

The Climb

"This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. Greater love has no one than this, that someone lay down his life for his friends. You are my friends if you do what I command you. No longer do I call you servants, for the servant does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all that I have heard from my Father I have made known to you.

You did not choose Me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit and that your fruit should abide, so that whatever you ask the Father in My name, He may give it to you. These things I command you, so that you will love one another. John 15:12-17 ESV

Derrick and Michael had very different personalities. Derrick was a bragger who tried to make himself the only hero when they rescued Mack's son. Michael was a gentle spirit who didn't seek attention for his part in the rescue. Mack asked the two of them to do a publicity climb together. Derrick wanted to do the climb solo. Derrick didn't understand how his snap decisions affected other people.

Are you prone to make snap decisions? Do you consider how your decisions affect others?

Derrick was holding onto betrayals of the past. His father deserted him when he was a child. When Derrick made a good climb he would stand at the top and shout, "I did it again, me, all by myself." Later Derrick said, "My whole life I've been trying to prove myself to my father, prove something to myself - I'm all I need -- but I am the most needy person I know." Derrick hated his father, but became like him.

Do you struggle to prove yourself? Has someone disappointed you? Do you know that God loves you?

Michael tried to talk with Derrick about being more careful. Derrick made fun of Michael's caution and his faith. Michael wanted them to think and train like a team. Derrick wanted to push life to the edge. When they were planning their climb Derrick said, "I'm not trying to get us killed, just come close."

Are you a careful person? Are you too cautious? Are you too reckless?

Cheryl's friend said to her, "You're playing with fire with that man." Cheryl's father said, "He is a man with different values -- When the storms come, and they will come, whose values are going to be your compass? Everything comes with a price." Cheryl responded that Derrick was a good man and she wanted her father to support her choice. When Cheryl needed him, Derrick deserted her.

Derrick didn't really know how to be a partner to Cheryl or Michael. Do you know how to be a partner?

Michael lost his wife in a car accident. He was still holding onto his pain. At the top of the mountain he put his wedding ring onto a little cross he made, signifying that he was willing to let her go. Even though Derrick was careless and took too many chances, when Derrick's life was in danger, Michael was willing to sacrifice his life to save him. When Michael gave his life Derrick finally understood what it meant when Jesus gave His life for us. Are there things that you need to let go of? Take them to God in prayer.

Derrick lived his life to bring glory to himself. Michael lived to bring glory to God. Derrick didn't feel satisfied no matter how successful he was. He always wanted more. He was bitter that his father abandoned him, and yet he was willing to abandon or even abort his own child. When God took away Derrick's arrogance and anger he finally learned how to love Cheryl and his son.

Dear Lord, each of us carries baggage from our past. Take away all that is wrong; poor self-esteem, anger, disappointment, rebellion, and bitterness. Fill us with Your love. Give us joy in our relationship with You and our relationships with each other. Help us delight in what is good and right. Show us how to turn away from damaging and destructive thoughts and actions. Teach us to build each other up because of our love for You. In Jesus' name we pray, Amen.