

PREPARING TO STAND

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“In this age, just prior to the second coming of Christ in the clouds of heaven, God calls for men who will prepare a people to stand in the great day of the Lord.” SW 3-21-1905

“Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up.” Galatians 6:9

DON'T GROW TIRED OF DOING THE RIGHT THING

(source unknown)

The story has been told, of a time when there was a war near a certain village. Reports had come in from nearby communities that the soldiers were making raids during the night for supplies, and many people from the other villages had been injured or killed. So, the people in this particular village held a council to determine what they could do.

One option would be to flee from the area, but that had its own set of perils. If they chose to stay, they could post watchers who would warn them if the soldiers were coming, and then they could escape into the forest. But the soldiers usually carried out their raids at night, and at night, a watchman simply would not have time to go around and wake everyone up to give them the warning in time. There was also the danger of the watcher falling asleep, and then there would be no warning at all.

After considerable discussion, they finally decided what to do. The forest nearby was full of large evergreens. These trees had long full branches around their base, that swept all the way down to the ground making a sheltered, well hidden space beneath each tree. Under many of the trees, this space was big enough to cover a wagon. Therefore, each family could load important supplies and possessions into their wagon, drive out into the forest late each afternoon, and spend the night in relative safety hidden by the trees. In addition, they would post watchers during the day.

But, it was important that they take their wagons into the forest before the dew fell in the evening. Then, someone could walk behind the wagon and sweep the grass that had been bent over by the horse's hooves and wagon wheels. If this was done, the grass would spring back up, and in a few minutes it would not be obvious that a wagon had passed that way. But if they went later in the evening, after the dew had wet the grass, it would lose its springiness and they would not be able to erase their tracks.

So late that afternoon, all the families in the village loaded their wagons and drove out into the forest with one family member sweeping the grass behind them. When they were well into the woods each family found a large tree, pulled aside its

branches, and parked the wagon under the tree. Then they bedded down for the night next to the wagon, and prayed that the soldiers would not find them.

The next morning, after cautiously scouting around and appointing watchers, they went back to their work in the village. Then again toward evening, they all went back and slept in the woods. And so for several days, late each afternoon they would spread out into the forest, and each morning carefully come back to their work in the village.

But after a while, because there had been no sign of any soldiers, some of the families were getting tired of loading the wagons, and going out into the woods each evening. Their beds at home were certainly more comfortable than sleeping under the trees. That night a few of them stayed home. Nothing happened. No soldiers came. The following night a couple more families stayed home, and the following night more yet. Within a few days no one in the village went out to the forest each night —no one that is, except for one family.

Every afternoon this family faithfully loaded their wagon and drove out into the woods, sweeping the grass behind them to erase their tracks. When they were well into the woods, they selected a large tree to hide under —a different one each night. After they bedded down, they prayed that God would send His angels to camp around them and keep them safe. In the morning they would cautiously come back to their work in the village. And so it went for many days.

Then one night, a little after they had gone to sleep, they were awakened by excited voices and the creaking of wagon wheels. The soldiers must be raiding the village, and their neighbors were coming out to hide in the forest. But as late as it was, even if the villagers swept the grass, they wouldn't be able to erase their wagon's tracks. All that the faithful family could do was just keep still and pray.

Soon, they heard shots! and screams! and the gruff voices of the soldiers. In the woods all around them their neighbors were being tracked down and attacked. The family lay very still and prayer earnestly.

Finally after what seemed like a very long time things quieted down. The soldiers must have left, but it still might not be safe to come out from hiding. Needless to say the family didn't sleep well the rest of the night.

In the morning they found that the soldiers had been able to follow the tracks and attack each of the other families in the village. Almost all the other villagers had been injured or killed. They were the only ones who were still safe. Because they had not only trusted God, but also faithfully acted their part by going into the woods each evening; because they had put their well-being above their comfort and convenience, they were still alive and well.

“The angel of the LORD encamps around those who fear him, and he delivers them.”
Psalms 34:7

“A thousand may fall at your side, ten thousand at your right hand, but it will not come near you.”

