

# Going Up to the Mountain

By: Sally Hohnberger

Before moving to Montana, I had only rarely been exposed to real mountains. Now living in the Rocky Mountains, I have learned to love their rugged grandeur, but I have also learned that it takes *real effort* to climb a mountain. I've climbed many. Your muscles ache; your legs get weary and cry out to stop; your breath comes in ragged gulps, and as you negotiate dangerous sections, you soon learn that there are situations and activities for which no anti-perspirant made is sufficient. It takes effort, persistence, focus, and tenacity to get you to the summit.

Now, if I find all this activity to be hard work, imagine what it was for Moses when God called him up Mount Sinai. Moses was eighty years old at the time, and I can see him in my mind's eye putting forth the effort to climb that mountain with its steep and rugged paths *to draw near to God*. Moses had been called to something, and he went forth with joy and great anticipation when he was called. He delighted in communion with His Maker. He claimed not his age as an excuse, nor did he stop to seek more clarification before obeying. He didn't stand at the foot of the mountain

and yell, "What?" up towards the top. Moses knew what splendor and affirmation awaited him. For you and I, we, too, have an invitation; no, more than an invitation; we have a command to go up the mountain and meet with God.

I compare Moses' going up the mountain to our learning the art of a two-way conversation with our Lord in our personal worship time. It's often arduous. Why? One time God speaks so sweetly and gives me a solution right away, then, another time, He seems so silent and far away. It tries our patience to learn the lesson of waiting on God to speak or not to speak, and finding peace either way. Being consistent in our time with God also takes exertion, and is much like climbing a mountain to gain our audience with the King of Kings. But, oh, is it worth it!

Moses was the leader of his people, and we parents are the leaders of our families. Yet going up the mountain involves more than just the desire to have a two-way conversation with our Lord, it is the "*training ground*" that the parents must conquer before they can safely lead their

children over the obstacles they face. We may not have a literal mountain to climb, as did Moses, yet every one of us is called up to the mountain to have our personal time with God.

“Lord I seem to meet so many obstacles when I come to You in the morning. I long to *draw near to God* as did Moses, but it seems I’m opposed on every side. For example, when I creep out of bed in the morning, tip toe down stairs very quietly and open my Bible silently...my child will often wake up with a “Whaa,” requiring my attention and crowding out my time to seek and connect with You. Why is that?”

*“Sally you are not warring against flesh and blood but powers, principalities, and rulers of darkness. (Eph 6:12) It is Satan’s constant effort to oppose your climb up the mountain to Me. He can push the emotional buttons in your child or you, for the purpose of opposing your time and connection to Me.”*

*“Remember climbing those steep precipices on your last mountain climb? You had to stretch your legs beyond your comfort zone, and you could not pull up that long stretch until Jim took your hand for a boost up. You need to grasp My hand to get you over this hurdle in a similar fashion. I’ll instruct you and teach you in the way you should go in handling your emotions of frustration, and your child’s upset feelings. I’m here to teach you.” (Isaiah 54:13)*

“Lord that gives me courage to try again—and I will. I see clearly that Satan wants to crowd out my time with You, often using my children crying, needing attention, or being unruly, not only when I’m trying to seek instruction from You in the morning, but also during the day.”

“I also have the obstacle of consistency that hampers my coming to you in the morning. I have good intentions and plans, but circumstances play heavily to

keep me from You, too. I get to bed late the night before, so getting up is arduous. The phone rings during my quiet time. The furnace makes noise that demands attention, and my mind wanders to my shopping list. So what do I do with these distractions?”

*“Satan effectively uses circumstances to crowd out or eliminate your time with Me. Separated from Me you will lack wisdom, courage, and strength, so this is why he is so persistent to distract you with whatever it may be. Circumstances are not to rule over you. You are to rule over your circumstances using Heavenly wisdom. Seek Me first, before you respond to the distractions in, order to filter what should and what should not be done. I will help you! Some distractions will still come. I let some come to you to train you in a better way of responding to them by coming to Me first. Many things can be deferred for later—I’ll instruct you if you come to Me.”*

My mind reasoned some more solutions. “Well I can turn the phone off until my worship time with You is done or delay the call for later. Maybe I should put my life in Your hands before I get out of bed in the morning, so you can work in my behalf ahead of time. I have read somewhere that when my mind wanders I should just bring it back. When I come to You, and take Your hand, You can get me up over any and every obstacle.”

Whatever your obstacle that keeps you from surmounting up the mountain in the morning to God, He has the solution for you. Time with God will resolve any and every difficulty or distraction, and you’ll find peace. Taking His hand will get us over every obstacle that is too large of a reach for us. He loves to have us call upon Him. God will lift up the hands, which hang down, and strengthen the feeble knees; He longs to heal the brokenhearted,

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help the helpless, set the captives free, and comfort the sorrowing. Every soul can find the strong hand of Jesus stretched out to clasp their hand. Put your trust in the Lord and climb your mountain to Him to connect to His wisdom and strength.

