

A Faulty Ladder

On June 11th of 2007 I took a fall with a stepladder and broke both of my wrists. In addition to the broken wrists, I hit my head very hard. My head is the hardest thing about me, so it shouldn't be damaged any. And no one could detect brain damage anyway because I act this way all the time. But I think my elevator doesn't go all the way to the top; and I'm starting to have little memory lapses.

I just knew that the fault was with the ladder. It was obviously made with hind legs that weren't strong enough to handle any strain without twisting. I had only climbed up four steps on a 7-foot ladder; and it twisted out from under me, and I went down with it.

I was determined to get that ladder taken off the market and maybe get some recompense for all the pain and suffering I'm going through. After I get the ladder proven faulty, then I would sue the manufacturer, the distributor, and the government agency that approved it. Wow, this case could be worth millions!

I had even seen other fiberglass stepladders, the same brand as mine, which were also twisted out of shape, probably from having gone through similar circumstances. Ladders must be built strong and sturdy to hold up to much strain and still be safe for the climber. Every ladder that won't stand up to the work should be taken off the market. Our government makes certain rules to keep us safe.

I had a friend working on the case, visiting web sites, making calls, and getting things rolling to prove this ladder faulty and begin to build a case against the manufacturer. It was beginning to look like it was really going to work. But then something happened to get me thinking how and why this accident really happened.

I received an email from my friend saying that if I had taken a previous fall with this ladder, then I didn't have a case. I could either lie about it or view myself as a fool for having climbed up a ladder that I knew was faulty. I was given only those two choices. I could be a liar or a fool. Which one would you choose?

That burned my gizzard! I did not know that the ladder was faulty. I didn't even suspect that it might twist out from under me or I wouldn't have climbed it. I don't go inflicting pain upon my body purposely. And I'm not a liar either. And why would a previous fall make any difference? Why would that have to keep justice from being served? This was the first time the ladder went down like that. I've taken falls from other ladders; but they were old and loosened up. This was a good stout fiberglass ladder that I had purchased only a year ago. But hummm, ya know, there was one other time that ladder had gone down in a twist.

Well, I didn't have to mention that previous fall. It's insignificant anyway. It has no bearing on the case. If I just maintain that this was the first fall with that ladder, then everything would be just fine. These three organizations would pay dearly for all the damage to my once good stout wrists, and the big, hard bump to my mental elevator

panel that could turn out to be some degree of brain damage. Even my hearing loss is greater after the fall. My body took a beating! But could I be a liar for the rest of my life? Could I live with my millions easier than I could live with myself after I lied?

I want the peace of God in my life more than I want money. There is no reward great enough to commit a sin that would never go away. Oh, I know that God would forgive me; and that the blood of Jesus is powerful enough to cover a sin like that. It's only one little lie. It wouldn't hurt anything. I'd be able to handle it. I could do lots of good with all the money I would have. Oh yeah, I could maintain a straight face in court and a calm conscience on a polygraph test. I would feel okay about it eventually. Bunk!

I'd choke on my millions. I'd never be able to live with myself. My peaceful existence would be gone. My new web site would be meaningless. A liar would be running www.FaithBuildingTestimomies.com. What would be the purpose of building the web site? It could never lead anyone to God unless God were in it. And God wouldn't partner with a liar. I would never excitedly tell my stories again. There wouldn't be any stories to tell. The blessings of God would be gone from my life. In that case, it might just as well end.

So I made the call. "Hello, my friend. I want you to stop pursuing the ladder case. I'm going to drop it. The ladder wasn't faulty. I'm the one that's faulty. I know exactly what caused the ladder to twist. I examined the whole situation and I can tell you every detail of how and why it happened. And I did have a previous fall with that ladder. I'm going to explain everything to you, but not over the phone. And I have something far better than a lawsuit from which we will make a vast fortune. I'll tell you all about it later."

A Sleepless Night

I had been awake all night. Liars don't sleep. They have perpetual insomnia. I even told God that I'm sorry, that I would drop the case, that I would admit my faults. "Please let me sleep now." But still I lay awake. God was giving me every detail of how the ladder accident happened. And He even gave me the solution to keep the problem from ever happening again. I didn't think of all this myself. All knowledge comes from God. Every good and perfect gift is from above. I only listen to His words and act upon them.

Now my broken wrists will count for something. They will bring about good in the world. I have a wonderful idea for a new invention that will make ladders safer to use. My new invention will save lives and prevent some of the human suffering that would be inevitable without it as ladders continue to twist and buckle.

