

# Fresh Start

By Jerry Bader

## The Importance of Being a Banana

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I give God thanks every day for the many ways he has transformed me since I accepted Jesus as my Savior about two years ago. Not least among those changes is how spiritual growth has made me a much more patient person. But like all elements of our transformation, that too is a work in progress. I have heard the call to the ministry but become impatient at times when God won't show Ramona and me exactly what that looks like, right now!

Further, I feel as though there simply are not enough hours in the day in which to immerse myself in the Word and study academic texts about the Bible. After avoiding the Book for most of the first 55 years of my life, I at times must control my unrealistic expectations for my Biblical learning curve. God recently answered my prayers for control in the most delightful way.

Out of the blue, I received a call from a friend. We hadn't spoken in a very long time and I caught her up on where Ramona and I are in our spiritual lives. I shared the call to the ministry we've heard and my frustration with my learning curve. I referred to myself as "a green banana." She replied: "At least now you're a banana." I just love when God does that.

Yes, I'm a banana. I'm saved. I awake every morning filled with anticipation for the next hour to hour and a half that I'm going to spend alone with God. I can look back in awe at how much he has transformed me in two short years. Yes, I'm still green. But I'm not as green as I was yesterday and I'm greener than I'm going to be tomorrow. Before 2016, I wasn't even a banana. God has transformed both my life and Ramona's life in ways we never could have imagined just a couple of years ago. God will sufficiently ripen me for our next season in His time, according to His plan. All I must do is trust Him. Two days after that call from a friend, God blessed me with verses to reinforce the message:

*"Joshua got up early the next morning and the priests took up the ark of the Lord. The seven priests carrying the seven trumpets went forward, marching before the ark of the Lord and blowing the trumpets. The armed men went ahead of them and the rear guard followed the ark of the Lord, while the trumpets kept sounding. So on the second day they marched around the city once and returned to the camp. They did this for six days."*

*"On the seventh day, they got up at daybreak and marched around the city seven times in the same manner, except that on that day they circled the city seven times. The seventh time around, when the priests sounded the trumpet blast, Joshua commanded the army, 'Shout! For the Lord has given you the city!'"* Joshua 6:12-16

Joshua and the Israelites marched around the wall of Jericho for six days and trusted that God would crumble the walls on the seventh day with nothing more than a trumpet blast. It was pointed out in one of the devotions I read that the wall didn't slowly crumble over those seven days; didn't begin to show any signs of deterioration at all. In other words, God didn't provide Joshua and the Israelites with any tangible evidence that what they were doing was making any difference at all. Yet they trusted God to deliver on His promise. And deliver He did.

Joshua trusted God because of what He had already done. He didn't need to see the steady results each day. God ripens us in His time. When we feel as though we're marching each day without seeing progress, it's helpful to look back and see how deep green you once were. But if you hadn't allowed Him to transform you into a banana at some point in your life, you wouldn't be able to ripen at all. When you find yourself becoming impatient or frustrated with your spiritual growth, start each day by thanking Him for that. Never take lightly the importance of being a banana.