

Fear vs. 'Guts'

Problem

"Losses loom larger than gains:"¹

The aversion to loss of a certain magnitude is greater than the attraction of gain of the same magnitude; We fear loss more than we value gain!

"Most of us are educated way beyond the level of our obedience ... What we lack is not education or resources, but good old-fashioned guts" – Mark Batterson

Consequences

Living life defensively vs. offensively = Playing not to lose vs. playing to win
Sins of commission (don't do this or that) <> Sins of omission (what we would've, could've or should've done)

Approaching God's will with a "better-safe-than-sorry" mentality

Letting our fears dictate our decisions

(We are so afraid of making the wrong decision that we make no decision. However, indecision *is* a decision. It's our indecision, not bad decisions, that keeps us in the cage)

Remedy

Fear of missed opportunities > Fear of making mistakes
Fear of lifelong regrets > Fear of temporary failure

- When it comes to doing the will of God and advancing His Kingdom, would you say that you are more afraid of making mistakes than of missing opportunities? Why or why not?
- What sin is harder to attack? What may be a sin of omission in your life right now?
- In what areas of your life are you playing not to lose instead of playing to win? What are some practical things you can do to start proactively and intentionally playing to win?

Fear vs. Faith

Read 1 Sam 14:1-23

- Which of the characters do you identify with most; Saul, the armor-bearer, or Jonathan? Why?

¹ William J. Gehring and Adrian R. Willoughby, "The Medial Frontal Cortex and the Rapid Processing of Monetary Gains and Losses," *Science* 295, no. 5563 (March 22, 2002): 2279-82. Available online at <http://www.sciencemag.org/cgi/content/abstract/295/5563/2279>

The words “fear not” or “do not be afraid” show up in Scripture more than 60 times. Consider the following from the book of Matthew (NB; Read these verses in the context of Jesus sending out the disciples on a ‘mission-trip’ – Matthew 10:1, 5-8, 16-20):

Matthew 10:26-28

Matthew 10:29-31

- What do these verses teach us about fear and faith?
 - Is there a difference between good fear and bad fear? What does it mean to fear the Lord?
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Faith + ‘Guts’ = Transformation

Jonathan’s ‘Modus Operandi’: “Perhaps the LORD will act in our behalf” (1 Sam 14:6)

The conviction that God will act on our behalf if we step out in faith

Opposite mode of operating: “Perhaps the Lord *won’t* act in our behalf”

Living out of fear instead of faith → Lack of faith resulting in lack of guts

God’s will is *not* an insurance plan – Hebrew 11 – Hero’s of Faith, yet massive sacrifices

There is nothing remotely passive about being part of the Kingdom of God

Eternal Perspective gives us the courage to come out of the cage of fear and forcefully advance the cause of Christ

Appreciate the extreme sacrifices made and courageous risks taken by our predecessors

- What makes life worth living? What are your most cherished memories?
The easiest victories and small challenges or the toughest victories and biggest challenges?
 - Think of a time in the past when you did something daring for God. What was the outcome? How do you feel about the experience as you look back? How did it feel before? During? After?
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Great Commission = Co-Mission

What Saul *didn’t do* is just as significant as what Jonathan (and David) *did do*.

Spiritual spectatorship; letting others fight the battle for us (Saul vs. Jonathan/David)

Spiritual codependency: letting a spiritual leader seek God for us (people vs. Moses)

Many of us are like Saul, not everyone may become a Jonathan, but all of us are at least called to be armor-bearers!

“Go ahead, do all that is in your heart; I am with you heart and soul” (1 Sam 14:7)

(Without the armor-bearer, Jonathan would have never climbed the cliff)

We are not created to be on mission alone!

- In what ways do you rely on others to fight your battles for you?
- Who is your armor-bearer? Do you think you need one? Why or why not?
- Who’s one person in your life doing something daring for God? What can you do to be an armor-bearer for him or her?

'One small step for man; One giant leap for mankind'

The 'domino-effect':

Small acts of courage can change the course of history!

One daring decision can be enough to shift the momentum!

"The difference between where you are and where God wants you to be may be the painful decision you refuse to make" – Craig Groeschel, pastor of LifeChurch.tv

The 21st century church needs more daring people with more daring plans!

"Sometimes I want to ask God why He allows poverty, famine and injustice in the world when He could do something about it, but I'm afraid He might just ask me the same question" – wisdom quotes

Sometimes it's the smallest prompting of the Holy Spirit that seems like the biggest cliff

Stop making a living	<>	Start making a life!
Stop repeating the past	<>	Start creating the future!
Stop living by default	<>	Start living by design!

- What cliff do you need to climb? What small act of courage could change the course of your life?
- What is something daring you'd like to do for God now? What fears stand in the way of your doing it? What do you think God would like to say to you about those fears?

Setting Life Goals – "Play offense with your life"

Being sure of what we're afraid of <> Being sure of what we hope for
"Faith is being sure of what we hope for" (Heb 11:1)

Lack of goals = Lack of faith

"Where there is no vision, people perish" (Prov 29:18)

Define what success would look like occupationally, relationally, or spiritually.
Set life-goals; "you won't accomplish any of the goals you do not set"

Remember: You are already part of the greatest goal ever set! (Mark 16:15)

- What are you hoping for?
- Do you have a life-goal list? If you do, what is on it? If not, what would be the first ten goals you'd like to put on such a list?
- What are ways in which you would want to expand God's Kingdom in this city? Who may be the Jonathan's and armor-bearers you could work together with?

www.rightnow.org – Today is no time for complacency

"Pray like it depends on God, work like it depends on you" – Mark Batterson