

Over the hill

After my first boot camp, my wife and I went to Indonesia for nine weeks. We took the Ransomed Heart message with us in the hopes of sharing it with the missionaries there. I poured my heart and energy into sharing the message with as many as possible.

When we returned, I was understandably tired. Living cross-culturally and sharing my passion had taken its toll. But more happened than mere tiredness: both our used cars refused to pass emissions tests and our washing machine started dumping oil on the floor. Since these problems affected my wife, I entertained the message: “You’re not a real man to let this happen to her.”

As the weeks went by, I felt lower and lower. I started taking naps at every opportunity. Finally my wife suggested I go to the doctor and see if there was something wrong medically.

At my second appointment, the doctor told me the tests had all come back negative (nothing wrong with me), but that I had appeared to have classic signs of depression. And he added, “You *are* 61.”

Next I went to see my supervisor to tell her of the results of the tests and to let her know of my need for shorter working hours (to allow for more sleep). She was very understanding and, without knowing what the doctor had said, also said “Well, you *are* 61.”

The message I got from all this was that I was “over the hill.” I bought it. I owned it. I began to think about the men I had seen in the workplace who, as they neared retirement, “checked out.” That used to bug me. I thought “Why can’t they push on and finish well? If not, why don’t they get out of the way and let us younger men get the job done.” Now I sympathized with them. I understood their plight. I started counting the years till retirement and wondered if I could make it that far. “Let’s see. Social Security can kick in for a lower monthly amount at age 62.”

At an earlier point I had decided to take some men from my church to boot camp. I had had to pay for it early. Now it was just a couple of weeks away and I was dreading it. I thought about the naps I needed and how tiring it was to live at 9,000 feet in Colorado. But I had paid for it and there was no way I was going to toss \$395 away.

So I went with a couple of other guys. The two guys I went with were full of energy so I got a boost from being with them. I seemed to have enough energy to stay engaged.

I’ll never forget what Bart said in one of the sessions: “It’s never too late to live the life you were created for.” The Holy Spirit zapped me with his words. And later I got zapped again with, “If we don’t believe our best days are ahead, we’ve been taken out by the enemy.”

Then John got up and during his time he said “The devil suggests discouragement (or something else) and then accuses us for being discouraged. He’s looking for agreement. If we give him agreement (“Yeah, I’m very discouraged”), he’ll work that until it is a stronghold. To break out of that, you have to resist him. Renounce the message he has suggested and you have bought into. “Resist the devil and he will flee from you.”

When John sent us out, I did just that: I resisted the message that I was over the hill. I told the Devil that my best days were ahead of me.

It was as if I had just reached over and thrown a light switch. The feeling of weariness, depression and hopelessness was gone. In its place was hope, even joy.

It's been years since that experience and I've been running at or near full throttle ever since. I have never had such exhilaration in my life. These are truly the best years of my life. I have *his* life and it is abundant.

And I've learned how to fight the battle of "agreements" with our enemy. I'm a better warrior for it.