



# Charting the Course:

a devotion by Chuck Hall

## TO GOD BE THE GLORY!

My three-year-old granddaughter, Sophie, likes for me to read a Bible story to her at night. She usually comes and crawls into bed with me and asks, "Grandpa, will you read me a story in my Jesus book?" I open the book, and then she adds, "Read me a 'skeh-wy' (scary) one." Jonah and the Whale, and Daniel in the Lion's Den are two of her favorite "skeh-wy" ones.

The other night we were reading the story of the children of Israel worshipping the golden calf in Exodus chapter 32. It says that when Moses failed to come back down from the mountain, the people asked Aaron to "make us some gods who can lead us..." (v. 1 NLT). The Lord saw this and told Moses to return because the people "have made an idol shaped like a calf, and they have worshiped and sacrificed to it. They are saying, *'These are your gods, O Israel, who brought you out of Egypt.'*" (v. 8 NLT)

This is a very timely passage for us today. Oh, I know that we would never openly worship an idol like the children of Israel did. However, they not only worshipped the golden calf, they gave it credit for leading them out of Egypt! The idol received the glory that belonged to God alone. The children of Israel failed to honor God for what He had done for them. Could it be that we Christians today also fail to give God the glory for what He has accomplished in us, through us, and for us. We often take credit, or give the credit to someone or something else, unconsciously, I might add, for the things that God has done. Let us remember that it is God, "and not we ourselves," who causes us to succeed. The Bible says that, "David continued to succeed in everything he did, for the LORD was with him" (1 Sam. 18:14 NLT).

If our thinking is not centered in God, it is easy for us to slip into taking credit for what God has done in our lives. The Psalmist exhorts us, "Know that the Lord, He is God; It is He who has made us, and not we ourselves;" (Ps. 100:3 NKJ). You might say, "Don't be silly; we know that all good things come from God." Yes, but **we must consciously remind ourselves often that it is God Who has given us what we have, and it is God Who enables us to succeed.** This is especially important to remember when things are going our way and we are enjoying the wonderful things that God has given us. When things are going well, when there is no sickness, when we have plenty and are experiencing success, the Bible warns us "that is the time to be careful. Do not become proud at that time and forget the LORD your God,..." (Deut. 8:14 NLT). It is when things are going well that we tend to forget Who caused this good to come our way.

It is God Who has helped us do things that we could not have done on our own. It is the Lord Who has led us this far and sustained us through difficult times. He has allowed hardships and trials to come into our lives to humble us and to cause us to depend upon Him. Yet all that He has allowed us to experience (the good and the bad) has been for our own benefit. Deut. 8: 17-18 says, "He did it so you would never think that it was your own strength and energy that made you wealthy. Always remember that it is the LORD your God who gives you power to become rich,..."

Don't be misled by the words "wealthy" and "rich." This principle includes not only prosperity but all the good things that we have experienced in our lives. He is the source and reason for all of our accomplishments. It is God who led His children out of the bondage of Egypt and gave them all that they had. It is the same with us and not the "golden calf" of our own strength and energy.

As we remind ourselves of His goodness and give Him praise and glory for what He has done in the past, we can look to the future with faith. When we remind ourselves of what He has done in the past, it is not difficult to believe that He will continue to do the same in the future. That's one reason that the Holy Spirit included those "skeh-wy" stories that my Sophie enjoys in the Bible. We can see in them the great things God has done in the past and look with faith toward the future because we know our faith rests in a God we can trust. He who stood with us in the past, will continue to help us in the future.

**May our Sovereign God and Loving Father give you faith for great things in 2008!**