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STRETCHING YOUR FAITH

Every normal child that is born will grow. They start out small, but they don't stay small. Their skin stretches, their bones grow, and the body adjusts to the changes. Often there is pain in rapid growth. A family member was five foot six inches tall when he started his 12<sup>th</sup> grade of school. By the end of his 12<sup>th</sup> year, he was six foot tall. That is a major growth spurt. It took a lot of stretching of the bones and the skin to make this happen. I am sure there was some pain with it also.

In the season that we are in, God is allowing our faith to be stretched and stretched. Some feel they are "at the end of their rope" with all the things happening in their lives. They just want to "go home." For whatever reason they were not taught that this would happen. How sad that they weren't prepared by their pastors for this season of stretching.

Both Russell and I have had our faith stretched in the past few years. We sold our "forever" home and moved. We lost the building that housed our church and thrift shop, so we lost our income. We experienced various surgeries and cancer. These are major things my friend, but we learned through all these things that God allowed these things to happen to bring us to where we are today. We went through the fiery furnace, but we have come through it refined. We are being refined for what is coming next. I am sure there will be more stretching to come, because if we aren't being stretched our faith isn't growing.

There isn't a soldier that is in the military today that did not go through basic training. Some don't make it. I know a young man that was so homesick that they sent him home. He just couldn't cut it. He "thought" the military life was what he wanted, but he didn't realize what it took. Boot camp breaks the will of those that enter. Their lives belong to the military, and they must respond, "yes sir."

Are we willing to say, "yes sir" to God when he brings stretching and change in our lives? Are we trusting that his plan is a better plan than the one we thought was right? We might say, "yes," but truly you will never know until you are stretched to the limit. Then and only then will you know what you are made of my friends. God allows the stretching to launch you into your next assignment. You will not know how important the stretching is until you get to the "new" place.

Don't resist this stretching. When, you feel you can't go on remember what God told Paul in 2 Corinthians 12:9, "**...My grace is sufficient for thee, for my strength is made perfect in weakness...**" I have often had to speak that verse over myself.

Yes, God's strength will get you through the stretching, and you will come out stronger than ever. Remember as you go through the process to praise God for His strength, and to stand strong knowing He knows exactly what it takes to bring you through the process.