

"Re-claiming the MAN-CARD ~ Chasing Lions 1" 6.24.10

5 yr old Scotty was in the kitchen as his mom made supper. She asked him to go into the pantry & get her a can of tomato paste, but Scotty refused. "I'm not going in there." It's dark & I'm scared. She asked again & he would not budge in that direction. Finally she said, "Its OK honey - - Jesus will be in there with you." Scotty walked cautiously to the pantry door & slowly opened it. He peeked inside, saw it was dark, & started to leave, when all @ once, this thought came to Scotty & he said "Jesus, if you are in there, would you hand me that can of tomato paste?" ☺

Psychiatrists speculate that we are born with only (2) innate fears: the fear of falling & the fear of loud noises. Both of these fears are designed to keep us away from danger as toddlers.

That means that every other fear is learned - MOST importantly - that means that every other fear can be unlearned!

Our world is filled with FEARS that professionals call PHOBIAS:

- Pela-do-phobia = fear of baldness & bald people = I'm afraid I might have that ☺
- Chae-to-phobia = fear of hairy people
- O-don-to-phobia = fear of teeth
- Graph-o-phobia = fear of writing in public

OTHER COMMON phobias include:

- A-rach-no-phobia = the fear of spiders
- Claus-tro-phobia = the fear of confined spaces

SOME FAIRLY RECENT phobias include:

- Tech-no-phobia = the fear of technology, especially computers
- No-mo-phobia = the fear of being out of mobile phone contact

Louis Pasteur is reported to have had such an irrational fear of dirt & infection that he actually refused to ever shake hands.

President Benjamin Harrison & his wife were so intimidated by the newfangled electricity installed in the White House they didn't dare touch the switches. If there were NO servants around to turn off the lights when the Harrison's went to bed, they slept with the lights on.

Just for the record I'm afraid of (2) very scary things ☺ Snakes & Heights

(1) FINAL phobia to mention:

Pho-bo-phobia = fear of being afraid: most of us deal w/some kind of fear.

It's interesting to note ~ professionals say: 90% of the things we fear never happen. That's a lot of wasted energy & time.

Today we want to consider how FEAR affects our FAITH & reconsider that what it means to live by FAITH.

In its most basic form, LIVING by FAITH means TAKING RISKS

Hudson Taylor pioneer missionary who founded the China Inland Mission: Integrated FAITH & RISK & once said, "Unless there is an element of risk in our exploits for God, there is no need for faith."

- I. Satan has (2) primary tactics to neutralize YOU spiritually:

A. Enemy's 1<sup>st</sup> tactic = Discouragement

- Satan wants you to focus on past mistakes you've made. As long as the enemy can keep you buried in the past, you will never be a threat to him in the future.

B. Enemy's 2<sup>nd</sup> tactic = FEAR

- Satan wants to scare the heaven out of you. He wants to put you on your heels so you become reactive & defensive.
- Bible instructs us, "Watch out for your great enemy, the devil. He prowls around like a roaring lion, looking for someone to devour." I Peter 5: 8
  - I Peter was written during a terrible time of persecution. Believers were dying daily because of their devotion to our Lord Jesus; naturally were afraid. Peter writes to encourage that there is a better way.

Remember our definition of what it means to 'Live by Faith'. Its not going backwards = back-pedaling, constantly living in fear of the enemy. There is something more - - something better on this journey of FAITH: Instead of being devoured by the LION let's consider chasing him in Jesus' name.

If that sounds insane I would like to introduce to you my favorite man in the O.T.  
BENAIAH

II. Story of Benaiah

A. (R) II Samuel 23: 20 – 23 or p. 255 in pew Bible

B. Discreet Observations about Benaiah (Mark Batterson)

1. He was born a priest = (R) I Chronicles 12: 26 or p. 319 in pew Bible
2. Bible does NOT say WHY Benaiah gave up the relatively safe & simple life of a priest & chose the dangerous life of a soldier.
3. Bible does indicate Benaiah was willing to get his hands dirty & put his faith into action.
4. Bible does say that his valiant behavior earned him the reward of being King David's captain of his royal Body Guard.
5. Bible does NOT tell us what Benaiah was doing or where he was going when he encountered this lion. We do not know the time of day or his mindset.

C. Couple of things we know for sure:

1. It was gutsy to CHASE this LION (leave the big kitties alone at the zoo)
  - a. Lions average 9ft in length & weigh between 350 – 500 pds
  - b. Lions can run up to 30 mph for over 50 yards
  - c. Lions can jump 12ft (vertically) & 36ft (horizontally)

2. Without a doubt Benaiah did not wake up the morning of the encounter & plan out every detail. It wasn't scheduled on his Google Calendar; was not on the top of his to-do list; seriously believe it was on his wish list.
3. This LION encounter was as unplanned as a flat tire!

D. Through-out the Bible God uses 'risk-takers.'

- Abraham ~ risked losing his biological son Isaac
- Rahab ~ risked everything in her world to hide the (2) spies
- Nehemiah ~ risked his position in the Babylonian administration to rebuild the wall in Jerusalem.
- Queen Esther ~ risked her life & crown to save the Jewish people
- Daniel ~ risked his royal position & very life to honor God

Remember our definition of 'Living by Faith' involves 'Taking Risks.'

III. Personal Question = "God, what do you want me to do with my life?"

A. Maybe only one thing more dangerous than asking this question IS NOT asking that question.

1. Don't be afraid of what you are going to step away from or how much the sacrifice will cost you wrong question
2. WHY b-c we always get back more than we gave up. AND if you get back more than you give up, have you really sacrificed anything at all?

B. This is my personal story of stepping out on faith:

1. You will always 2<sup>nd</sup> guess your decision:
2. I naively signed up for ministry without taking into account some pretty serious matters:
  - a. I didn't speak-communicate-talk well up front; matter of fact I was terrified of public speaking = Gloss-o-phobia
    - i. Weddings were the worst – uncontrollable knee knocking
    - ii. Cotton mouth ~ tried to solve it w/water = another problem ☺
  - b. I never factored in my Myers-Briggs Personality Test
    - i. I'm a very strong INTROVERT ~ I gain energy from small intimate groups + solitude
    - ii. To this day large crowds w/out a purpose make me anxious
  - c. Finally I was not from a priestly family by any stretch of imagination

C. Don't LIVE this life in the grandstand watching from afar; LIVE this life with no regrets!

1. (R) Matthew 14: 22 – 33 or p. 747
2. It's easy to criticize water walkers from the comfortable confines of the boat.
  - a. Truthfully ~ I believe the other (11 disciples) were haunted the rest of their lives by the missed opportunity.
  - b. Think about it ~ they could have walked on water; but they chose the safe confines of the boat.

- c. They missed a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity because they were not willing to take a God-ordained risk.

D. Difference between Action Regrets + In-Action Regrets

1. Action Regrets = taste bad, but inaction regrets leave a bitter aftertaste that lasts a life-time.
2. In-Action Regrets haunt us b-c they leave us asking, "WHAT IF?"

We wonder how our life would have been different had we taken the risk or seized the opportunity.

When people reflect upon their lives as a whole: In-Action regrets outnumber Action regrets = 84% to 16%

There are basically (2) approaches to YOUR life: Playing to win & Playing not to lose = WE PLAY OFFENSE!

The purpose & goal of our life IS NOT to arrive safely @ death.

Marching orders from Jesus = (R) Matthew 11:12 or p. 742 in pew Bible