

May I Help You? — Week 1

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Philippians 4:13: “I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me” (NKJV).

May is one of my favorite months; it is *the springtime of life*. May honors mothers on *Mother's Day* and those who fought for freedom on *Memorial Day*. It is the month of our wedding anniversary. I also like the word, *may*. According to Webster, *may* means: To be allowed or permitted to: indicates a certain likelihood or possibility; To be obliged; Used to express a fervent desire or wish. . . .

“May I?” is a question that usually paves the way to something meaningful: May I come in? May I have this dance? May I see that? May I fix that for you? Or, **May I help you?**

But the word *may* is often misused or interchanged with *can*. English professors agree that often these words are used incorrectly in writing or when speaking. **May** indicates that one is asking permission to do something. **Can** asks, “Am I cable of doing it?” Recently these two words, and their differences, became significant to me.

This story involves a bicycle. Dad taught me to ride when I was a child. Patiently he would walk up and down the dirt road in front of the parsonage at Scaly Mountain, holding the bike so I wouldn't fall. After several attempts to ride on my own, I finally was ready and so excited when I did!

Time brings changes (some not pleasant). Too many pounds have crept up on me, and I need more exercise. My husband Ron and I walk regularly in our neighborhood and at the mall. We also live in a bike-friendly neighborhood. So we decided to add bike riding to our exercise routine.

My lessons took place a long time ago; and I've not ridden a bike in years. I heard once you learn to ride, you never forget the concept. Excited about this venture, we bought new bikes. When a sales clerk tried to fit me to a lady's bike, I panicked. At 4'9," I could not get on the thing; let alone think of riding it. We went to the youth section and found the perfect bike—a gleaming purple *Maverick Iron Horse*, just my size and better still, on sale! I could hardly wait to ride.

Excitement grew as I imagined us, as I had seen other couples, cruising up and down our streets enjoying time together. “Piece a cake, I learned to ride 50 years ago,” I told myself. WRONG! For years, I have battled vertigo (inner ear issues). While sitting still, without warning, I can suddenly get dizzy. What was to be a fun experience was becoming a nightmare. When I tried to ride, I felt like I was going to fall, so I fell many times with bruises to prove it.

Ron kept encouraging me that I would catch on, not to feel afraid. He walked beside me up and down the street. Neighbors would wave, smile and extend positive support. I saw flashbacks of a little girl on a bicycle with a loving daddy by her side on a dirt road. It was as though Dad was watching from heaven, cheering me on. But fear inside me kept yelling, “You **can't** do this!”

When weather predictions called for sunny days, Ron suggested we ride bikes. Without comment, I prayed for rain! Episodes of trial and error followed. He didn't chide or push. While I was at work, he would ride his bike, wishing I were beside him as we had dreamed of doing.

It was a warm Saturday in March. Spring was winning the battle over winter; birds were singing; Ron suggested that we ride our bikes. Apprehensive but submissive, I agreed. I could not give up. Perhaps this beautiful day would be a new beginning. . . .

In routine, he slid his bike down the ramp of our storage building. Then he came out with mine. I will never forget the moment. On a Web site, he had found stabilizing wheels (training wheels designed for seniors desiring this form of exercise but challenged with instability). He had gotten them as an extra birthday surprise. He and a bike expert installed them.



"The wheels have a little play in them," he explained. "You have to do it that way so you will be able to make turns."

Tears of joy surfaced realizing how much this meant to him. I climbed on my 24" trike with new determination. However, fear of recent attempts/failures engulfed me. "It's still wobbly!" I announced emphatically; convinced that the bike would turn over, even with training wheels, because it had me on it!

Ron smiled and proclaimed, "You'll get it; it will come."

Another familiar voice inside me spoke peace, "May I help you? HE whispered.

"Yes, God, help me!" I begged. As insignificant as this story may sound, this was something I wanted to do, but it was bigger than I was! I had prayed; but this time I surrendered it to HIM. When riding a bike came to mind, instead of the panic I had come to feel, I started thanking God for His help.

With new confidence, I started peddling down the street with Ron riding beside me. As I gripped the handle bars, I looked up. In my heart I heard God ask, "**May** I help you?"

"Yes, You **can!**" I responded. Riding through our neighborhood, we meet people we've never met. Astonished children ask, "Ma'am, why do you have training wheels on your bike?"

With no intimidation I respond, "I'm a *little old lady*; if I didn't have them, I'd fall off my bike and get hurt!"

One little boy said, "That's cool!" as he rode away on his bike. I've actually become the envy of other *little old ladies* in the neighborhood who say, "I need a set of those."

God is ready to respond to your call for help. He **can** do anything. He has provided the **wheels** of faith, hope, goodness, mercy and love. Clouds of doubt and fear can override our best efforts at believing they're for us. "God, Your provisions aren't quite enough for this situation." In reality, nothing is impossible with God.

Perhaps you're struggling with a more complicated story. Panic has gripped; inside you're screaming, "I **can't** do this!" Your heavenly Father, who loves you more than you can imagine, is asking, "**May I help you?**" This would be a good time to let go and let God do whatever you need Him to do.