

Hooked On Recovery

December 10, 2004

Don't Fall

"So, if you think you are standing firm, be careful that you don't fall!"

Saturday mornings are archery mornings for Joshua. In my hometown, they have a really neat archery range and a good teaching program. Last Saturday, after he launched arrows for an hour, we stopped to get some hamster supplies. Crystal, Joshua's hamster, needed food and bedding. Once we got in the store we saw some new cages on sale. Joshua opted for the Critter X ensemble, complete with wheel, slide and petting container. So we get back home and Matthew gets a look at the new cage and boy is he excited! "That's cool, Josh! That's coooooool!"

The cage is definitely cool; blue and green and yellow and designed for critters. Even Samantha got in on the assembly, helping to lay out all the pieces to the new cage. Matthew was on his knees, on a chair, elbows on the table, head propped in his hands watching with utter concentration and fascination as his big brother put it together. I wondered, "What is he cooking up in that mind of his?" We cleaned up the old cage, an old 20 gallon aquarium, and set Crystal up in her new digs. After roaming around on the floor of her new castle, Crystal makes her way, up to the wheel and decides this is where she'll settle. After several trips down to the bedding and filling her pouches she had the bottom of the wheel filled with bedding and off to sleep she goes.

Later on that evening, Joshua left for a birthday party; he would be staying over with about 10 other boys. Glad it wasn't at our house. He had a camping birthday party in August and Dad got to sleep in a tent in the back yard. What fun. I was awakened at 11:30 by one of Joshua's 10-year old guests who couldn't sleep and had to go home. He lives right around the corner... brother. Anyway, Joshua left, my wife went to bed early fighting off a late pregnancy migraine, Samantha and I are watching a movie, and Matthew is... where's Matthew? Uh oh, it was too quiet.

Sure enough, Matthew runs into the family room and shouts, "Crystal's out", except it came out like "Kwishhtalzout! Kwishhtalzout! Kwishhtalzout, DaDDEE!" It took us awhile to figure it out. Sami and I go upstairs to the new Critter X cage and sure enough, there's Crystal on the desk trying to get back in the cage. Matthew had opened the cage and was trying to put her in the plastic roller ball thing that she can roam around the house in. This was an ambitious project for a two year old and I admire his spunk for even trying. I also wondered how long he had been plotting. We opened the cage and returned Crystal to her home. Matthew couldn't open the old cage, so I was talking with him about not touching his brother's stuff, not opening the new cage ever again, asking for help, you know all the paternal things I'm supposed to do.

Matthew was saying very matter of factly (and without any remorse), "Sorry, Dad" and about to scooch down the steps on his butt and I was about to start down the steps when it happened. I wasn't paying attention and when my heel hit the edge of the first step, I slipped and BAM!, I fell hard on my hip and I wasn't scooching down four or five steps, I was bouncing (or at least it felt like bouncing). It was not graceful and it was not pretty and I wrenched my back. "Help me I've fallen..." But at least I could get up. It hurt though, dammit.

I was in the airport the next day, traveling with John Shea and I was telling him this story. As I was reliving it, it occurred to me that recovery is exactly the same way, “If you’re not paying attention, not even for a minute, you can slip, and you can fall and you can fall hard.”

Be careful. Don’t fall. And now the rest of the passage from above.

“So, if you think you are standing firm, be careful that you don’t fall! No temptation has seized you except what is common to man. And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can stand up under it.” -- 1 Corinthians 10:12-13

Hooked on Recovery is a biweekly message from CCAR Executive Director Phillip Valentine, person in recovery since 12/28/87, devoted husband, father of four (expecting number five) and just another surf fisherman. He welcomes all your comments and suggestions on this column, email him at phillip@ccar.us. Or visit the website at www.ccar.us to read the entire series.