

**Exploring Life – part five**  
**“Exploring the Life of a Stunt Man”**  
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*September 20<sup>th</sup>, 2009*

**Intro:**

**Matt 28:19** “Go and make disciples of all nations...”

**ECC Process of Discipleship: Making an IMPACT...To Love...To Grow...To Serve**

We have 3 priorities – To love...which is expressed in our Sunday morning celebration. To grow...which is expressed in our Connection Groups. To serve...which is expressed in our daily lives in the places we live, work and play; as well as through the local church. The vision of E.C.C. is to gather together weekly for corporate worship, loving God and each other; then to come together in small Connection Groups for discipleship and fellowship, and are regularly involved in reaching out to others with the love, acceptance, and forgiveness of Jesus Christ through community outreach. To Love...To Grow...To Serve!

**Sermon Series Title: Exploring Life:**  
**“To Boldly Go Where No Man Has Gone Before!”**

**Series Synopsis:** We’ve reset our assumptions of Jesus Christ; climbed the mountain learning about the teaching of Jesus Christ; learned how to live life in the valley – now.... Let’s begin to explore life!

Life happens one season at a time; filled with individual events - positive and negative, known and unknown. In this six week series we shall boldly go where no man has gone before; to explore the good, the bad and the ugly as it pertains to each of our lives – in our quest to make an IMPACT for the Kingdom of God.

**The Following Writing Comes from Steve Kline, Jr.**

First of all...I missed you Sunday and am praying that God is in the midst and doing His work in whatever situation called you to Washington.

Second...I may have told you this before but I wanted to share with you a little about what God has taught be about risk taking. I can’t look up scripture references right now but I’m sure you can find them.

God is a risk taker. This is something that did not occur to me for quite a while. He’s omnipotent and omniscient. So, what could he ever do that involves risk? Well, it seems that creating a universe that He described as good then giving part of that creation, man, dominion (and along with it free will) over His awesome creation in the hope that man would love and worship Him is pretty risky. His risk taking goes even further because He did this knowing that man would not love Him. So, He would have to send His only Son (part of His very own being) to die for to prove His love for us. And, of course, He knew that before he started His creation.

It seems to me there are two main principles we can draw from God's risk taking. First, it is always centered around relationships. The focus of God's risk taking was to build a relationship between Him and us. But, He did it in an interesting way. I'm sure He could have achieved what He wanted by putting the onus of His risk taking on us to demonstrate our love for Him. But, instead of doing that, He put the burden of His risk taking on Himself. He did this by demonstrating how deep His love was for us in the *hope* that we would love Him in return.

Second, God knew the outcome of His risk taking. Risk involves a chance of failure, but the probability of failure is not an unknown. God knew that some of His creation would not respond to the love He demonstrated. There was going to be failure, but God knew how much failure there was going to be. God weighed that probability of failure against what He would have to do (let His own Son die) to ensure success. In other words, God counted the cost of His actions before He took them. He deemed the cost worth the risk so He sent His own son to die for us.

Because we are made in the image of God, risk taking has been imprinted upon our spirits from the beginning. In fact, we have a basic need and desire to take risk. Because we are both spirit and flesh we can take spiritual risk and natural risk. Spiritual risks are those that demonstrate love and build relationships – the kinds of risk that God took. The focus of spiritual risks is on others. Examples of spiritual risk are sending your wife flowers or writing her a love letter, encouraging your children in a difficult task, blessing someone else financially when they are in need, tithing, worshipping God with your whole heart, etc. Natural risks are those that feed our flesh and, in general, destroy relationships. The focus of natural risk is on oneself. Examples of natural risk include viewing pornography, reckless driving, yelling or lashing out at someone, dismissing your wife's ideas, etc. Only spiritual risks satisfy the two conditions above that define God's risk taking.

Both types of risk have two things in common. First, we undertake actions that fit into either category because we ultimately know that we need and desire God's love. Whether I'm writing my wife a love letter or viewing pornography I must realize that the ultimate goal of my risk taking is God's love. If I don't recognize this I won't be able to shift the focus of my risk taking from myself to others (God or my wife). No matter what risk we are taking we are trying to fill the hole in our heart that only God can fill. Second, risk taking builds upon itself. If I start entertaining lustful thoughts then at some point those lustful thoughts won't be enough to satisfy my need for risk. So, I will have to take a more risky action such as viewing pornography. Soon, that level of risk taking won't satisfy me and I'll have to move onto something even more risky...perhaps having sex with someone who is not my wife. (This is why Jesus says that a lustful thought or a hateful thought is a sin the same as adultery and murder are a sin. Those thoughts are the early stages of a cycle of risk taking that lead to an act of risk taking and sin that can be seen by others.) The same cycle is true of spiritual risk taking. I hold my wife's hand in public, then build to writing her a love letter, then build to covering her in prayer, then build to seeing her with the eyes of God so as to love her without seeing the past sins. This is how good builds upon good and evil upon evil.