Over the years I have come to know that in every situation "I'm not the only one." If I have problems with ladders twisting and buckling, then so do others. I know exactly what would have stopped the ladder from twisting in both situations. This little apparatus will be easy and inexpensive to make. It will be easy to apply and use in every outdoor ladder situation. Before I tell you about it, let's take a look at why the two ladder accidents happened. This is the information I acquired during my sleepless

night. I didn't even have to go outside and examine the ladder. This knowledge was put straight into my mind. You will be able to see that what I'm giving you is good sound logic even if my elevator doesn't go all the way to the top.

A Hard Fall

Several months ago the first accident occurred. I wasn't seriously hurt; and I breezed over and past it so quickly it was forgotten in my haste to get on with the work on my front and back decks and roofs. I didn't even take time to examine why it happened. If I had, I could have prevented the next one, the one that broke my wrists.

I was building the front deck roof at the time. I was installing rafters. I had sixteen foot 2 x 6's lying up on the attic floor. I positioned the stepladder and climbed up to take a rafter down to the ground to make a cut on it. Reaching to my right over the edge of the floor from the outside perimeter, I picked up the rafter with two hands. To drop it to the ground, I swung it to the left to get it over the edge of the floor. Can you picture that? I was foolish. I was going to swing around quickly and throw it to the ground. It would have been an easy task if I had been standing on something immovable. But I was standing on a stepladder!

Picture this: Standing on the fourth step of a seven-foot fiberglass stepladder, I have a sixteen-foot rafter in my hands. I'm in the middle of the rafter, eight feet in front of me and eight feet in back of me. The attic floor is to my right; and the rafter is on my right side. The only safe thing I can do is set it back down on the attic floor. I want it on the ground. What's going to happen if I swing it around to my left? I'm telling you, my mental elevator just doesn't go all the way up sometimes.

The twist of my body put twist pressure on the ladder. If the ladder had been bolted down it might have stayed put. That's where my invention will come into play. My body and hands and arms can easily make the pivot and throw the rafter to the ground. But the ladder was not designed to grab the ground with its feet in order to resist the force of the twist. The weight on the ladder and friction were the only tools available to hold the ladder's feet in place. When my invention is put into production, ladders will grab the ground and hold on.

If it had been a short board, say six or eight feet, the ladder might have resisted the force. But this board was sixteen feet long! So what happened to the ladder? Its hind legs and feet shot out from under it. Sometimes my elevator just doesn't go all the way up.

The ladder went down, I crashed to the ground, and the board came down. Is this guy suicidal or what? Fortunately, I only suffered a little pain in my left side for a few days. It was enough to prompt me to think first, act wisely, put away my foolishness, and be more careful. It was what I didn't know that hurt me the next time.

My sleepless night continues. It's only in retrospect that I am putting all this together. Even at the time that ladder went down I did not take time to think all this through. Nor did I think of it during the ensuing work and use of the ladder. All this was fed into my mind during my sleepless night. And there's more...

Broken Wrists

It's an uncanny thing to me that the second accident took place in exactly the same location as the first one did. Of all the places around the two roofs in which I had positioned the ladder and worked, the two times it fell occurred on exactly the same piece of ground. It was a little to the right of the spot that one set of the porch steps would later occupy. That must have been the only place where my guardian angel wasn't standing.

I was working on the back deck roof at the time. I had it all framed in and decked. I was making a cutout for a dormer window. I needed to take a measurement of one of the front dormers to make sure I got the back ones installed at the same height. I didn't want to carry the extension ladder around to the front, so I used a stepladder that was already at the front porch. I positioned the ladder where all four legs were on solid ground. It was strong and sturdy. I stood on the bottom step and tested it before climbing. This would only take a minute, one little measurement and I'm off and running.

I climbed up four steps and began to raise my left hand with the tape measure up to the roof. All of a sudden the ladder twisted and buckled. I went down quickly. There was nothing on which to grab a hold. The right hind leg had twisted inward allowing the ladder to lean to the right. In seconds I was on the ground and in pain.

I didn't know exactly what had happened at the moment, or how I was injured. I slammed my forehead against the ground right next to a cement pier. I could feel pain at the frontal lobe of my cerebral hemisphere, pain on my nose, and I was spitting sand. In every situation I talk to God, so I said, "Wow, Father, that was hard!" I don't care as much about what happens to me as I care that God is there. Just calling on the name of the Lord brought Him into the situation. And He started working out the details from that point on.

