

CommonCall: Overcoming setbacks, embracing joy

August 4, 2015

Flo McKinney, age 83, broke an arm and injured a shoulder earlier this year running in the rain.

That setback put a damper on one of her favorite activities—pushing her wheelchair-bound friends around [Baptist Retirement Community](#) in San Angelo, where she has lived the last 12 years.



Flo McKinney recommends “a good

dose of joy each day.”But it has not clouded her disposition, nor has it kept her from being showered with God’s blessings.

Despite the busted wing, her spirit soars, and the rest of her body, her mind and most of all her desire to serve the Lord and others remain strong.

Although she required surgery after her accident, she doesn’t consider herself weakened.

“Weakness is a falling away from the Lord—he is my strength; he is my all. Weakness has nothing to do the physical,” McKinney, a [former missionary to China](#), said. “I feel the distinct knowledge that I’m not growing older, I’m growing better and stronger and more filled with his love and his grace in my age.

“The joy of the Lord is my strength, and that carries me through each day. I recommend a good dose of joy each day. Like the song says, ‘The longer I serve him, the sweeter it grows.’”

She does admit, however, maintaining a joyful spirit can be challenging.

“It’s a prayer request for me that I continue to look at life with a pleasant attitude,” she acknowledged. “I say, ‘Lord give me your joy.’”

Ministry continues

Although her wheelchair-pushing days are on hold, God continues to allow her to minister.

“God has brought people into my life, and they call,” she said. “They have problems, and I am able to listen to them and talk with them, so my life is taking a bit of a different turn, but the joy is still there.

“Praise the Lord. I just get up and thank him every morning. My shoulder is

in his hands, whatever happens.”

Her ministry extends beyond the other residents of her retirement community.

“This is a tremendous mission field,” she said. “The staff, the nurses, they have their problems. And they come to you—marital problems, husband problems, children problems, financial problems. And it’s a joy to be able to sit down with them and tell them about God’s love and to help them find his will for their lives.”

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McKinney acknowledges she would not have chosen the change in lifestyle necessitated by her accident.

“I have to adjust to a different path now,” she said. “I keep praying: ‘Lord, I know you’re trying to teach me something. Help me to learn it fast.’ I think one of the things he’s teaching me is patience.”

Through the experience of physical infirmity and unanswered questions, she has learned where to find strength, she noted.

“This is a time that I’ve grown closer to the Lord,” she said. “I’m relying on his wisdom. I don’t know why all this has happened.

“I do, though, have time to read, time to think, time to pray, and time to say, ‘Thank you, Lord.’

“And he’s also given me his wisdom. The people he’s given me to minister to, the things I tell them are from him, not from me. I’m going deeper with my Lord.”

The depth of God’s love

Her accident and its aftermath taught her the depth of God’s love for her, she added.

“God loves me so much—absolutely and no matter where I fail,” she said.

When his children fall—physically or spiritually—God looks on them through eyes of love, not focusing on how they stumbled, she noted.

“He doesn’t see that. He sees me through his eyes,” she said. “That has been so tender and so wonderful. We don’t have to strive; he gives his grace to us.

“I want to share that with people who are sad, who are sick, who are not as positive. I want them to know that God loves them so much—and all they need to do is love him back.”

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