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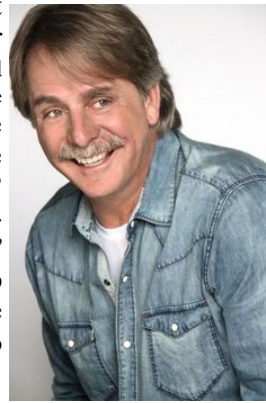
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“...USED TO COULD...”

Noted comedian Jeff Foxworthy shot to fame with, “you just might be a redneck if...” He then would fill in the blank with something along the line of “you ever cut your grass and found a car.” In like manner he would dredge up various words and phrases that seemingly depict him as a “regular Joe”. “I used to could...” (only said quickly all together to make it sound like one word, “Iusedtocould”) is a prime example. How many of us can use that as a preface to what follows? “I used to could stuff a dozen mini-marshmallows in my open mouth.” At some age and maturity catch up with us all and there is a whole check list of things we “used to could” but no longer do.



the God of hosts; for the sons of Israel have forsaken Thy covenants, torn down Thine altars and killed Thy prophets with the sword. And I alone am left; and they seek my life, to take it away.” Do you see the “used to could”?

Drop down to verse fourteen and when asked again by God “*What are you doing here, Elijah?*”, to see the response Elijah gave. “*I have been very zealous for the Lord...*” He tried to cite any number of reasons as to why “he used to could”, but not so much now. To which God answered those objections and directed him to return and to be about the work (see verses 15 thru 18) Bear in mind that “*whatever was written in earlier times was written for our instruction...*” (Romans 15:4) as a result there is a powerful take away we can use from this example.

While all of that may be understandable from a physical standpoint, it becomes problematic when “I used to could” or some variation thereof is used in reference to spiritual matters. In 1Kings, chapter eighteen, Elijah, with God’s help was able to enjoy a victory over the prophets of Baal. However, in chapter nineteen of 1Kings there is a different attitude seen in Elijah.

Do you remember the excitement and zeal you had when you first obeyed the gospel? The Ephesians surely did as can be seen in the 19th chapter of Acts. However, over time that excitement waned and by the time of the writing of Revelation, it could be said of them they “used to could.” In Revelation 2:5, after it told to them that they had “*left your first love*”, they were challenged. “*Remember therefore from where you have fallen and do the deeds you did at first...*” In short, rekindle the zeal and fire that was in place way back when.

Elijah learns that Ahab and Jezebel are out to destroy him. In fact in verse two, Jezebel sends a messenger to Elijah with the following message. “*So may the gods do to me and even more, if I do not make your life as one of them by tomorrow about this time.*” What she had reference to was the death of the prophets of Baal as seen in 1Kings 18:40. Elijah, upon hearing this message, became afraid and made the decision to flee into the wilderness. Ultimately he found his way to a cave where he took up lodging.

If that fire and zeal have diminished somewhat, reacquaint yourself with Christ, which is what the author of Hebrews noted as seen in chapter three and verse one. “*Therefore, holy brethren, partakers of a heavenly calling consider Jesus, the Apostle and High Priest of our confession.*” Would you feel right to say, “I used to could” when it comes to being about the work for the cause of Christ? While physically we may not be able to do some things, yet our zeal and drive must take on a different approach. (wbe)

“*What are you doing here, Elijah?*”, said the Lord as seen in 1Kings 19:9. Take note of the response given by Elijah as found in verse ten. “*I have been very zealous for the Lord,*

THE BULWARK