

**QUIET TIME GUIDE
FOR Friday 5/08
FROM JACK MILLWOOD**

Greeting:

Saturday we took a couple of teenagers over to the Ichetucknee River to one of the state parks of Florida. It was a great day. For those of you who are unfamiliar with the Ichetucknee River, it is an amazing story. Undergrounds springs feed and form this natural river through the Florida forest. The crystalline Ichetucknee River flows six miles through shaded hammocks and wetlands before it joins the Santa Fe River. In 1972, the head spring of the river was declared a National Natural Landmark by the U. S. Department of the Interior. From the end of May until early September, tubing down the river is the premier activity. In addition to tubing, you can enjoy picnicking, snorkeling, canoeing, swimming, hiking, and wildlife viewing. For me I simply enjoyed parking my lazy self in a tube and simply floating carefree down the river. It is not like a river most of us are familiar with. It is simply a forest where the spring water have run through it and formed a river. There are fallen trees in the water. There is no mud river bank. The river and the forest are one. It is as beautiful and natural as you can get. Right after we all piled into our individual rafts and had gone less than a hundred yards down the river we heard the sound of cracking behind us. We turned to see a giant tree fall in the forest. It was amazing to see this huge tree simply fall quietly and easily to the ground. I thought about it as I floated down the river. I began to look to the sides and I saw a hundred or so trees that over the years had fallen. I had nothing else to do but think and relax. I thought about it. These trees are a hundred years old and more. The tree that I saw fall had to be in excess of a hundred years old. Then, on this day that I was there, it just came toppling down. It did not break or tear into. The top just began to bend over and the entire root system simply came out of the ground. I noticed that about the other fallen trees in the wilderness. I am not a geologist, a naturalist or a scientist but it is pretty obvious what had happened. The water had eaten away at the root system of the trees until the roots were no longer able to hold the tree up and they came toppling down. Over the years the water running swiftly underground ate quietly away at the root system until they toppled over. As I floated along I could not help but think back to the very first Psalm we read in our quiet times, Psalm 1. Refresh yourself with this Psalm and what it says about trees.

Scripture for today:

Psalm 1: *1 "Blessed is the man who does not walk in the counsel of the wicked or stand in the way of sinners or sit in the seat of mockers. 2 But his delight is in the law of the LORD, and on his law he meditates day and night. 3 He is like a tree planted by streams of water, which yields its fruit in season and whose leaf does not wither. Whatever he does prospers."*

Life Application:

Trees need water. The psalmist says that the trees planted the streams of water yield fruit. However, in the case of the trees on the Ichetucknee the roots had died out. I began to

think and to apply what had happened to the trees on this river to our lives. It occurred to me that the same river that helped them to grow for over a hundred years had also robbed them of their foundation and eventually caused their toppling to the ground. I am reminded that no matter how high a tree grows it can not survive with out a strong well rooted foundation. It is true that life has a way of eating away at our foundations as well. Many of us spend a lifetime reaching for the stars, growing taller and climbing to new heights. However, if we lose our roots and our foundation it will all come toppling down in destruction around us.

Spiritual exercise:

We all need a spiritual foundation for our lives. Our lives must be built and fed upon a strong and healthy relationship with the God who created us. We need balance in our lives. We need the rich soil of God's word to feed us. We need to be well rooted and grounded in what God says. I am afraid many of us get carried away by the drift of life as it hurries past us. We are so busy that we fail to go deeper with him. It amazes me that as I sat there in my little tube I saw a tree that had stood for over a hundred years, in a matter of two to three seconds, fall to the ground, dead and lifeless. I am reminded that all we build and hold on to can come crashing down in a second. It is important that every day we check where we stand. How much time do you spend building the foundation for your life? We are busy building our assets higher and higher and trying to accomplish new things every day but are we taking the time to make sure we are still rooted and grounded? What new have you learned about the Lord lately? How much time do you spend daily being refreshed and made stronger? Are you learning Scripture and scriptural principles that will hold you up under the stress of time and life? I remember when I was in seminary I had a seminary professor tell me once while we were discussing my "future ministry" that I need to focus on the depth of my ministry and let God handle the breadth of my ministry. What he meant by that was that I did not need to spend my time on trying to build a ministry or build a career but to spend my time on building my relationship with God. God would take care of building my ministry. That has proven to be great advice over the years. It is also true for each of us. Do not neglect your relationship with God. The foundational issues of faith, family and friends are the building blocks that the rest of our lives stand on. If we neglect those we can come crashing down like the trees of the forest. On the other hand, if you build your life on his principles and word you can withstand the storms of life and the test of time.

Thought for the day.

Keep your foundation strong and secure!