Finally, because we are made of flesh we have a great desire to feed it. Natural risk taking is always easier than spiritual risk taking and gives us immediate satisfaction. It feels really good but the high fades quickly. Spiritual risk taking is much harder but gives a more lasting feeling of satisfaction. This is why it is so hard to move out of a life of natural risk taking to one of spiritual risk taking. But the more spiritual risk taking we do the less our desire for natural risk taking will be. As Christians we must challenge each of our actions to see the risk we are taking is spiritual or natural. We must also count the cost of these actions to see if we are willing to pay the price that will result from those actions. We can't say that the costs are unknown because God's word tells us the results of all our actions and even if we don't know His word His Spirit is inside of us to let us know the costs of any action we are about to take.

### **Part 5: "Exploring the Life of a Stunt Man"**

#### **Question: How do we get out of our comfort zone and take a risk?**

There are many famous Stunt Men in History

- Evil Knevil
- Super Dave Osborn
- Man who went over Niagara Falls in a barrel
- Rod Kimble
- Larry Rippenkroeger – who? Bruce Willis's stunt man – unknown, but often times stuntmen are. You don't see them in the top credit. They try to remain unseen – yet they take all of the risks.

Each of these examples of stunt men were people who were willing to take a risk, to get out of their comfort zones to accomplish a special feat. We have to be willing to get out of our comfort zones if we truly want to accomplish something in life that will make a true IMPACT in the lives of the people around us.

We can't always take the "safe route". But the route of the Christian is a dangerous, tough route that is not for the faint of heart. You've got to have "Holy Spirit Moxie" if you will to accomplish this life and to live it to the fullest making the greatest IMPACT possible.

What causes ordinary people to take risks? What prompts people to gamble or engage in extreme sports such as skydiving, hang gliding, scuba diving, auto racing, rock climbing and whitewater kayaking? Psychologists have determined that it is more a personality trait rather than a behavior. Some people love to take risks; they thrive on the adrenaline rush and the feeling of escaping the ordinary. However, the majority of us prefer not to take risks we prefer the comfort of some security in our lives. We have committed ourselves to playing it safe. We hedge our bets, cover our tracks and dot every "i" and cross every "t". From being over insured to eating low fat diets we try to minimize our risks as much as possible. In fact we do not mind taking risks as long as someone else is doing it. Jesus made it clear that following Him would be a risk. In fact He wants us to risk everything that we have to follow Him.

## Definition of “The Comfort Zone”

Basically, everything you know is your comfort zone.

You can divide this zone into five parts:

- **Geographical** - Let's say you are at home in your living room; this means you are within your geographical comfort zone. If you're in a place where you have never been before, you are outside of your geographical comfort zone.
- **Mental** - If you think about something you are familiar with, like job tasks you do on a daily basis, you are within your mental comfort zone, but if you think like you have never done before, you are outside of your mental comfort zone.
- **Activity-related** - If you do something you have been doing your whole life, like a card game you grew up with, this is within your activity-related comfort zone, and if you do something brand new, you are outside of your activity-related comfort zone.
- **Personal** - If friends surround you, you are within your personal comfort zone, and if strangers surround you, you are outside of your personal comfort zone.
- **Spiritual** - Everything that you associate with in regards to your relationship with God would be your spiritual comfort zone. The way you've always reacted to God is your comfort zone. Getting out of that zone and thinking differently or doing something differently would be out of spiritual comfort zone. When you get out of that zone, at least one of the other 4 zones will probably be affected as well.

But now comes the critical question, so make sure to answer honestly: Where do you prefer to be? Within your comfort zone, or outside of it? Ninety-five percent of people feel more comfortable within their comfort zone, and you probably fall into that category; this is absolutely fine! But why do most people feel better within their comfort zone? The explanation is simple, yet frightening: Humans are born with an innate, primary instinct that continues to control our lives, the desire of survival. Basically, your comfort zone is a safe place, so why would we want to leave it? We all want to survive in life.

