

ARE YOU STILL WOBBLY?

I like the metaphor my friend Dr. Bill Summerhill used to assure his students and staff at Ascension Academy that they would soon be more comfortable and productive as they shift to online learning during the virus shutdown.

"I remember the day I learned to ride a bike," Dr. Summerhill began. And he told how unsteady he was at first on a two-wheeled vehicle. He started with training wheels on his bicycle. That was a breeze. But when they removed those crutches, Bill couldn't keep the bicycle upright. His dad had to run alongside him to keep him from falling over. If his father turned loose, Bill and his bike toppled.

"Then it just happened," he recalled. "One summer morning I got on my bike and started riding by myself, careening into some garbage cans. But somewhere on that collision course I knew something was different. In that moment I knew, or I felt, that I could ride a bike. From then on it was easy."

My friend's illustration spoke forcefully to me, because I've been there, done that. So have most of us who learned to stay upright on a bicycle. Now, decades later, most of us (even some who now wobble when we walk) can climb onto a bicycle and peddle away without the slightest concern about how to keep it upright. We've learned that skill forever.

Right now in this crazy, mixed-up, rapidly changing virus age, so full of new challenges daily, we're having to learn a whole gaggle of new ways to cope. Everything from buying toilet paper to booking a doctor appointment requires a new skill-set. Almost nothing works like it used to. If you're like me, more than once in this blitz of changes you have crashed your bike.

But we're learning. While we're doing things in ways we never thought of before the coronavirus hit, we're acquiring new skills. And my friend Bill is right. When this is over, "we will be different. We will be stronger, more capable, and more ready to ride our bikes along roads that will take us far into our future."

My dad died over twenty years ago, so I don't have a tutor to run beside this new bike. But all of us who trust in the Lord do have all the help we need to get through this crisis. "I am with you," he promises. "I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you" (Isaiah 41:10).