Psalms 91:7

BRAIDED CORDAGE

If the fibers that you have to work with are short and/or coarse it may be easier to braid, or plait, cordage rather than twining it. For example, throughout Polynesia, the strong, coarse, relatively short fibers from coconut husks are common. At a cultural exhibit, I remember seeing a rather large building made in the traditional manner. It was completely lashed together using three-strand flat braided cordage!

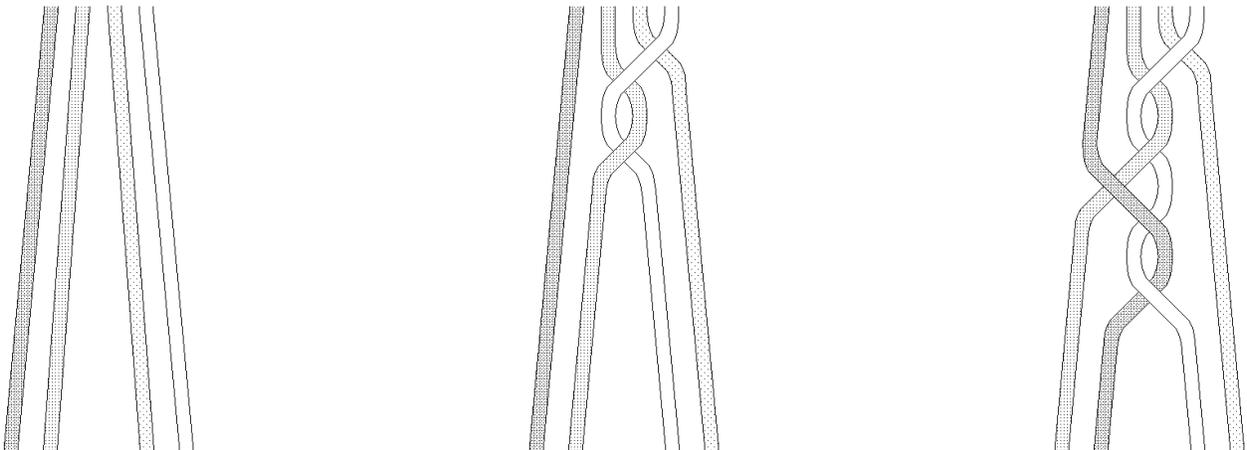
Three-Strand Flat Braid

This is probably the most familiar braid or plait. It is commonly used to braid hair. Hold the fiber strands flat, then simply bring the outer strand, from first one side then the other, in between the other two strands. And as noted above, very effective cordage can be made using this method.



Four-Strand Round Braid

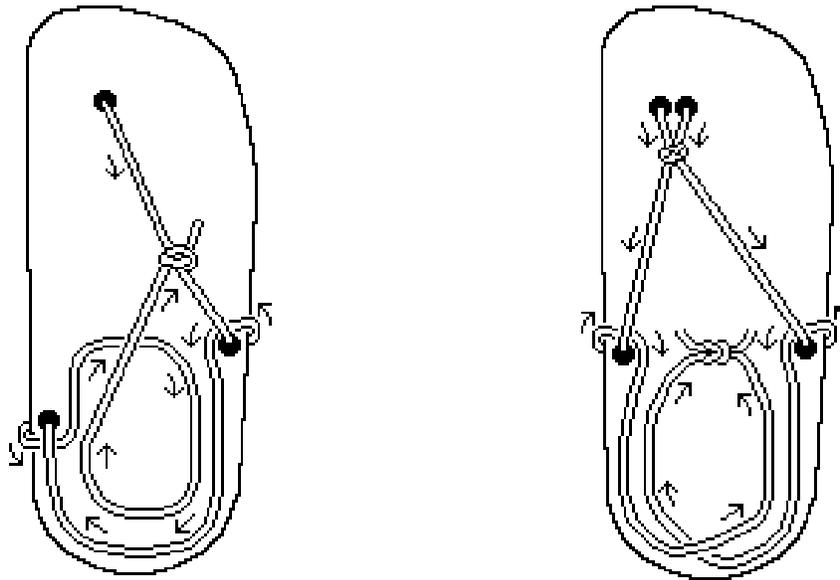
Sometimes it may still be advantageous to have “round” rather than “flat” cordage. This can be accomplished by using the “Four-Strand Round Braid.” Even though this braid will end up being “round,” it is helpful to do the braiding with the strands of fibers held “flat.” Separate the four strands so that two strands are on the left and two strands on the right. The outer strand, from first one side then the other, crosses over and goes around the inner strand on the opposite side, to end up as the inner strand on its original side. (This braid can be easily learned by using two different colors of fiber strands. Get some natural brown jute twine, and some green jute “garden twine” from the hardware store. One color will always start and end on the left, the other color will always start and end on the right.)



