

Recently some of my friends and I along with our wives went to Polk County, Tennessee to just get away for a couple of days. It had been a pretty busy summer with camp and the blessing of being able to speak in many different locations, but the traveling had taken its toll and we needed some “down time”. Friends I want you to remember that word, “down time”, as you read through this article. We met at the Kroger in Dickson to purchase the food for the trip and next headed to Horizon Medical to meet and pick up another passenger and then head out for some “down time”.

Finally we were on our way! Oh yeah, forgot that we still had the rugrats, but we dropped them off in Nashville with the aunt and THEN WE WERE ON OUR WAY!!! Oh yeah, forgot we needed to stop and eat some lunch—so we did—AND THEN WE WERE ON OUR WAY!!!! Wait a minute—we had to stop and get gas after we dropped off the girls, after we ate lunch—AND THEN WE WERE ON OUR WAY!!!! Thirty minutes down the road—yep you guessed it—bathroom break—AND THEN WE WOULD DEFINITELY BE ON OUR WAY TO SOME MUCH NEEDED, HIGHLY ANTICIPATED “DOWN TIME!!!!!!” Finally we arrived at our destination and “Momma” and Moe greeted us with open arms. As we checked into our rooms and made plans for volleyball that night, I said to myself, “Self, this is just what you needed.” After beating the ladies in three straight games we made plans for the next day. After taking my life in my hands and doing the white water rafting trip last year; I decided to take the “down time” approach this year and just float the Ocoee. Some in our group were going to do both and that was just fine, but as for me and my household we would be floating.

At 4:30PM we set out on our float. Now the inner tubes used for floating by this particular company did not come in “Joe” size and I quickly learned my best bet was to flip it over and lie on my stomach and float head first down the river. As we began the first leg of our journey the water, on the surface seemed very peaceful, but was actually flowing very quickly. Our guides (yes we had guides and this should’ve been the first warning sign that this is not “down time”) ask us to stay in the middle of the river due to “snags”. They commented that if we were to get caught in a snag (a downed tree) that the current could sweep us under the tree and we could drown. I began to see this was not the “down time” I was looking for. Around the next bend in the river one of guides paddled quickly up and shouted, “GET TO THE LEFT SIDE OR THE CURRENT WILL SLAM YOU INTO THE BLUFF!” Once again, not the “down time” I was looking for and added bonus was the fact the mother of my children, my beautiful and loving wife apparently didn’t hear many of the warnings and found herself headed for trouble on many occasions. I of course saved her (three times). By the end of the journey my arms were raw and I was more aware of the dangers of “down time” and a swift and dangerous undercurrent.

Luke 21: 34-36, “But take heed to yourselves, lest your hearts be weighed down with carousing, drunkenness, and cares of this life, and that Day come on you unexpectedly. ³⁵ For it will come as a snare on all those who dwell on the face of the whole earth. ³⁶ Watch therefore, and pray always that you may be counted worthy^a to escape all these things that will come to pass, and to stand before the Son of Man.” In our spiritual life we sometimes grow weary and we look for “down time” and then we suddenly find ourselves caught in the dangerous undercurrent of life. If we fail to allow Christ to rescue us and if we fail to heed the warnings we can find ourselves in real danger. If we only grab a “snag” in life the current will surely take us under and no matter how much we paddle and struggle we just can’t make it. I ask each of you to allow Jesus to work in your life. Listen to the warnings given throughout the scriptures and never find yourself stuck in the dangerous undercurrent of life. Romans 12:2, “And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what *is* that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.”

In Christ,
Joe Rhodes