

## **There In The Darkness**

Have you ever heard the legend of the Cherokee Indian youth's rite of passage? His father takes him into the forest blindfolded and leaves him alone. He is required to sit on a stump the whole night and not take off the blindfold until a ray of sun shines through it. He is all by himself. He cannot cry out for help to anyone. Upon surviving the night, he has entered manhood. He cannot tell the other boys of this experience as each young brave must make this rite of passage on his own.

Naturally, the boy is terrified. He can hear a plethora of noises emanating from the forest. The darkness has its own horrific sounds and it seems as if the forest itself may swallow him up into its gaping darkness at any moment. The boy knows that there are wild animals which can come without warning. He begins to wonder if one from the enemy's tribe will sneak up and take his life. The wind howls and the trees rustle. The earth moves and the stump on which he is sitting, seems to shake. But he sits stoically, quietly, fearfully; never removing the blindfold for he knows that he must endure it if he is to become a man.

Finally, after an excruciatingly endless night of terror, the sun begins to peek over the horizon and its first rays pierce the blindfold. Finally, he can remove it; his trial has ended. He takes off the blindfold and his eyes begin to regain their focus, and it is then that he sees his father sitting on the stump next to him. His father had been there all along, keeping watch the entire night.

How often it is in our own lives we go through things in which we think we're all alone. We suffer in a relationship and we feel like a ship being broken by the crashing waves. We hear the news from the doctor and wonder what tomorrow will look like. We endure the difficulty of persecution at work or within our own family. Maybe it is the dark trial of loneliness and despair, as we wonder if there is any hope for tomorrow.

If there's one thing we can all count on in life, it is that we will go through difficult times. We will experience times when we are afraid and when we feel like no one is with us. We'll go through things that make us feel like we're alone in a dark forest.

It is in those times, especially, that we need to remember the God of the Bible. He is the One who proved His love for us by sending Jesus to die for our sins. He is the One who comes to our aid and who says, in Hebrews 13:5, "I will never fail you. I will never abandon you." He will be your Shield and Protector during your time of need. Find solace in Him today.