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Series: Living Your Faith

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UP THE DOWN ESCALATOR

Hi! I love to go to the National Missionary Convention. It is wonderful to visit with the missionaries and see so many fine Christian people. I try to go often, usually with Deaf Missions' booth. One time when I was about 65 years old, I went to that special convention. Oh, I was enjoying it! But I had to lead a workshop. So I excused myself from the booth, saying, "I need to go lead a workshop," and I started to go to that workshop. I had not visited the room for the workshop before, but that was okay because I had read the program book, and that had a map. I could see I needed to go over to an escalator, then up and then back to the room right above me.

So I started. I went to the escalator but it was closed (see the picture). I didn't know what to do. Well, it was not only closed for repairs, but they had removed it. It was gone! There was no way to go up. You couldn't even use it like steps. The other side was working fine. It was coming down fast, but I couldn't go up. What was I going to do? I looked in my program book at the map and saw there was an elevator behind the escalator. So I went around there, but there were people all lined up. Wow! I knew that if I was at the back of that line, I would never be on time for my workshop. I saw a little old lady right close to the door of the elevator, and I thought to myself, "I could push her out of the way." But that's not nice—that's not Christian. In fact, I'm not sure it was Christian to even think about that! What was I going to do?

I looked at the map in my program book again. Way over there was a stairway, but it was a long way in this big building. Then I'd have to climb up and come all the way back to my workshop. I'd be late again. What was I going to do? I went around and looked at the escalator again. I looked all around, and my mother was not there. You see, it was my mother who always told me when I was a boy, "No, Duane, you can't go up the down escalator." I wanted to do that so much! Now, Mom was not there. I decided I was going to go up that escalator, and I started. I knew I had to go fast because it was coming down fast. So I went fast. I looked back to see, and I was on the first step—I hadn't gone anywhere! So I decided I had to go faster. I did; I went faster.

I watched, and there was a big marble column holding up the building. I decided if I could move past that, I'd know I was making progress. So I did. I looked back and I was doing fine. But two little boys got on; they saw my example and wanted to do it also. I thought to myself, "They will pass me up," so I tried hard. Pretty soon I looked back and those boys were still on the first step. But I was tired! Oh, my, I was tired! I thought, "I need to give up. I can't do this."

Then I thought, "If I give up, what happens? Back down, then I'd have to start again." That would be terrible. So I decided I was going to go some more. Oh, I was tired. I thought maybe I was going to die. It was so tiring! Breathing was so hard. But then I saw the floor, and it gave me some encouragement. So I tried some more and got close. Oh, I was tired. I thought to myself, "If I would fall forward, maybe I could stop on the floor and hang on." So I did. I fell forward and hung on. I could feel the steps hitting my legs, and I rolled over to look around to see who was watching me, but there was nobody. I caught my breath and went and led the workshop.

Now why did I tell you that story? I told you that story because I learned three things that day—three really important things that I want to share with you:

1. I learned to choose my way carefully. Friend, we are going through life, and we must choose our way carefully. You must choose your way carefully and I tell you something, Jesus is truly the way. Jesus is the best way through life on earth. Jesus is the ONLY way to heaven forevermore. Some people say, "Well, what about Confucius or what about Mohammed?" They're dead; they can't do anything for you. Jesus is alive and well. Jesus knows the way to heaven. Jesus can take us there. Jesus is the way. But that's not the only thing I learned that day.
2. I learned also to keep advancing. Don't stop! Don't give up! Wow! What if I had given up? I'd have gone back down and had to start over again. I didn't want that, so I had to keep going. It's a little bit like when the doctor or the druggist sells you some antibiotics. They always tell me, "Now take all of these pills. If you don't, then you will kill some of the bad bacteria, but you won't kill it all. And which ones will live? The big, bad ones will live, and they'll have babies, and they'll get you! You've got to take all of the pills." The Bible is our medicine—our way—that teaches us. And we must take all of the Bible, not just one verse here and one verse there. "I like this verse, but I don't like that verse." We have to take it all, and keep advancing. Today, live better than you did yesterday. Tomorrow, live better than you did today. That's important. Jesus was perfect, and no other person is perfect—just Jesus. But we can be better tomorrow than we are today. I learned to keep advancing.

So the first thing I learned was to choose my way carefully. The second thing I learned was to keep advancing. Before I tell you the last thing, the third thing I learned, I've got to tell you the rest of the story. When I returned home from that convention, I went to the doctor. Why? The doctor had told me that I needed a stress test. I told the doctor, "I've already had my stress test." I explained to him and the two nurses there. All three of them were laughing at me for my story about the escalator. Then the doctor said, "You need a stress test anyway." I said, "Why?" He said, "Because you were not connected with the monitor." Oh, boy! I said, "Okay." I accepted the stress test. But I'll tell you something, that was easy compared with the escalator. It sure was! I passed that test fine, but I'll tell you something else. The other day I went back to that doctor again. He has so many people in his office that he can't remember me and my name. His nurses are in the same position. When I walked in there, he didn't know my name, but he said, "Aren't you the escalator man?" I said, "Yes, I am." That was nice. They

remembered. I'll tell you something. Maybe you will never remember my name. Maybe no one will remember my name, but that's okay if, when people see me they say, "I don't remember your name, but aren't you the Jesus man?" Wow! If people would think of Jesus when they see me, that would be an honor. Or if when people think of Jesus, they'd think of me. Wow! I'd love that! I want to be a Jesus person. Don't you? You can. You can be a Jesus person if you do three things:

1. Choose your way carefully. That's Jesus. Jesus is the way.
2. Keep advancing—don't give up. Every day should be better than the last.
3. Stay connected with the monitor. What's that? The Bible. That's how we know if we're doing okay. I went to the heart doctor, and he connected me to the monitor. I saw the little TV screen, and I could see the blood going through my heart and my heart beating. It was wonderful. The doctor knew how my heart was doing. God knows how your heart is doing. Do you know that some people will die today because they were connected too late with the monitor to know what was happening in their heart. Worse than that, many people will die and go to hell today because they were connected too late to the monitor—the Bible. The Bible teaches us how to live, how to serve God, and how to go to heaven.

You can be a Jesus person. God bless you so that you will become a Jesus person.



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