

God is holding on to you

By Elise L. Moore, C.S.

It was a beastly hot summer day. I'd been taking horseback riding lessons and wanted to go riding with my dad. So he found a place, a resort hotel an hour or so from his house. By the time we arrived, all the horses were rented. I was crushed. Dad was insistent. Wasn't there something for me to ride? He'd called ahead.

So they produced a horse that they told Dad would be just right for his little girl. I couldn't go out on the trail with him, but there was a big ring I could ride around. That was fine. The better for Dad to watch me. Unfortunately they didn't have an English saddle either. I'd never ridden Western, but it couldn't be that different.

So off we went to the ring. There was a girl about my age taking a lesson in one corner, but plenty of room for me to ride around. After getting comfortable I started applying English signals for the horse to trot and then canter. Not much happened. I managed to elicit a reluctant trot toward the shady side of the ring, but not much else. This was embarrassing.

Finally the instructor took a few minutes and told me the proper signals for a Western horse. They were very different. Even the way he told me to hold the reins was different. But it seemed to work. The horse began to canter and I began to smile. Success at last.

Somehow it had eluded me that my horse was becoming increasingly resistant to moving out of the shady area. I was concentrating on holding the reins right, giving the proper signals and impressing Dad. The next thing I knew instead of breaking into a canter, the horse went straight up into the air and proceeded to bounce stiff-legged around the ring.

The other girl started screaming. The instructor was yelling instructions. And I started praying. At the first buck, I lost both stirrups. However, the English training paid off. I gripped as hard as I could with my knees. I never was scared. But I had no earthly idea what one was supposed to do. I

couldn't differentiate between the screams of the girl and the shouts of the instructor, so I tuned them both out. I just turned to God and knew God was right there. I literally held on to God. And I knew God was holding on to me. There is a wonderful Bible verse in Isaiah, "For I the Lord thy God will hold thy hand, saying unto thee, Fear not; I will help thee." (Isaiah 41:13)

Now I might not have thought of that specific verse as we were bouncing around the ring, but I felt the strength of God with me. As long as God was there, I couldn't fall. So I just kept thinking, "God is here."

On the tenth bounce, the instructor managed to grab the reins. I was still in the saddle. Still had the reins. Still unafraid. Actually I thought the whole affair was my fault, that I had given the wrong signal. Turned out the horse hadn't been fully broken yet. They'd just acquired him, which is why he was still in the stable. But they figured a little girl in a ring, what possible trouble could that be?

My dad was upset with them, but I wasn't. God had been right there with me and I'd never felt outside of His strong hand. Actually it had been an adventure and I'd certainly succeeded in impressing Dad.

You may never ride a horse. I haven't for years. But if we find ourselves suddenly in a difficult situation, turn to God. He is ever-present, always with us. Whatever we need to know or do, God will tell us. He will protect us. Remember God is holding on to you. So hold on to God. "Though I walk in the midst of trouble, thou wilt revive me. . . thy right hand shall save me." (Psalms 138:7)

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