

## Exploring My Heart

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In my journey I came across a deep hole in the ground.

I said, "Wow! That hole looks deep. It's so dark down there; I can't even see the bottom."

*God replied, "I want you to climb down there."*

To which I protested, "What!? I can't! I'm afraid I'd fall. I don't know what's down there. It might kill me if I fall and hit the bottom. Even if I do make it to the bottom, there could be hungry beasts down there."

*God prodded with, "Have I ever let you down?"*

I said, "Well, no."

*"And what makes you think this will be any different?" God challenged.*

"Ok, but only if you come with me", I asked.

*"I wouldn't have it any other way." God affirmed.*

As I began to get into the hole I said, "Well, this is pretty hard and stable rock. It seems like it shouldn't be too bad to climb down there."

So, I started climbing down but after a little while I started to get tired.

I said, "Wow, I'm getting tired and I still haven't seen any hint that we are near the bottom."

*"Keep going." God insisted.*

I complained, "I don't know, if I go back now I can make it back to the top before I'm completely exhausted. Besides, it's getting hard to see where I'm going."

*God pushed back with, "Keep going, this journey is going to take a while but I will provide you with the rest you need."*

Suddenly a glowing light appears far below me.

*God said, "Go there."*

I said, "That's pretty far, I don't know if I can make it."

*God speaking more forcibly than I was used to replied, "Go!"*

I resumed my climbing, and started to get hungry and even more tired. As I got closer I realized the glowing light was coming from a cave in the face of the wall I was climbing down.

I griped, "I'm really tired, I don't know if I can make it. Can you help me finish the rest?"

*God encouraged me with, "You can make it. Keep going. I'll keep you from falling."*

From that encouragement I felt a small surge of energy and redoubled my efforts to get to the cave. I arrived at the cave exhausted. The cave was well lit but with no apparent source of light. There was a table with lots of food and a comfortable looking bed in the corner.

I exclaimed, "Wow, what a feast! Can I have some, I'm starving."

*God wisely said, "Eat until you are full and then get some sleep. You are going to need your strength for tomorrow."*

I ate until I was full and when I climbed into the bed I noticed something interesting. As soon as my head hit the pillow the light dimmed but didn't completely disappear. The light dimmed enough that it wouldn't keep me awake but was bright enough that I knew that it was still there.

I don't know how long I slept but when I awoke I was completely refreshed. I also could see that the table had been restocked. The cave was lit with a soft morning like light. The cave didn't look dirty. In fact, it felt quite comfortable.

*God welcomed me saying, "Good morning. Eat some breakfast; you will need your strength for the climbing you have to do today."*

Appreciatively I sighed and said, "This is great. Can't I just stay here? I really like this. We can talk and enjoy each others company."

*Tenderly God replied, "Son, I would love to enjoy your company over breakfast. But afterwards we must move on."*

"But I'm comfortable here. I don't really want to leave." I said stubbornly.

*"I have more for you than this. Eat and begin climbing down." He said with loving firmness in his voice.*

"But it's dark out there?" I reasoned "How will I see where I'm going?"

*"I will be with you and I will light your path. You can follow me." God reasoned back.*

So we ate, talked and laughed. When I was full and completely rested I began to climb down deeper into the giant hole in the ground. I could see all around me. The light that surrounded me was like daylight. I could determine no apparent source of the light but it lit the rock about 10

feet below me and about 10 feet above me at all times. It seemed to move with me. I could look onto the other side of the hole I was climbing down and clearly make out the features of the rock. The parts of the rock face I was to hold onto or step on seem to glow to indicate where I should go. I got pretty efficient at knowing what foot or what hand to put on what rock. However, as time went on, I eventually noticed the rock was getting softer.

Fearfully I said, "I'm not sure if I can go very much farther. The rock is getting softer. Surely this is as deep as I can safely go."

*God encouraged me with, "Keep going. Have I left you since you began climbing?"*

I worried, "No, but the rock is...."

I was cut off mid-sentence.

*"Keep going! Trust me, there is more."*

I kept climbing down the hole. The rock kept getting softer and softer. Pretty soon, I noticed the rock begin to crack if I spent too much time on it. I began moving faster. It seemed like the further I climbed down the softer the rock was getting. The rock began cracking more and more quickly. I was able to spend less time on a given rock. I was getting tired and I knew that if I were to try to climb back up to the cave I would never make it. Too much of the rock was weakened by my weight. So I kept moving faster. The rock kept getting softer until I couldn't move any faster. Then suddenly...

"Help!!!"

The rock I was using to support myself gave way just as I was stepping to the next rock.

I was surprised, "Wait, I'm not falling? I'm being held mid-air."

"Thank You!" I called out with gratitude when I realized God had saved me.

*"You trusted me to go deep. Now it will be easier for you but we still have some distance to cover." God affirmed.*

I slowly began to descend. It was like I was flying except I wasn't in control. While descending we talked and laughed. I hardly noticed the walls around me begin to change. The rock became smooth. Any ability I would have had to climb was gone. There was nothing to hold onto.

I half jokingly said, "I guess I have no choice but to completely trust you now."

*After a laugh He said, "Oh, just wait until you see what's next."*

As soon as he said that the rock started to glitter as our 20 foot bar of light moved deeper into the hole. It looked like precious gems of every color embedded in the rock. We began to pick up

speed and the reflections from the gems began to blur together in a beautiful array of breath taking color.

In wonder I asked, "Did you make all this?"

*He answered, "Yes, it's been here all along."*

Happy to be here but wishing I could have started the climb earlier in my journey I said, "I had no idea there was so much wealth here. Thank you, I would never have seen this had you not made me to go deep. I wish I would have started earlier."

After that I just floated down enjoying the splendor of the deep. Some time passed before I noticed that we were slowing down. It wasn't long after that when I noticed that I could see the bottom. It too seemed to be lit even though you couldn't see the source of the light. The bottom was paved in solid gold with a large crown engraved in it. I also noticed that the walls had narrowed somewhat. As I traced the walls of this deep hole down toward its end, I saw what at first looked like the opening of a large cave. As I got closer I realized that even though it had the mouth of a cave, only a few feet into it were two large oak doors.

"What's that?" I sheepishly asked.

*Graciously God explained, "You followed me deep. This is your reward."*

As my feet touched down in the middle of the giant crown the doors began to open. When I saw what was inside I understood that I was only just starting to go deep because there was so much more He wanted to show me.

"I'm so glad I started climbing. I'm so glad I didn't stay at the cave. I'm so glad I trusted you! Thank you for calling me to go deep!"