SANDALS

Among many people groups, footwear has been recognized as the most important item of clothing. Since most of our feet have not been toughened by going barefoot all the time, it would be awkward and painful to go without some type of footwear. In a survival situation, footwear would be necessary to be able to get around, and gather all the other things we would need. If for whatever reason we didn't have any shoes, we would need to make some type of footwear—even though what can be made from natural materials generally is not as durable as commercial shoes.

Sandals are one of the simplest types of footwear. Soles can be made from many different things such as slabs of bark or plant stalk, or small mats woven from leaves or fibers. Experiment with what is available in the area. Of course if you have some leather, or an old tire, use that. (The side-walls of tires are generally easier to work with than the tread.) There are many different ways to keep the sole of the sandals on the feet. Two simple tie patterns are shown in the diagrams below.



When fashioning your first pair, make one complete sandal before you make the second one. As you are making it, check frequently for size and fit, and after it's finished, walk around in it a little bit before you start the second one. Then make any changes or adjustments on the second sandal. It is a lot easier to re-make the first sandal if you need to, than to make a whole new pair!

MAKING THE MOST OF OUR NIGHT VISION

Compared to most animals, humans don't have very good night vision. But by slowing down a bit, to allow our brain time to process the information, and by understanding how our eyes work, we should still be able to get around fairly well at night.

On the back of the inside of our eyeball, is a layer covered with light-sensitive nerve endings called the Retina. There are two different kinds of these nerve endings, the Rods and the Cones. The cones see color, and the rods see black and white. Cones need to have a certain amount of light to be able to function. On the other hand, rods are still able to work with much less light. This is why at night we only see black and white.

Although there is only one type of rod, there are three different kinds of cones. Each type of cone picks up a different band of color, similar to the three primary colors on a "color wheel," (yellow, red, and blue). All of the other colors can be made by different combinations and intensities of these three. Humans have all three types of cones, so we are able to see all the different colors. But most animals have only one or two kinds of cones. As a result, they are color-blind, and can only see certain colors.

In the place of the cones that they don't have, animals have more rods. And, because the rods are smaller than the cones, several rods fit into the same space that one cone would take up. Therefore, animals have many more rods than humans, and this is why animals can see better at night than we can.

The rods have a chemical, called rhodopsin, which builds up under low light conditions to make them more sensitive, and it takes about 20 minutes for them to get fully "charged." Any "bright" light will cause the rhodopsin to be released, which is why our eyes "hurt" when the lights are turned on after having been in the dark. Thus, we can frequently "see better" without a flashlight than with one, although we may not be able to make out as much detail. The rods are desensitized by the brightness of the flashlight, so we can *only* see where we shine the beam. But by turning the flashlight off, and waiting for the rhodopsin to build up in our rods, we should be able to see all around us.

In the center of the retina is a little "dimple" called the Fovea. This "dimple" is caused by many nerve endings being crowded closely together causing it to bulge slightly. All of these nerve endings enable us to clearly see whatever we focus on. However, there are primarily cones in the fovea, with very few rods. As a result, when we look straight at something at night, we are not able to see it very well. If we try looking all around whatever we want to look at, rather than looking straight at it, and letting our brain take in the whole picture, we should be able to make it out better. This may be hard to do at first, but with practice it becomes easier.

In summary, here are four things we can do to make the most of our night vision and help us get around at night:

- (1) Allow about 20 minutes for our eyes to fully adjust to the dark.
- (2) Once our eyes have adjusted to the darkness, don't expose them to any "bright" light sources, such as a flashlight, a campfire, or looking directly at the moon. If we do, we will have to wait for our eyes to re-adjust again.
- (3) Don't look directly at an object we want to see. Look all around the object, letting our brain "fill in the picture."
- (4) Slow down to allow our brain time to process the information it receives not only from our eyes, but from all of our senses.