This is why most people spend their entire lives within their comfort zones, desiring more of the same and occasionally wishing for better. Because you already know everything within your comfort zone, unfortunately spiritual development in your walk with God is only possible if you step outside of it.

**Your IMPACT in life will be minimal unless you're willing to get out of your comfort zone! Take a risk... take a chance... get out there and do, think, be, go, etc. to places you've never gone before.**

“Move out of your **comfort zone**. You can only grow if you are willing to feel awkward and uncomfortable when you try something new.”

~ Brian Tracy

“A dream is your creative vision for your life in the future. You must break out of your current **comfort zone** and become comfortable with the unfamiliar and the unknown.”

~ Denis Waitley

“To the degree we're not living our dreams, our **comfort zone** has more control of us than we have over ourselves.”

~ Peter McWilliams

## **IS IT POSSIBLE? Yes.....**

Let me share with you 55 examples out of the thousands of those over the last 4 millenniums, (4,000 years) of those who stepped out of their comfort zones to make an IMPACT throughout church history.

### **55 Risk takers of Church history during the last 4 millenniums**

1. Abraham 2,161-1986BC - The patriarch who was the father of the people of God, Abraham the risk taker who left the security and comfort of Ur because of the call of God. He took a risk and became the "father of the multitude " he is the spiritual ancestor of all Jews and the father of the nation of Israel.
2. Isaac- He went to Mount Moriah with his father where Abraham was going to offer up a living sacrifice- Abraham was directed to sacrifice his son- but Abraham knew deep within God would provide a living sacrifice- but Isaac went with and it was risky but God came through with a ram to sacrifice.
3. Moses 1527-1405BC- This man of God gave up the best Egypt could offer to a prince to serve God. He risked his life and reputation in Egypt to serve God. His reward for taking a risk is that nearly every book in the bible references Moses or his writings.
4. Joshua ruled 1406- 1382 BC The risk taker is still considered one of the best military minds of history. His dedication to risking all to take the promised land is noted by all. His strategy and tactics are still classics in military science. He after taking the land devoted himself to strengthening the worship of the Lord even when many others were falling away from God. The last appearance of him in the Bible is one which shows a man challenging the people of Israel to covenant themselves back to God. Once again taking a risk to call people back to God when it was not popular.
5. Deborah- Deborah demonstrated the quality of courage when she rallied the tribes of Israel to attack Sisera and the Canaanites, who had been raiding Israel for years. Barak assisted Deborah as they defeated them at Kishon with help of a violent storm (Judges 4,5).

6. Ruth- She took a risk to stay with Naomi and her God. The impact was she needed to leave her family and home country.

7. David 1050- 1,000 BC- a risk taker who challenged a Goliath. He took a risk for God and slew a giant everyone else was afraid of. This risk taker became Israel's most famous king and the nation fondly remembered his reign as it's golden age.

8. Solomon

9. Jeremiah 625-585 BC- The priest who took the risk to speak for God during the heartbreaking final days of Judah. His risk caused himself to be called a traitor, to be arrested, to be hounded, and threatened throughout his ministry. Yet he took the risk for God and as he predicted, Jerusalem was captured and the nation deported because of their unwillingness to repent to God for their sins.

10. Esther was an orphan who became queen of Persia. Mordecai raised her and helped her to become queen. She was placed in her position by the Lord to be the solution to the problem created by Haman. She needed to risk her life to save the annihilation of the Jewish people by Haman's evil plan.

a. Esther 4:14 "For if you remain silent at this time, relief and deliverance for the Jews will arise from another place, but you and your father's family will perish. And who knows but that you have come to royal position for such a time as this?"

b. This was risky business but listen to her response: Then Esther sent this reply to Mordecai: 4:16 "Go, gather together all the Jews who are in Susa, and fast for me. Do not eat or drink for three days, night or day. I and my maids will fast as you do. When this is done, I will go to the king, even though it is against the law. And if I perish, I perish."

11. Daniel 606- 530 BC- a prophet who took the risk of serving God in a heathen nation under captivity and refused to change and conform to their ways. Daniel the prophet who took the risk to refuse to bow to the emperor and acknowledge him as divine. He became known as one of the most famous prophets during the captivity of Israel and he also became one of the top leaders in Babylonian empire, and Persian empire. His risk taking caused a King Nebuchadnezzar to accept the Lord.

12. Ezra 516 - 458BC - a priest/scribe who was a risk taker who returned to Jerusalem to restore the temple insist on obedience to the Law of God and purity among the Israelites. His risk caused many to repent and the restoration of the temple.

