Taking Risks for God

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Risk taking is an essential ingredient in ministry in the Kingdom of God. Most Bible heroes were risk takers. Jesus was a risk taker.

Risk taking at times needs to be bold and calculated. Other times require spontaneity. The paradox is that in the realm of organized religion, institutional thinking, and even in many local churches risk-taking is non-existent. It is frowned upon.

Most American Christians have never taken a risk. Most of them stay within familiar boundaries their whole lifetime. Most of the men worked one or two jobs, lived in the same home, retired, and attended the same church their whole lifetime. They were/are stable, solid, dependable people.

The pastor before me was here 49 years. The church is 94 years old. I am the 4th pastor.

· That is stability
· But stability can make it hard to take risks

So here I am . . . a risk taker.

I have taken bold, very bold risks in life and ministry as I have stepped out on faith to follow God's will. I have given away a fortune, literally. My wife has given all of her furniture away 3 times. We have moved over 20 times. We have wept as we have left family, friends, and security time and again to do the will of God. God knew we would do it, so He called us to do it, and we did it.

We will do it again.

I have a history of bold risk-taking decisions. I am willing.
I only mention those things to validate that I am one of those who is willing to take risks in order to advance the Kingdom of God.

**In environments where conformity and uniformity are stressed so highly those among us who take risk become easy prey.** You will be misunderstood, mislabeled, misrepresented, ostracized, and so forth. You will be targeted by the non-risk taker . . . the settler.

Risk takers are needed . . . perhaps more than ever. You won't be comfortable running with the pack or settling in walled environments. You will always be looking ahead over the horizon. Pioneers are needed in this environment of today just as they were in the early days of our nation.

There are many differences between pioneers and settlers. Settlers wait until the pioneers have blazed the trails and fought the battles. The voice crying, "Is it safe out there?" is the settler. The voice calling back, "Sure, it is safe now" is the pioneer.

**God is shaking this world. Uncertainty and fear is in the air.**

If God challenges you in the future to do something abnormal . . . take the risk.

**Be true to whom you are and don’t compromise your integrity.** Non-risk takers will strip your integrity away and if you let them they will never let you be who God wants you to be.

I once taught a seminar in Detroit to a group of business people. The CEO’s, Presidents, and Vice-Presidents of 27 major companies were there. The event was hosted by Ford Motor Company, and their top officials were there. I took a risk. As I was concluding my session on “How to do Administrative Continuous Improvement” I told them that their greatest challenge was their own intestinal fortitude to continue the process once all the present improvements and dollar savings were accomplished. Three CEO’s told me later that was the clincher for them that let them know I was real. On another occasion, I fired my pastor’s son-in-law because I knew it had to be done and nobody else would do it.

These were risk. I would do each again. I will take risks again when I know it is the right thing to do.

I am admonishing you to do the same.

Risk taking will be required to transition the Church to meet the challenges of tomorrow. None of us know those challenges, but they are coming rapidly. I encourage you when the time comes to rise up,
do it, don’t fear it, be willing and take risks as necessary. Don’t force God to have to go around you to find someone who is willing to take risks for Him that He has positioned you to take.

After all, is there really even a real risk involved when stepping out on faith to fulfill the will of God? No . . . there is no risk. The risk is when you do not step out on faith and you refuse to do something God has asked you to do. It could be because of:

- Little faith
- Fear
- Being too settled
- Being influenced by non-risk taking peers

**Examples of risk-taking**

- Abraham willing to sacrifice Isaac
- Noah
- Elijah against Ahab and Jezebel’s 850 false prophets
- Elijah with the cloud the size of a man’s hand
- David against Goliath
- Jonah
- Queen Esther
- Peter with the lame man at the Gate Beautiful

Faith and foolishness looks similar at a glance.

We see some take bold steps and succeed. Others, and the result is a bust.

**What’s the difference?**

It can not be judged in a window of time. Often the longer the dry period, development... The greater result.

We get frustrated when we judge our result by others.

Some are faith driven, others are just restless souls.
No doubt movement brings things to the surface, however restless is more a product of flesh than faith.

It is easy for us to spiritualize our steps. The test of time will reveal our work.

Look at a church full of solid, dependable people and judge the end result and you know faith was involved.

Apostolic churches with solid people is not a work of flesh.

Time has a way, like wind, of removing the details.

It is easy for us to spiritualize our journey.
It is easy for someone who never exercises faith to discount the actions of those that do over time.

Be encouraged . . . others will discount the actions of someone exercising faith.

We can not over analyze what God is asking of us. Obedience is just following direction.