

PRESSING FORWARD THROUGH THE PLATEAUS

Outdoor activities such as hiking, cycling, and skiing are a big part of my life. Recently, it struck me how similar our time on earth is to the time I dedicate to outdoor fitness. I tend to focus on building my stamina and skills in one activity for a time or season. Then by choice, chance, or invitation, I switch to another. No matter how fit and confident I feel in a type of fitness, though, upon switching to a new enterprise, I find myself winded, falling short, and feeling muscles I've "never felt before." Then I settle into the new type of fitness and rebuild the necessary endurance and skills.

Similarly, in life we tend to become focused on certain habits. We become comfortable. Then by choice, chance, or invitation, our plateau of comfort and ease becomes a period of challenge and opportunity for growth.

Tackling life's challenges can be a daunting task. Nephi encourages us, saying, "Press forward with a steadfastness in Christ, having a perfect brightness of hope, and a love of God and

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of all men. Wherefore, if ye shall press forward, feasting upon the word of Christ, and endure to the end, behold, thus saith the Father: Ye shall have eternal life" (2 Nephi 31:20).

Occasionally, I wonder how nice it might have been to have remained indefinitely in the premortal existence, listening to Heavenly Father simply *tell* us about His great plan of happiness. However, our progression required a "classroom"—earth—where we could experience mortality for ourselves.

Over the years as I have testified of the truthfulness and need for Heavenly Father's plan, new opportunities and

sometimes-painful experiences have embedded this teaching into my soul. We seem to learn gospel truths in layers, revisiting the same subjects again and again. I sometimes find myself asking, "How much deeper are we going to go here?" Or, like fitness, "How many other muscle groups do I still need to train?"

Still, as the seasons of life change and challenges vary, I know that the Lord will provide me with the experiences I need. And as I press forward, I will learn to become more like Him and return to His presence. ■

Christopher Drake, California, USA



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