Back up to the edge and lean against the rope."* I nervously inched over to the edge of the silo; but I wanted to keep my balance, and I definitely did not want to put the weight of my body solely on that rope. I could tell that to lean back would place my body too far over the edge to be able to regain my balance. It was the point of no return.

"Lean back against the rope; you can trust it." My heart was beating fast and the adrenaline was at a high level. After what seemed like forever I leaned back, felt the rope tighten, and realized my body was secure in the harness. I almost looked like a pro.

Even though the apprehension was there, all I needed was to follow the example and instructions of those who had gone before me. I began to enjoy rappelling down the side of the silo. My relief gave way to a sense of accomplishment. *"This was easier than I thought."* My positive experience even began to help encourage some of the other dads who had hesitancies about such an excursion. But would you like to know the best benefit from rappelling that day? It was the bonding time with my boys.

Home education is similar to rappelling. You think about it, check it out, observe others doing it, and then make the decision. After you get to the point of no return and trust the Lord to help you, you begin to experience the joy and satisfaction of learning together. That enhances family cohesiveness.

Look around you. You will see families who should be home educating but do not think they can do it. A word of encouragement from you might help them move to the point of no return. Invite them to a support group meeting. Take them to your annual conference. Open your life to them and be ready to mentor them. They will thank you as they experience God working in their lives through home education - and you will be blessed.

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