13. Nehemiah 516- 433 BC -He took the risk to return to Israel and give up the posh life in the Babylonian court to rebuild the walls of Jerusalem and support Ezra's revival of the Jewish community.

14. Mary the mother of Jesus. She risked her reputation and life to give birth to Jesus.

15. Joseph was betrothed to Mary when she was found with child he was going to put her away but an angel changed his mind. He risked everything to marry Mary and raise Jesus. He put his life in danger and spent his helping to raise Jesus.

16. Jesus 0-33 AD- He was willing to risk all to follow God's plan even risk his own life on the cross to see to it that God's plan was fulfilled and the world given redemption through his sacrifice.

\* He is the ultimate risk taker of all time!

1. He risked all and worked through his fears- He worked through his fear in the Garden and he faced them and defeated them with the courage to risk all for God.

2. Jesus knew that to defeat fear you had to risk comfort and safety and face it head on in God.

3. Jesus was a risk taker - Jones states, "Jesus was not exactly what people had in mind for a leader." Jesus took risks consistently confronting the Pharisees and the sinner and speaking the truth.

4. Jesus had the attitude of a risk taker because he said "Why not Me?" The key here to understand is that maturity in Christianity says "Why not me?" We come to understanding that we are in a walk that will have points of taking risks for Christ. We should have the motto "I will serve and risk", not "Why don't they do it!" One has a risk taker attitude the other has an excuse maker attitude.

\* Jones states, "... The willingness to enter into whatever God wants is one of the hallmarks of spiritual leadership."

17. John the Baptist 1BC- 30AD-John the Baptist was a risk taker. He was beheaded by Antipas, but his influence survived for years. Some of his followers joined Jesus; others continued to revere him. He was the last of the prophets and the forerunner of the Savior, and, according to Jesus, the greatest man born to woman.

18. Peter ? -65AD- risked all to come to Jesus on the water. He risked all to follow Jesus his risk taking sometimes got him into trouble when he risked seeing what happened to Jesus and became afraid when confronted on who he was. He off course denied Jesus three times. It crushed him but Jesus appeared to him and forgave him. Barker notes, Peter the fickle loudmouth, was, however, transformed by the resurrection. He took charge of the frightened, faltering group of believers and fearlessly preached the news of the resurrection on the streets of Jerusalem"(281). He risked his life for Christ and gave it up on a cross upside down stating he did not deserve to die like Christ.

19. Stephen- The first disciple killed for preaching the Gospel.

20. Andrew (?-69AD) was a follower of John The Baptist. Then became the follower of Jesus Christ. He was killed in Patras preaching the salvation message of Jesus. He carried the message to modern day Russia and Georgia, and Istanbul. He was known for raising

up leaders and then moving on to another area. He was stoned to death.

21. James ?-44 AD- James was murdered by King Agrippa I, and his death is noted in Acts 12:1,2.

22. John ?-90-100 AD - Risked all to serve Jesus and follow him and became one of Jesus' best friends. His risk taking for him gave him the privilege of writing the book of Revelation and revealing the great Revelation of Jesus Christ. He was a major influencer on Christian thinking and living.

23. Philip – He took the message to France and was murdered in Hierapolis by being pierced through his thighs and hung upside down.

24. Bartholomew – He brought the message to India and was martyred in Albanus. He was flayed alive by the order of King Astyages and then beheaded.

25. Thomas – Thomas founded the church in India. He was martyred on Mount Thomas in Mylopur by being run through with a lance.

26. Matthew – He took the Gospel to Persia and wrote the book of Matthew. He was believed to be martyred by the Jewish Sanhedrin.

27. Paul 1-65 AD- Risked all after his encounter with Jesus to reach the Gentiles for Christ. He endured persecution beyond what we can understand and considered it an honor to risk all for Christ. Paul's risk for Him blessed him with the honor of writing a major part of the New Testament.

28. Perpetua

29. Polycarp- born AD 70 -155 - A risk taker who stood against Rome's persecution of Christians. He was Bishop of Smyrna. When he was brought into the arena the procounsel encouraged him to denounce Christianity and bow to Caesar. His response to them was "Eighty and six years have I served him, and he hath done me no wrong; how then can I Blaspheme my king who saved me?" They tied burning him but it is reported that the fire would not consume him so the executioner ran into the fire and stabbed him. When he started bleeding they claim that his blood put out the fire and a dove shaped cloud ascended up into the sky.

