

Faith is risk

“You will never have a boyfriend if you won’t have sex until you’re married!” Disgusted, the young man drove off, with a squeal of his tires. Claire, stunned, hadn’t even had time to feel hurt. She had really been enjoying this third date with James. Many of her college friends were already married. Though she had wondered when God would bring her the right man to marry, she had begun to think it might be James. Hopeful, fluttery feelings danced in her whenever she thought of him. She had been so sure James would understand her commitment to Jesus concerning God’s will for sex and marriage—after all, James had assured her that he was a Christian too. They had even prayed together! And now this. Fear washed over her as she thought, “What if he is right?”

Stephen felt nervous. Very nervous. As a junior partner in his law firm, he knew that his future very much depended on the good will of his senior partners, especially the managing partner, Bill. Yet he felt the Lord had stirred within him the idea of taking a portion of the firm’s profits and donating to needs in the community. As a Christian, Stephen believed that it was the right thing to do. Plus, he knew that the firm would undoubtedly prosper with a reputation for serving the community. But seated at the conference table with the other partners, he felt scared to the point of thinking he couldn’t even speak. When his turn came, he opened his mouth, stammered a little, but began.

“My husband will think I’m being ridiculous,” Sarah thought to herself. “He knows I have been saving up for our cruise to Alaska. But that young couple going to Vietnam as missionaries—they seem so filled with God and hopeful. I really want to support them. But if I give them the money I have saved, what about our cruise?” But suddenly sure somehow, she reached for her checkbook.

Donnie did not want to go see “Texas Chain Saw Massacre.” He had never like scary movies anyway, especially



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gory ones. But Jim and Pete were going. They had already begun to laugh and call him a weenie when they saw him hesitate. “I thought you were cool,” Jim taunted. “What’s wrong? Aren’t tough enough?”

Jennifer’s parents were appalled to hear that she was planning to become a Bible Translator. Even though they were active in their church and had financially supported missionaries for years, they always assumed their own daughter would do the sensible thing with her PhD. After all, they had spent a fortune helping her through those years of school. Now it was time, they thought, to begin to see some reward from their investment. A professorship at a university perhaps, or a significant position in industry or government. But to throw away her life on a tribal people in Papua New Guinea? Why, they might not even see her again!

Daryl considered the fact that his neighbors might never talk to him again. He had invited his neighbors over to watch the finals of the NCAA basketball tournament. During half time, he planned to take a few minutes, over refreshments, and tell them about his experience with Jesus Christ. E worried they might be offended at hearing his story about how much Jesus has meant to him. But he felt he had to tell them. How could he live with himself and not share with them literally the most important thing in his life? Yet even though nervous, he felt a certain excitement about taking this risk for the God he loved.

FAITH IS ACTING AS IF SOMETHING IS SO.

Faith gives Claire the courage to stay pure sexually until marriage, because she believes that by obeying, God will bring her the right husband at the right time. Faith gives Stephen the courage to bring up the subject of distributing a portion of his firm’s profits to the community, because he believes that in obeying, God will protect his position at the firm. And even if he should lose his position, God will get him a better one. Faith gives Sarah the courage to give away her cruise money, believing that as she obeys God, what would appear to be a loss, will not actually become so. Besides, she gets to love. Faith gives Donnie the courage to say “no” to his friends. He believes that if they are real friends they will still be so, even if he doesn’t cooperate with their wishes. Or, if they are not real friends, Donnie believes that Jesus will remain his friend. Faith gives Jennifer the courage to stand firm, despite her parents’ being upset with her. Faith will also give Jennifer’s parents the courage to face a future that is not the one they envisioned. Faith gives Daryl the courage to risk upsetting his neighbors. He believes that he would rather be faithful to Jesus than anything else—even if his neighbors might feel funny about him.

In every case, faith allows us to be courageous in the face of possible loss. To have faith is to risk. If no risk is involved, no faith is needed. Faith allows us to live with an inner “knowing” that God lovingly rules over us. Nothing makes God happier than to see us trust him. What risk are you being asked by God to take? Can you trust him with the possible loss such a step might involve? Will you trust him?

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