

CLIFF CRAWLING IN THE GARDEN OF THE GODS

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My darling girl has been flexing her independence muscles lately. One week it included things like washing her own hair, handling some new chores, and riding her bicycle as fast as she could peddle down our street. The next week we were on vacation and independence looked like accepting no offers for help as she climbed up (sometimes crawled up) the boulders and jutting rocks in the Garden of the Gods. Slightly more advanced risk. Since she refused my hand and basically any offer for support, I generally positioned myself next to her, or beneath her, or wherever the threat of falling was most severe. She probably didn't even realize what I was doing while I was doing it, but even though the challenge to her little body was clear, she was never in any danger. Why? Because **while I chose to let her struggle through the tricky terrain, I was with her.**

If you've ever read [The Horse and His Boy](#), by C.S. Lewis; you may recall this remarkably similar scene with Shasta and Aslan. While Shasta, feeling alone, not yet having encountered the truth about who he was, found himself being depended on heavily to journey over a mountain, and he was greeted by a heavy fog. He didn't know who he was yet, he was tired, he was alone, he sensed urgency, danger, and he could not see. He did not even know Aslan for who he was yet, but just because

Shasta didn't know him fully, that didn't make Aslan less of who he was. As they walked together over unfamiliar ground, it was not until dawn and a slightly cleared line of sight that Shasta realized this lion had walked beside him, shielding him from the drop off that threatened his safe passage.

And oh, it is not just Mila and Shasta who know this story. Do we not face seasons where our identities are in question? Where our challenges burden and our cliffs seem insurmountable? Where our vision seems shrouded in thick fog? And likewise our savior walks beside us, regardless of our full and complete knowledge of who he is. **Because our knowledge does not diminish his character. And his love for us means that he will walk near.**

"He will not let your foot slip — he who watches over you will not slumber... The Lord watches over you — the Lord is your shade at your right hand... The Lord will keep you from all harm — he will watch over your life; the Lord will watch over your coming and going both now and forevermore." — Psalm 121

Know that wherever we are, the God who longs for our growth and maturity, the Lord who intricately wove together every detail of our bodies and swirling dreams in our hearts, in his mighty strength, he walks right next to us as we crawl over cliffs. It is so beautiful a notion that I fear we see the wonder of it, but we fail to realize it as certain when we peer over ledges into caverns and ravines, and we tremble at all the possibilities of loss that encircle us. I know I do. I forget that not only is he lovely, not only is he tremendous, but the two are married together, and so every challenge we take on is one marked by the proximity of his might, and the presence of his love.