

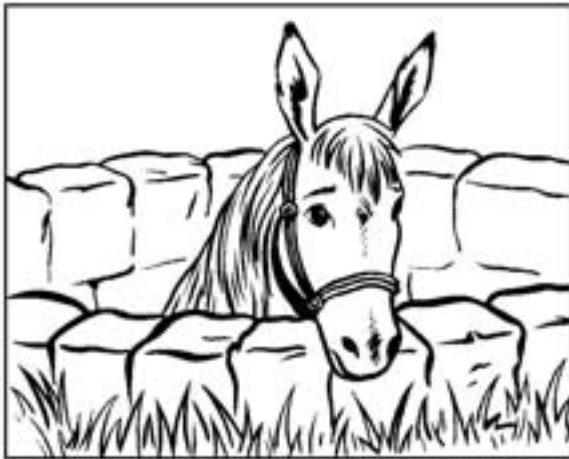
## Getting out of the hole

A parable is told of a farmer who owned an old mule. The mule fell into the farmer's well. The farmer heard the mule braying and, after carefully assessing the situation, sympathized with the mule. He decided, however, that neither the mule nor the well was worth the trouble of saving. Instead, he called his neighbors together, told them what had happened, and enlisted them to help haul dirt to bury the old mule in the well and put him out of his misery.

Initially, the old mule was hysterical. But as the farmer and his neighbors continued shoveling and the dirt hit his back, a thought struck him. It dawned on him that every time a shovel load of dirt landed on his back, he should shake it off and step up! This he did, blow after blow.

"Shake it off and step up. Shake it off and step up. Shake it off and step up!" No matter how painful the blows, or how distressing the situation seemed, the old mule fought against panic and just kept right on shaking it off and stepping up. It wasn't long before the old mule, battered and exhausted, stepped triumphantly out of the well.

—Author unknown



**Do you sometimes feel that you are in a deep hole? And what's more, do you feel that somebody just keeps throwing dirt on you? You can turn the bad to good by looking up and seeing that the Lord is there through it all. Take His hand. Ask Him to pull you up and to help you see His purpose in it all. He can help you see the events around you from His perspective. He can give you His calm and stop the panic. And then He can help you find solutions that will enable you to step triumphantly out of that deep well and onto the path of a brighter tomorrow.**

—Chloe West

## Answers from God

*For all the negative things we say to ourselves, God has given us His positive responses in the Bible.*

You say, "It's impossible."

God says, "All things are possible with Me" (Luke 18:27).

You say, "I'm too tired."

God says, "I will give you rest" (Matthew 11:28–20).

You say, "Nobody really loves me."

God says, "I love you" (John 3:16 and John 13:34).

You say, "I can't go on."

God says, "My grace is sufficient and I will always be there to help you" (2 Corinthians 12:9 and Psalm 91:15).

You say, "I can't figure things out."

God says, "I will direct your steps" (Proverbs 3:5–6).

You say, "I can't do it."

God says, "You can do all things through My strength" (Philippians 4:13).

You say, "I'm not able."

God says, "I am able" (2 Corinthians 9:8).

You say, "It's not worth it."

God says, "It will be worth it" (Romans 8:28).

You say, "I can't forgive myself."

God says, "I forgive you" (1 John 1:9 and Romans 8:1).

You say, "I can't manage."

God says, "I will supply all your needs" (Philippians 4:19).

You say, "I'm afraid."

God says, "I have not given you a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind" (2 Timothy 1:7).

You say, "I'm always worried and frustrated."

God says, "Cast all your cares on Me" (1 Peter 5:7).

You say, "I don't have enough faith."

God says, "I've given everyone a measure of faith" (Romans 12:3b).

You say, "I'm not smart enough."

God says, "I give you wisdom" (James 1:5 and 1 Corinthians 1:30).

You say, "I feel all alone."

God says, "I will never leave you or forsake you" (Hebrews 13:5).