

Finding Balance

Dr Lois Dodds (Part 2 of 3)



The last time I stepped on a coral snake, I didn't scream! I was amazed at my calm. There we were on a sloping, slippery jungle trail, my 3 little kids and me. We were coming up from our baths in the river. We had on wet sneakers instead of our boots. I just happened to look down on my foot as it landed on the snake. Now this had been one of my worst fears. I was a city girl transplanted to the jungle so I had a lot to be afraid of. I didn't scream or even flinch. I kept my foot right on that snake. I told the children to jump over it and run ahead. Once they were down the path I took a flying leap. I didn't look back. I felt like singing. I saw how God had answered my prayer. I had written down a long list of fears and laid them out before God. I was prompted by the warrior King David in Psalm 34 where he said, 'I sought the Lord and he heard me and delivered me from all my fears.'

Since I grew up with seven brothers I thought I was a weakling, afraid of anything scary, so my list included: drowning (which I almost did), snakes, spiders, falling off of logs - and not being a good enough mum. Part of being a good mum for me means to keep my balance, to keep the best things first, to not spin out of control with too much busyness. You know what I mean? Life can just get so busy in a new culture, learning a new language, cooking new foods, keeping the house going, trying to adjust. If you are a mum there is never an end to your work. If you are a dad your work is different but there is never an end to it either. Did you ever feel like a toy top that tumbles over when it loses balance?

Well how can we keep our balance? Do you stumble sometimes? Sometimes I do. I have to re-adjust my life, to cut out something, to re-focus on the children or marriage. You know, it's easy to think that we are doing a bad job, especially in a new culture. Do you ever feel that way? I had to measure all over again, by different standards, how I was doing. It was hard to tell. Maybe you feel like that sometimes too.

Our life in the jungle gave me another priceless image to reassure me. I felt like it was from God, another answer to my fears. Michael at age 4 loved to hike the muddy new cut trails. The first day there in the jungle he actually used up all his clothes falling in the mud so often. I finally said to him, 'Michael, when you want to hike please ask daddy to go with you, hold his hand so you won't fall.' So that's what he did. I'll always see in my mind's eye little Michael in his yellow raincoat and red boots reaching up to hold his daddy's hand. Whenever Michael stumbled he didn't fall into the mud because he was holding Larry's hand. I see that picture each time I recall Psalm 37, 'If the Lord delights in a man's way, he makes his steps firm; though he stumble, he will not fall, for the Lord upholds him with his hand.' That reminds me that keeping my balance is not just my responsibility. Fortunately God will help me when I depend on Him, because He holds my hand. Even though I stumble sometimes, and get out of balance, He is holding my hand so I do not fall.