

THE JOY OF WALKING ON AIR

By John F. Hall

When I write a story that satisfies me, and makes me feel happy, I'm walking on air. Michael Postil and Stephen G. Geyer wrote the song "Believe it or Not." Some of their words express how I feel when the right words keep coming my way. These are just a few of their lyrics: "Look at what's happening to me, I can't believe it myself. Suddenly I'm on top of the world. It should have been somebody else. Believe it or not, I'm walking on air. I never thought I could feel so free. Flying away on a wing and a prayer who can it be? Believe it or not it is me...".



Ken Dodd wrote the hymn "Happiness." Most of my stories contain a spiritual message. Some are very serious. I wanted this story to be up-lifting, so here are some of Ken Dodd's lyrics: "Happiness, happiness the greatest gift that I possess. I thank the Lord that I've been blessed with more than my share of happiness. To me this world is a wonderful place. I'm the luckiest human in the human race. I've got no silver and I've got no gold. But I've got happiness in my soul. Happiness to me is an ocean tide, a sunset fading on a mountain side. A big old heaven full of stars up above, when I'm in the arms of the one I love. Happiness is a field of grain, turning its face to the falling rain. I see it in the sunshine, breathe it in the air. Happiness, happiness every where. A wise old man told me one time, happiness is a frame of mind. When you go to measuring my success, don't count my money count happiness. . .".

As most folks who read my stories know, I don't write for money, I don't write for fame. I don't write so that someone might remember my name. I simply write for the joy of writing. In John Chapter 15, Verse 11 are these words: "These things have I spoken to you, that My joy may remain in you, that your joy may be full." And if my stories are enjoyed by both young and old alike, then you can say that my stories serve a useful purpose as they are free. More importantly, I believe that my writing is something Jesus Christ wants me to do. I've been writing for the past 43 years, and I'm still trying to get things right. I am getting too old, at 76, to still be a work in progress.

Sandra McCracken wrote the hymn "Grace Upon Grace." These are some of her lyrics: "In every new station, new trials and new troubles call for more grace than I can afford. Where can I go but to my dear Savior for mercy that pours from boundless stores. Grace upon grace, every sin repaired. Every void restored, you will find Him there. In every turn He will prepare you with grace upon grace. He made a way for the fallen to rise perfect in glory and sacrifice. In sweet community my needs He provides. He saves and keeps and guards my life. To Thee I run now with great expectation. To honor You with trust like a child. My hopes and desires seek a new destination and all that You ask Your grace will provide. . .".

As I scan the pages of my memories, for the things that made me feel like I was walking on air, I recall a time during a day light parachute jump. As I can best remember, it was a sunny, hot day on Fort Campbell. The jump master lowered the back cargo door.

The Lockheed C-130 Hercules, with its ramp down, gives a View like being at a drive-in movie. It's like walking to the concession stand. You just walk and then jump off the back ramp and then get hit with the blast of wind from the C-130's turboprop engines. In a matter of seconds, my main parachute deployed and gave me a jolt. Then the strangest thing happened as I was looking around. All the other 101st Airborne paratroopers were slowly drifting down to the ground. But I was going up and I thought, "can this really be happening to me?" I was caught in an updraft. This happens when the sun heats the ground. The heat from the ground warms the surrounding air, which causes the air to rise. The rising pockets of hot air are called thermals. I wondered why I was the only paratrooper caught up in the updraft? It felt like my parachute became more like a glider. It gave me the sensation that I was walking on air.

Michael Joncas wrote the hymn "On Eagles Wings." These are some of his lyrics: "You who dwell in the shelter of the Lord, who abide in His shadow for life, say to the Lord, 'My refuge, my rock in whom I trust.' The snare of the fowler will never capture you. And famine will bring you no fear. Under His wings your refuge, His faithfulness your shield. You need not fear the terror of the night, nor the arrow that flies by day. Though thousands fall about you, near you it shall not come. For to His angels He's given a command to guard you in all of your ways. Upon their hand they will bear you up lest you dash your foot against a stone. And He will raise you up on eagles wings. Bear you on the breath of dawn. Make you shine like the sun, and hold you in the palm of His hand. And hold you, hold you in the palm of His hand..."

Christ has sailed my life more times than I choose to count. He has given me much, much more grace than I can ever repay. Why He cares about this wayward soul is still a mystery to me. John Wetton and Geoff Downes, wrote their version of the song "Walking on Air." These are some of their lyrics: "Close your eyes and look at me. I'll be standing by your side in between the deep blue sea and the sheltering sky. If we find no words to say to the rhythm of the waves, then we'll both surrender there, walking on air. And the worries of the day lie down under the cover of the fading clouds. The secrets of the night come alive in your eyes. You don't have to worry, you don't have to try. Cause you don't have a care, you're walking on air."

I sometimes change the ending of my story to enhance the theme. I woke early in the morning and wrote this ending. Keep Jesus by your side. Keep Him in your court. Let no day go by without acknowledging that He is yours and you are His. By doing so, His grace upon grace will continue to flow until He calls your soul to walk on air.

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