I tried to push myself up with my left hand, but it wouldn't push anything. There was too much pain. I lifted up my arm to look, and the wrist was bent over nearly double. I said, "Well, that will need a doctor's attention." I tried the same thing with my right hand; but it too was in pain. I knew I needed to go to an Emergency Room. But I couldn't even get up.

Just then I noticed my neighbor out on her front porch. I hid down. She hadn't seen me. I sure didn't want any hysterical woman screaming over me and trying to call an ambulance. I needed time to think about what I was going to do; and my elevator was jammed. After she went into her house, I rolled over and managed to get to my feet. I

walked to the back door, but I couldn't open it. After some struggle, I got the knob turned, walked into the house, and went straight to the bathroom to look at my forehead. It was only scraped, and so was my nose. I managed to wash the sand off my face and hands. Then I decided to call a friend. She rushed right over and took me to the Emergency Room.

We arrived at the hospital, but not at the Emergency Entrance. It must have been the Administration Office. A female executive grabbed a wheelchair and wheeled me down corridor after corridor all the way to the Emergency Room and told someone, "Take care of him right away." Wow, what luck! No waiting!

Time has flown by very quickly. I was well cared for in every situation. I had the best help available anywhere. But I had no idea how that accident happened. Why did the ladder fall? I had intentions of getting someone to help me recreate the situation after I was strong enough, so I could figure out why that ladder twisted.

Well, I have not yet made it to that point. The ladder can't be climbed on again. I would surely need two people holding it before I could climb its steps. But I didn't need that, because during my sleepless night all that knowledge was put into my mind. Maybe my elevator is going up farther now. I know exactly what happened. It was no one's fault but mine. The ladder wasn't faulty until after the first fall. But I didn't realize that. Now it's obvious that it's worthless to be used in that condition.

A Vast Fortune

So here's what happened to the ladder. In the first fall the ladder was over twisted, causing it to be weakened. It was inevitable that it twist in the first fall with 16 feet of leverage acting upon it. But the damage was so slight that it couldn't be detected at a glance. The feet had shot out from under it, skimming over the ground then up through the air. The tremendous force against the ladder didn't allow it to remain firm on the ground long enough to bend the legs enough to be seen.

The next time I climbed the ladder in that same spot, which must have been the only time I didn't have it standing against something, which would have given it some support, the ladder twisted with only a slight weight shift. When I reached up with the tape measure, the weight shift was enough to send the ladder into a twist. And thus it went down to the right as it had the first time. The legs weren't perfectly in line with each other any more, though I didn't know that. And the frame was weakened so that it didn't have as much twist resistance as it did when it was new.

What would have prevented the twist? If the ladder had been bolted down to the surface it wouldn't have fallen. That isn't feasible in most situations. It needs to be easily movable. But how can we make it grab the ground? What about Spike Heals? If it had spikes digging into the ground, it would have tremendously more twist resistance. And besides that it wouldn't slip in other ways either. It would be firmly planted and hugging the ground.

So that's my idea. It was given to me during my sleepless night. I'm proposing that we make Ladder Spikes or Spike Heals that can easily slip onto ladder legs and dig into the ground for support. These Spike Heals will be soft rubber boots with hard rubber heels through which spikes will protrude. Spike Heals will help hold a stepladder or extension ladder in place during outdoor use and prevent twisting. Spike Heals will also be easily removable for indoor use or on other solid surfaces.

Ladders, especially stepladders, have a tendency to twist on variable surfaces in outdoor use causing falls and injury to the climber. I am not the only one who has ever fallen when a ladder twisted. Hopefully I'm the only one who broke both wrists. I tend to do it up good most of the time. I figured if I broke both of them I'd get out of twice as much work!

Don't you think that Spike Heals would hold a ladder more firmly in place? Once we start making and using them, lives and bodies will be saved the world over. There will be a potential for less pain in the world with a drastic reduction of ladder accidents. And my two broken wrists will have counted for something. All the pain I suffered, and am still suffering, will be worth it all if it can be used to save others from accident and injury. And if I hold the patent rights on Spike Heals I do believe there will be opportunity to produce much more money than that of which any lawsuit is capable. It will produce a vast fortune in the years to come. And no, I'm not going to stay off of ladders!

By Wesley J. Allen
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