

## Shallow Water

Growing up in Tennessee gave me many opportunities as well as many challenges. One of the opportunities that I had was learning to swim in a creek. For those of you unfortunate souls that have never swum in a creek, three of the things you need to know are; they are shallow, they are cold, and they have a current flowing through them. The shallowness and current are positive things in learning to swim, the coldness, not so much.

I was 12 when my father decided that it was high time that I learned to swim. He gave me basic instructions on what to do and then threw me into the water. After overcoming the shock of the cold water and with additional coaching, by the end of the day, I had learned to swim. It wasn't pretty but I could swim. I could swim really well with the current, not so well against it. The great thing about swimming in the creek, because it is shallow, when you get tired all you had to do is just stand up. Everything is OK.

Not only did we have creeks in the area where I grew up but the Tennessee River ran about two miles from my house. As I got older, my friends and I spent a lot of time on the river. Despite the fact that I could swim, I was not confident in my ability to swim. As my friends would do cool things like jump off bridges and barges (the things our parents told us not to do). I was the nerdy guy that would only get in the water that was chin deep. The fear of getting into water that was over my head kept from doing more things with my friends and really held me back from fully enjoying swimming.

One day, while we were at the river, I had swum around with a couple of buddies and has lost track of how far I had gone. When I reached, with my toe, for the comfort of the riverbed below, it wasn't there. I sank beneath the surface of the water and eventually touched the bottom. I frantically bounced back up to the surface as quick as possible. Immediately, I swam to shallow water, to get back to the safe area where I was comfortable. As I stayed there a little while, I realized, despite my great horror, everything was OK.

After that one time of sinking below the surface, I never had any fear of swimming in deep water again. I was able to play with my friends and that fear did not hold me back any more. As our time now is filled with uncertainty and fear, we should not let it hold us back from enjoying the life that we have. In John 16:33, Jesus says, *"I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world."* Just as we will not have true confidence in what we can do until it is tested, we may not have confidence in what God can do through us until it is tested. Sometimes, we have to get in over our heads to have the confidence to realize that everything is OK. Do not let fear keep you in the shallow water. Swim in the deep water!

Jeff