30. Justin Martyr - Risked all to defend the Christian Faith before the Emperor himself. Justin was brought to trial with six other believers in AD165. His answer to his executioners to denounce Christianity was "And you, you can kill us, but not hurt us." His risk taking for Him got him the title "Defender of the Faith." because he published works on the authenticity of Christianity as the true faith.

31. Tertullian - 150-212 AD - He was a risk taker for Him and wrote over thirty books dealing with Christian living, church life, and doctrine.
32. Origen - 185-254 AD - A risk taker who was considered to be the best scholar in the Christian church in the first half of the century. During his six decades of his life he defended the faith against heretics and Roman authorities, he was active as a Christian educator, a witness to the Jewish community, and a spiritual leader in the Christian church.
33. Jerome 331 AD-420 AD - He was a risk taker that translated the Bible into Latin known as the Vulgate he became known as a successful Bible translator.
34. John Chrysostom 350-407 AD- A risk taker who became known as an anointed eloquent preacher - he became known as "goldenmouth." He excelled in moral and spiritual teaching. He birthed the preachers of today who emphasized spiritual teaching than doctrinal exposition.
35. Patrick - 389-461 AD - A risk taker who took the gospel to Ireland after he escaped from Ireland as a slave from 405-411 AD. He took a risk to go back to his captors and share Christ with them. He saw converts converted in all social classes during his ministry.
36. John Wycliff - 1330-1384 AD- He is a risk taker known as the Morning Star of the Reformation. He risked taking on the Catholic church for Christ to cause reform and influenced his followers to translate the Bible into English so the common man could read it.
37. Martin Luther 1483-1546 AD- He is the father of the Protestant Reformation. He was a catholic monk and priest that challenged the church's heresy. He promoted justification by grace alone through faith, that the Bible was the ultimate authority for Christian belief and practice even though the church of the day disagreed with him. AS a result of his risk taking Evangelical Christianity preserves and continues today.
38. William Tyndale - 1490-1536 AD- He is the risk taker who is the father of the English Bible. Before him there was the Wycliff Bible but this never widely circulated in English and was a translation from the Vulgate. Tyndale translated an English version of the Bible from the Greek and Hebrew and had it printed in mass and circulated. He was branded by the Catholic church as an outlaw. He later became known as "God's Outlaw". He was martyred at Brussels for his actions.
39. John Calvin - 1509-1564 AD - The risk taker who was exiled from France and became chief pastor in Geneva. He is known as the Reformations supreme Bible teacher. He some of the first commentaries on Scripture. His writing helped fire such great pastoral evangelists such as John Bunyan, George Whitefield, Jonathan Edwards, Charles Haddon Spurgeon and William Carey.

40. John Knox 1514-1572 - Brought the reformation to Scotland. He was a risk taker who went against the church to preach the truth.

41. John Bunyan 1628-1688 - he was a risk taker who spent years in prison in England for his stance on truth. He is the author of "Pilgrims Progress" and 59 other books. Many of his allegorical writings point to salvation by grace and a distinct salvation experience.

42. Jonathan Edwards 1703-1758 - He was converted at 17 and became a missionary to America. He risked stressing practical piety. His pastoral insight and personal saintliness granted him the honor of being considered balanced in "The heart" and "The head" of Christian doctrine and lifestyle.

43. Mrs. Wesley

44. John Wesley 1703-1791 AD - A risk taker along with his brother Charles who started a society in the Church of England called "Under God" later the "Holy Club at Oxford" and later after deaths birthed the Methodist Church. John tirelessly spent his life as a gospel outrider. He is reported to have covered 250,000 miles on horse back in all weathers. He said "I offered them Christ" was his own repeated summary of what he did for the kingdom of God.

45. Charles Wesley 1707-1788 AD - A preacher and traveler until 1750's when he took the risk to write more. He became a songwriter and a famous author of many hymns. He dictated his last hymn on his deathbed. Charles famous quote is "God buries his workmen, but carries on his work." Some of his more famous hymns are "Jesus, Lover Of My Soul", "Hark the Herald Angels Sing", "Christ the Lord Is Risen Today", "O for A Thousand Tongues to Sing", and many more to be exact he wrote 8,989 hymns.

46. George Whitefield 1714-1770 AD- A risk taker who was considered the greatest evangelist since the apostle Paul. He preached four to three times a day outdoors. He preached in Great Britain but spent time also preaching in the colonies. He built two large churches in England and many in the colonies and a Orphan house in Georgia. He was the chief figure in the Great Awakening in America. His essential message is "Ye must be born again!" This risk brought on the wrath of many but he countered it with kindness.

