

Letter 02a  
**The Day I Learned To Pray**  
2012-01-31

Dear Dan,

When I was about four years old my parents moved to Washington State from Portland, Oregon. After staying with my mom's mother (and her mom) in Kirkland for a little while, my folks purchased some raw land, 2 and 1/2 acres, in East King County.

They moved a small camping trailer onto the property, and built a little shed attached to it so we would have a place to live while Dad and Grandpa built the house my two younger brothers and I grew up in.

For the first year or two after the house was built we lived in it with no electricity. Not because my folks didn't want power, but because there wasn't any. Puget Power had not yet put in power poles or electrical lines down the dirt road our property was on. I remember looking out the front living room window at the big yellow trucks as they drilled into the ground and put in the power & telephone poles. Not long after that we got power and phone service.

Up until then we were truly pioneers, with lanterns for light and a wood stove for heat and cooking. Even after getting electricity, which in turn powered the pump to our well and brought water into the house for modern plumbing conveniences, I preferred to use the outhouse because when I became a young teenager I could sneak a smoke without anyone knowing about it.

The house was built on the front acre of the property, with the back 1 and 1/2 acres left alone in an undeveloped state except for a few access roads cut through the brush with a tractor. The back half had a slope to it, with one of the access roads going down a fairly steep angle for about sixty feet. Mom loved horses so the plan was to fence the back half for a horse pasture.

But I had another idea.

I must have been about five, and I was still riding a tricycle. One day I ventured with my tricycle out to the back half of the property and pedaled my way along the bumpy dirt road to the top of the hill, looking down and wondering if I could ride my tricycle really fast to the bottom.

Overcoming my fear of the hill, I took off and started to coast the tricycle down the bumpy, rutty access road, letting it pick up as much speed as possible. Toward the bottom the front wheel hit a root or stone in the ground, and flipped my tricycle over. By the time my tricycle and I were done tumbling over each other, I was upside down with this heavy tricycle on top, and me wondering what had happened, and I was rather shaken.

It was late in the afternoon, and I knew from the stories my mom would tell of seeing bears and coyotes in the woods that there was a possibility of danger.

Then a new fear set in. I begin to cry, and while I was busy doing that, the training that I already had from attending Church and Sunday School with my Mom begin to emerge. I begin to pray and call on the Name of The Lord Jesus.

“DEAR JESUS,”

I prayed,

“PLEASE HELP ME GET UNSTUCK FROM MY TRIKE  
SO I WON’T GET EATEN BY THE COYOTES.”

After a while I calmed down and begin working at getting unstuck. Somehow I was able to extricate myself and walk my trike back up the hill and to the house. Since I was OK, and my trike was not bent, I never mentioned a word of this to my Mom or Dad, lest I should be restricted from further adventures.

But that day was the day I learned to pray.

Blessings...