

Impossible Challenges

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"The tree is too big. You have not climbed a tree in thirty years, and for your own safety I think you should discard the idea of cutting this tree down. Besides, the fence makes it almost impossible for you to climb the tree. However, if you insist on cutting down the tree, you should hire someone with experience in tree climbing to do the job for you. It will cost about three hundred dollars, but it's the best option you have."



I listened intently to the opinion of my brother-in-law while analyzing the problem facing me. The sprawling branches of the wild tree filtered the direct rays of sunlight, thus inhibiting the growth of fruit trees in its shadow. Contrary to my brother-in-law's advice, I spent the next two hours devising an action plan to dismember the tree, limb by limb. It was a challenge that was not factored in as part of my vacation plans for Trinidad, but it was a challenge I was determined to take on and win.

I found an old, iron ladder under the house, which I dragged and propped against the tree, thus overcoming the problems posed by both the fence and the thick trunk of the tree. Overcoming my phobia for heights, I climbed the ladder and sat comfortably in the fork of two stout branches, where I meticulously planned the dismemberment of the tree against the backdrop of the setting sun.

At 6:00 a.m. the next morning, while the lone rooster crowed and the rays of sunlight had not yet reached the treetops, and shivering slightly from the cool ozone-filled sea breeze and my dew-saturated sneakers, I began to dismember the tree, branch by branch, from the smallest to the largest. By 1:00 p.m., it was all over. The massive tree had fallen. That impossible challenge was lying motionless on either side of the fence, the sap from its freshly cut branches dripping and disappearing between the listless leaves.

Are you afraid of a challenge, or do you run from it? To really make a difference in your workplace, put on your rose-colored glasses and greet challenges with creativity. Often a project, assignment, or responsibility can initially seem next to impossible, but as you dig in and explore possibilities, you will be surprised by what you can achieve.

Motivational speaker Bob Nelson said, "Nothing ever can be achieved when you focus only on why it can't be done - you need to focus instead on what can be done and how you can be the one to do it." Basketball superstar, Michael Jordan, speaking on the same subject said, "Obstacles don't have to stop you. If you run into a wall, don't turn around and give up. Figure out how to climb it, go through it, or work around it."

The year 2003 comes with many challenges for students, parents, teachers and school administrators. Some may be huge and seem impossible to overcome, but do not be intimidated by the size or complexity of the challenge. When confronted by what was perceived by the Disciples of Christ to be an impossible situation, Jesus said to them, "With men, this is impossible; but with God all things are possible" (Matt. 19: 26).

Confront your challenge with confidence, knowing that God is bigger than it. By exercising faith in God, and combining careful planning with determination, creativity, boldness and patience, you will realize your greatest success when going after a seemingly impossible challenge.