47. William Carey 1761-1834 - This risk taker became known as the "Father of Modern Missions". He started the modern missionary movement which has had global impact in the world. His forty year veteran missionary stay in India set a powerful example of sacrifice for foreign missionaries of the future.

48. Charles Finney 1792-1875 AD - The risk taker who is most often remembered as a revivalist. He organized and worked at motivating people to get revived. He is noted as being considered one of America's greatest revivalist preachers. Many noted that the first half of the 19th century in the U.S. is often called the Age of Jackson but many have commented it was also the age of Finney's Revivals. His fundamental concern was to get

sinner converted.

49. C.H. Spurgeon 1834-1892 AD- A risk taker who impacted 1,000 daily. In 1865 his sermons sold 25,000 copies weekly around world and England. He was considered "The Prince of Preachers."

50. D.L. Moody 1837-1899 AD- He birthed mass evangelism and the Sunday school movement. He is known for his three R Theology: A. Ruined by the fall B. Redeemed by the Blood C. Regenerated by the Spirit. When he was asked about his theology he replied, "My theology!" "I didn't know that I had any." He is also known for reaching people across Many interdenominational lines.

51. Dietrich Bonhoeffer 1906-1945 - He risked all to openly criticize Hitler and the Nazi anti-Jewish policy which cost him his life on April 9 in a Flossenburg concentration camp. He preached for Christian ethics and the What it meant to be a disciple for Christ. His famous book the "Cost of Discipleship" has left a massive imprint on the minds of many Christians.

52. C.S. Lewis 1898-1963 - The best Christian author of all time. He risked much to write what he wrote he was often called a heretic for his writings.

53. Billy Sunday

54. Kathern Kuhlman

55. Billy Graham 1918 - He risked all to serve Christ in the mid-twentieth Century, theological liberalism dominated the mainstream churches. The authority of the Bible was discounted, and a belief in the upward march of humanity was still in fashion. Yet along came Billy who has impacted our society beyond belief. Liberal theology was challenged and is on the decline, The Bible is coming back, humanism is slipping and Billy keeps on preaching.

**HOW? How can we live the life of a stunt man and get out of our comfort zones, making the greatest IMPACT possible?**

## Breaking Out of Your Comfort Zone

### 1. LOOK ABOVE YOU

### Ask Yourself: What does God want?

#### **Jeremiah 33:3**

*“Call to me and I will answer you. I'll tell you marvelous and wondrous things that you could never figure out on your own.”*

Seek God's guidance. What does God want? Seek God's guidance. God knows you better than you know yourself and has greater plans for you than you could possibly imagine. When you step out of that comfort zone – be looking above you – knowing that God is with you each step along the way. Do you know who your God is? Do you understand the power that He has? Do you understand that everything that happens in life He is aware of and will use ALL of it for His purposes and His glory? Begin to figure out what God wants for your life, not what others want or even what you want... but what does God want?

#### **Deuteronomy 20:1-4**

*“When you go to war against your enemy and see horses and chariots and soldiers far outnumbering you, do not recoil in fear of them; God, your God, who brought you up out of Egypt is with you. When the battle is about to begin, let the priest come forward and speak to the troops. He'll say, ‘Attention, Israel. In a few minutes you're going to do battle with your enemies. Don't waver in resolve. Don't fear. Don't hesitate. Don't panic. God, your God, is right there with you, fighting with you against your enemies, fighting to win.’”*

**When we begin to understand who God is we can begin to face our fears. It's important to face your fears; but do it in small steps.**

This is one of the best ways to overcome fears and get out of your comfort zone. What holds us back in our zone of comfort is often a fear or that facing that fear straight on might be overwhelming. This is a solution to those two problems. It allows you to stretch your comfort zone slowly making it less uncomfortable and frightening.

If you're for instance nervous socially you might not feel able to ask people out on dates right away. The fear of being rejected and that others might think less of you if you get turned down can make many of us feel unable to ask the question.

So you take small steps instead. Steps like first just saying hi to people. Or starting to talk more to people online via forums and Instant Messaging. And then trying to be more involved in conversations at work or in school to exercise your conversation-muscles.

I guess one could say that you gradually de-sensitize yourself to social situations or whatever you are afraid of. Or, seeing it in a more motivating light, that you are building courage and expanding your comfort zone in this part of your life (which is something that often seeps over to other areas of life too.) So, identify your fear. Then make a plan with some smaller steps you can take to gradually lessen your discomfort.