We climb our mountain to pray and commune with God in the morning, giving God opportunity to share specific direction for us today, and come down off our mountain to tell our children what God has said. Exodus 19:3 says, "And Moses went up unto God, and the LORD called unto him out of the mountain, saying, Thus shalt thou ... tell the children." A parent seeking God in this way can be His messenger. If we learn to go to the mountain first and get our instructions from God, then as parents we can be effective tools in Jesus' hand, and to work a work as He did with Moses. For most of us this is going to mean on the job training. Let me share one incident I had.

Andrew was silent and stubborn. I have to admit I didn't feel too cheery either. We had just had a typical conflict over sweeping the floor. I wasn't sure where to go next, but the Lord knew. "*Sally, how is your spirit?*" He asked tenderly.

My mind whirled, but I forced myself to slow down and evaluate my feelings. "Well, to be honest, Lord, I'm ready to give him what he deserves right now and *make him* sweep that floor the right way. He knows better and he needs to start exercising some self-government!

"*But Sally, isn't your spirit the same stubborn spirit you see in your son right now? Come apart and let's talk things over,*" the Lord encouraged me.

Part of me wanted to, and part of me didn't. With just that moment of interruption from God, I could see both sides more clearly, now that I had calmed a bit. I decided I didn't want to resort to anger,

fretfulness, and force to get Andrew to obey. "God's way is better. I'll try God," I thought, and excused myself for some time *alone* in the bathroom with God, although I felt this mountain climb was not convenient.

"Lord, what shall I do with him?" I asked. There was silence for thirty seconds and then sixty seconds. It seemed endless. "I need to get out there so breakfast can be ready on time." Slowly, in the quiet, my true need surfaced. "Oh Lord, I am not happy nor at peace. I need to get rid of all these pushy emotions in myself; Lord, please take all this yuk I have in my heart right now."

I relaxed and let it all go. "This, too, can be a little thing," I decided. "I know You'll help me work it through." I prayed and asked God to be my King, and I was willing now to be His subject. Making sure our hearts and spirits are sweet is always the first step in any child rearing conflict. And God did show me how to bring Andrew around the "right" way, and because my spirit was sweet, he responded in like manner.

God needs to be a part of any resolution for disputes. It's God, through His Word and His Holy Spirit, that speaks to the individual heart and has the power to change thoughts, feelings, emotions, habits, inclinations, or dispositions. We need God in our parenting.

Most parents trust in a methodology and know not God. Many parents ask me, "When my child does this, what should I do?" They are waiting for me to prescribe a specific course of action for them to follow as if that is our secret to success. When I tell them about going up the mountain to find out what God wants them to do, they become honestly and sincerely baffled. They listen and nod their heads, but they turn aside from Him who reads their child's thoughts and ask me, "Now,

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how do I get them to eat their peas?"

We must change from serving this powerless god of *our* own wisdom, and learn to trust in God's leading and communicating with us what consequence or approach will be effective for our children. Only here will my questioners find the power they desire. It is not that I am opposed to specific information. However, a consequence that works today isn't guaranteed to work the same tomorrow. It all depends upon where the child's heart is. God alone knows the end from the beginning, so our secret of success is to consult with Him, and if we do so, we will have success in gaining our child's heart into Jesus' hand, where power to change is found.

Moses needed wisdom to judge in the moment of crisis and conflict with the rebellious minds of Korah, Dathan and Abiram. What did Moses do? He turned to God for the answer, and did God know what was right to do? Yes! God first used the mild measures of reason, then gave time for repentance, and when having chosen independence of God and to yield to the spirit of treachery, then God, judging their hearts rightly, gave a severe consequence; opening up the earth to swallow them.

Later we see God's methodology is different in a similar conflict with Miriam and Aaron. Miriam coveted Moses' position of authority, just like Korah, and was reprimanding Moses wrongfully. This time God didn't use mild measures first. He immediately imposed leprosy upon her as a consequence for her envy and jealousy. Moses pled with God to heal Miriam's leprosy and forgive her. God knew that while she and Aaron were erring, their hearts were still tender and willing to be corrected. God knew Moses would respond in love to their rebellion, for He had put this in Moses' heart, and it was Moses' example that touched the heart of Miriam effectively and brought this dispute to a good end. We, too, must turn to God for *our* direction in the moment! Our success is

found in following the method God directs us with, not the method itself.

To follow the example of Moses, to go up the mountain, to commune with God, is a blessed, wonderful experience, and it awaits all who are willing to put forth the effort to obtain it. As you and I come to learn the voice of God to our soul, by experience, we will make fewer and fewer mistakes, and develop confidence in God leading us. So, have faith in Jesus—the friend of sinners—to teach you as He did Moses. "As I was with Moses, so I will be with you..." Joshua 1:5.

### Power for Living

**This excerpt was taken from Sally's book entitled *Parenting by the Spirit*. To order or find out more please contact us using the information below.**



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