

IN OVER YOUR HEAD?

Panicking only knocks you off your feet.

by BILL KING

BOTH BOYS were almost beside themselves with excitement and anticipation. Randy was 8, and Kerry, his little brother, was 6. Going fishing with their Grandpa Ezell was a rare privilege for them. I can appreciate their feelings because I fished with their grandpa a few times myself when I was a kid. He was quite the fisherman.

When I was too young to fish in our pond by myself, or at least Mama thought so, I watched for anyone we knew to drop a hook in the water. I had several regulars like Mr. Gilbreath, Mr. Ledbetter, and Randy and Kerry's Grandpa Ezell who often fished in the ponds near our house. I thought Mr. Ezell was a pro. He took his fishing seriously. On days when I couldn't catch anything, not even a bad cold, he would stand right beside me and reel in largemouths — with large bodies that matched their mouths! For some reason, I occasionally fished in mud puddles, but I never caught anything in them. Mr. Ezell didn't fish in mud puddles, but I believe if he had, he could have caught something even out of them.

Randy said their grandpa had certain rules for them when they fished with him. They had to stay at least 50 feet from him, with one of them on each side and their grandpa in the middle. I suspect that separation had something to do with past episodes of talking too much to each other,

fighting, or any number of things little boys that age have a tendency to do and grandpas his age don't care for — especially when trying to catch fish. It may have been because their grandpa didn't want to be close enough to either of them for their hooks to snag him.

On one particular day of fishing, everyone had settled into his assigned spot, and serious fishing had begun. Well, as serious as boys that age can be about fishing or most anything else. As Kerry cast his line, he attempted to drop his bait under a willow tree branch that hung over the water. That's a difficult maneuver for a seasoned angler, let alone a 6-year-old. He missed his target. His bait landed in the tree and wrapped tightly around a limb. He tried to yank his lure free, but the hooks dug in deeper instead of coming loose. He gave a hard jerk on the line, which caused him to lose his balance. He plunged off the side of the dam and fell headfirst into the water.

Kerry was thrashing and flapping around in the water, and Randy was in a state of panic as he thought his little brother was about to drown. Grandpa Ezell hardly seemed to notice or at least was unmoved by what the two boys believed was a state of emergency. He quietly and calmly continued to cast his rod and reel as if nothing had happened. With a note of fear and a feeling of frustration with his grandfather, Randy yelled, "Are you not going to help Kerry?"



“Be still, and know
that I am God”
(Ps. 46:10, KJV).

Their grandpa leisurely looked over in Kerry’s direction as Kerry fought for his life. His nickname for Kerry was Mazeroski. He slowly said, “Hey, Mazi, stand up.”

As it turned out — although Kerry thought he was drowning — when he stood up, the water was only about a foot and a half deep!

We’ve probably all had situations in life much the same as Kerry’s. We felt like we were in over our head, literally or figuratively, and that we were in danger of drowning. When all was said and done, the situation was not nearly as serious as we believed, and our perceived dire situation was no real threat. We may struggle, frail about in a state of fright and panic, and think we are going to go under for the last time when all that is needed is for us to be still and stand up. Thankfully, you don’t have to be a seasoned fisherman to react with the wisdom of Psalm 46:10: “Be still, and know that I am God” (KJV). 🌀

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