In the Word, Christ teaches us to face our fears instead of running from our fears. It's the best thing you can do; not necessarily the easiest, but the best.

## 2. LOOK WITHIN YOU

### Ask Yourself: How has God gifted me?

#### Proverbs 18:16

“A man's gift makes room for him and brings him before great men.”

What are the natural tendencies that God has placed inside of you? What are you good at? What do you passionately love to do? Look within you and begin to realize that God has gifted you in certain ways all for His glory.

Begin to look at the habits of your life as well. Begin to understand the truth about your habits. It is your current habits that are keeping you in the rut you are in. The habits in your marriage, your relationships, your work place, your relationship with God; all of your habits in the life you live that keep you from being as IMPACTING as you possibly can. So, it's time to pin down the habits that have become unconscious and are running your life for you, and get rid of them.

#### Proverbs 18:9

*“Slack habits and sloppy work are as bad as vandalism.”*

Habits... They always represent *past* successes. You have formed habitual, automatic behaviors because you once dealt with something successfully, tried the same response next time, and found it worked again. That's how habits grow and why they feel so useful. To get away from what's causing your unhappiness and workplace blues, you must give up on many of your most fondly held (and formerly successful) habits. and try new ways of thinking and acting. There truly isn't any alternative. Those habits are going to block you from finding new and creative ideas. No new ideas, no learning. No learning, no access to successful change which all leads to a non IMPACTING life!

## 3. LOOK AROUND YOU

### Ask Yourself: What needs are there?

#### Proverbs 28:27

*“Be generous to the poor—you'll never go hungry; shut your eyes to their needs, and run a gauntlet of curses.”*

We often times don't get out of our comfort zones because we're too focused on our own needs, our own desires, our own agendas. We need to look around at the needs around us and begin to realize that the needs of the many (theirs) outweigh the needs of the few (mine). Look around you. Stop looking within and start looking without. We must be outward focused as opposed to inward focused all of the time. The needs are there, look for them.

As well, we don't always move out because we're not educated in what we're doing or where we're going. We don't know the truth about the situation we're moving into. Your comfort zone might be protecting you from imaginary dangers. Maybe things aren't as difficult or scary as you imagine? Do a bit of research. Getting some good information can dissipate quite a bit of your fear and nervousness. Do a bit of Googling. Read books and blogs. Ask someone who has been there before. By reading/hearing about what others that have done the same thing you are about to do saw, heard, felt and did you can not only lessen negative feelings but also get some very valuable and practical tips.

I know when going on a missions trip to a foreign country for the first time I like to find out everything I can about that country; the people, the culture, the food, the political status of the country, etc. It helps to be educated as you step out.

Don't be afraid to **try something different**. As creatures of habit, we always do the same thing, eat the same thing, act the same way, go to the same places, etc. My bride had a rule in her home when growing up when eating; that you had to try everything at least once. After trying it, if you didn't like it you didn't have to eat the rest of it. That now has been adopted in our home.... so now, we all have to try everything at least once. Talk about uncomfortable; at least for me! I like the food I like and don't normally like to try new things. But this has pushed me a bit. I like the same food at each restaurant I go to; but Butch, my bride, she likes to try something different each time.

To break out of our comfort zones, sometimes we have to just step out and try something different. But to do this, it takes confidence and faith in God; knowing that He will be there when you do.

**Hebrews 11:6**

*“Without faith, it is impossible to please God.”*

I like the definition someone gave to faith as an acrostic spelling FAITH.

FORSAKING  
ALL  
I  
TRUST  
HIM.

**4. LOOK BESIDE YOU**

**Ask Yourself: What resources do I have?**

Money (use it), time (use it), energy (use it), skills (use it), love (risk it), influence, friends? What do you have available to you right now that you could use to make an IMPACT in the lives of those around you. Time? Talent? Treasure?

**Acts 2:44-45**

*“And all the believers lived in wonderful harmony, holding everything in common. They sold whatever they owned and pooled their resources so that each person's need was met.”*

**Matthew 25:23**

*“His master said to him, 'Well done, good and faithful slave. You were faithful with a few things, I will put you in charge of many things; enter into the joy of your master.'”*

## 5. LOOK BEHIND YOU

### Ask Yourself: What experiences do I have?

... to share that would help others? Do you have a hurt that makes you able to relate? Has God changed your life? God can use your past to perhaps answer someone's prayer.

