

# Illustrated Bible Life

## An Uphill Climb

**R**ecently, I made the move across country to Oregon to be closer to family. During the pandemic, we spent several months working from home, and it worked out very well, so many of us have chosen to continue to do so. Although I have visited my family here for more than three decades, I spent most of that time catching up with everyone, so it has been a powerful learning experience as I get to know a whole new city and region.

One of the major differences between Kansas City and Oregon are the hills. Kansas City has virtually no hills. When you go for a walk, you can purposefully add them in, but they are few and far between and usually amount to no more than gentle rises in terrain.

Over the years, I had built up a whole repertoire of hikes and walks in Kansas and Missouri, both in the city proper and in the various parks and wilderness preserves nearby. I had my walks for hot weather (shady trails in the parks) and freezing weather (a short circuit around my complex), for days after heavy rainfalls (the zoo, a preserve with graveled paths), and for ideal conditions (almost any park, but especially the trails near the lakes). The one thing all of these places have in common is the almost flat terrain one expects of the Central Plains region.

Now, I live on a hillside, surrounded by forest. From the moment I descend the stairs from my home to the street, I am on a hill. Even walking to my mailbox, I lose several yards of elevation. My first few months here, I found myself huffing and puffing everywhere I went. I quickly resolved that I would have to make a conscious effort to take long uphill/downhill walks if I was going to be able to enjoy the hiking and walking I have always loved so much.

“Train yourself to be godly. For physical training is of some value, but godliness has value for all things, holding promise for both the present life and the life to come” (1 Tim. 4:7-8). I am glad to be discovering a whole new world of God’s good creation to explore, but even more importantly is Paul’s exhortation to Timothy here. Physical training is of value; it is good to strengthen the body, but it is more important to strengthen our relationship with God.

This quarter, our first unit on Hard Sayings answers questions that may have been keeping us from growing in grace. And the apostle Paul’s encouragement to his colleague and protégé, Timothy, are words we can follow as well as we seek to be closer to God. Train yourself to be godly, for it holds promise both now and in the life to come.

JUDI KING