#### **Awash your mind with positive memories.**

Take a look at what Paul says...

#### **1 Timothy 1:12-14**

*"I'm so grateful to Christ Jesus for making me adequate to do this work. He went out on a limb, you know, in trusting me with this ministry. The only credentials I brought to it were invective and witch hunts and arrogance. But I was treated mercifully because I didn't know what I was doing—didn't know Who I was doing it against! Grace mixed with faith and love poured over me and into me. And all because of Jesus."*

Realise it can be fun to get out of your comfort zone despite what your mind and feelings might be telling you before you get started. Think back to the previous times when you have broken out of your comfort zone. Focus on the positive memories, when you got out there, when you took a chance. And it wasn't so bad, it was actually fun and exciting and something new to you.

A lot of times we automatically play back our negative experiences – or negative interpretations of events – in our minds before we are about to do something. And we forget about the positive memories and our previous, positive achievements. Avoid that trap. Let the good memories flow through your mind instead and let things become easier.

#### **1 Cor. 15:10** Pauls says...

"By the grace of God I am what I am."

#### **The message:**

"But because God was so gracious, so very generous, here I am. And I'm not about to let His grace go to waste."

And finally...

## **6. LOOK AHEAD OF YOU      Ask Yourself: What floats my boat?**

What vision fires you up enough to where you're willing to take a risk? Is it helping the homeless?

### **Matthew 16:25**

*“For whoever is bent on saving his [temporal] life [his comfort and security here] shall lose it [eternal life]; and whoever loses his life [his comfort and security here] for My sake shall find it [life everlasting].”*

### **Take some time out and have a detailed look at yourself—with no holds barred.**

Discovering your unconscious habits can be tough. For a start, they're unconscious, right? Then they fight back. Ask anyone who has ever given up smoking if habits are tough to break. You've got used to them—and they're at least as addictive as nicotine or crack cocaine. Take some time and look deep inside in your relationship with Christ. Examine yourself and see what's in there. If you truly want to get out of the comfort zone of your life you have to know who you are in Christ Jesus.

### **Ask someone to point out your blind spots.**

We've all got blind spots; those things that we can see in our lives. In those blind spots there may be some habits that we've become accustomed to that we need to get rid of. If we can't see them we can't deal with them, so ask someone to point them out to you.

### **Be who you are.**

It's easy to assume that you always have to fit in to get on in the world; that you must conform to be liked and respected by others or face exclusion. Because most people want to please, they try to become what they believe others expect, even if it means forcing themselves to be the kind of person they aren't, deep down.

The fact is: You're unique. You've been made by God to be who you are; so be who you are. If you don't be who you are you'll end up being who everyone else wants you to be and you'll be miserable. Let the real you shine forth! God made you just like you are, and thankfully He'll continue to work on you and make you better than you've ever been before! Be yourself!

### **Philippians 3:13-14**

*“Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.”*

Conclusion:

It seems that the world has its share of risk-takers, the seemingly unafraid to try anything and everything. Have you noticed those who are not afraid to tackle new skills? Those who just charge ahead into uncertain territories. The world has its share of those who will climb Haleakala just because it is there. Or swim the Kaiwi Channel just because it is a challenge. There are those who appear to move without fear at any number of tasks and they make the hardest tasks seem simple. There are those who truly desire to make an IMPACT in the world they live.

They make the impossible, easy; and the complicated, elementary. And when we look at them we admire them as the world's risk-takers. For without them our world would be dull. Risk-takers expand our horizon, they expand the boundaries of what is and what can be done.

Risk-takers shatter our ideas and our old, pre-conceived thoughts. Thank God for the risk-takers who bring fresh-air to the old and stagnant, and bring brand new visions to the old dreams. We admire their strength. We admire their tenacity. We admire their courage; their willingness to run ahead without a cleared-out path. We admire them.

Often these risk-takers are not appreciated. Often they are misunderstood. They are called foolish and impractical. We love them and yet we don't like them at the same time, because as soon as we get used to something they come along and tell us that there is something new...something else that we must do.

As soon as we get comfortable and complacent these risk-takers come along and shake us up. As soon as we learn how to do something they come along & show us there is still yet more to learn. They make us realize that we still need to do more. That it's not over.

Are you ready to be a risk taker? Are you ready to step out of your comfort zone to make an IMPACT in the lives of people that will last throughout eternity?

It's time to step out of our comfort zones, to be a spiritual stunt man, to take a risk for Christ and make an IMPACT.

And as you do...

You watch... you wait... you'll See!