



Sailing The Sea of Courage

*Then the Lord said to Moses, "Why are you crying out to me?
Tell the Israelites to move on!" Ex. 14:15*

The Sailor:

As a Sailor, I've always wondered about this place called Courage. What will this Sea bring to me that I haven't seen before? There is a mystery to this sea—the mystery of starting and ending. I can't end without coming here, nor can I start without it either. This last of the Seven Seas is really the beginning of the seas. Like some kind of vortex in time, some parallel universe, some window of discovery, within the Sea of Courage I step into the Sea of Clarity and it's like I begin my trip and set sail for the first time.

Courage seems like an intangible, sometimes untouchable quality that is possessed by the warriors on the front lines: those who lay down their lives fighting for their country, those brave firefighters going up into a tower that is burning and crumbling down in pursuit of people to save, and those police officers who chase out of control runaway drivers on crazy California freeways. Considering this, to say that we all need courage seems to trivialize the courage displayed by these brave people.

Yet, courage is an ingredient from within and is necessary in order to travel the *Seven Seas of Life*. There are four types of courage that we need, if we want to pursue a successful Christian life. They are the courage to swab the deck, courage in the face of fear, courage in the midst of doubt, and courage to launch out. Each of these elements needs to be employed if we are to be effective. The courage it takes to encounter each of these elements, when combined, will prepare us and enable us not only to launch out on our journey in life but to keep on sailing. It's true; we need courage to begin and courage to continue. On our journeys we will face trials, mountains, hills and bumps, but we need the courage to keep on going. We will face obstacles, but we need the courage to work and walk through them. We will face doubt, but we need the courage to learn how to trust God. And we need courage to look at ourselves clearly, unobstructed by denial or pride, to set a plan, and create a map for our continual, never-ending improvement.

The Bible says that we are to be "mature and complete, not lacking anything." (Ja. 1:4, NIV). And so we must look at what we are lacking, look for what we need to complete us, find what we can add to our life that will make it more impactful, more meaningful, more fulfilling, and more glorifying to God.

COURAGE TO SWAB THE DECK

As I said right from the beginning, we lead unexamined lives. We need to make a clean sweep and look at everything. We need to look at all the Seas (Cs) of our lives, evaluate where we are and plan where we need to go.

Courage requires taking the risk to be vulnerable and humble in the evaluation of ourselves. It is risky to admit that we need improvement. It takes humility to openly admit that we have never really arrived, and that we, too, are in process.

Think about it. Doesn't it take humility to admit that you're not clear about everything, but that you're in the fog about some things? As clear as your personal mission statement may be, it takes an unassuming nature to say that you're looking to God for leadership and guidance in your life. Swabbing the deck continually reevaluates and reworks our mission statements, making sure we always stay on mission or occasionally redirect our mission.

Isn't it risky to admit that you're looking for confirmation? That your confidence doesn't rest on you alone, but that, like everyone else, you seek to be affirmed in your talent, skill, or giftedness, and that confirmation comes from affirmation?

Doesn't it take some form of vulnerability to identify your weaknesses? Many leaders don't want to admit that they have limitations, and if they do, it's in the general sense rather than specific. It's gutsy to expose to others, especially those in the realm of your responsibility, that you may be pretty good *at this*, but not very good *at that* (whatever *this* or *that* might be).

Can you say you lead a totally congruent life? Don't you sometimes get frustrated, or feel tension, wondering if what you do really counts or makes a difference to God? Doesn't it take courage to realize and admit that sometimes your life is in fact incongruent, that it doesn't seem aligned with God's design? Swabbing the deck means to consider the tension you may feel between your spiritual life and your secular life and what you can do to make sure that your secular life is contained within your spiritual life.

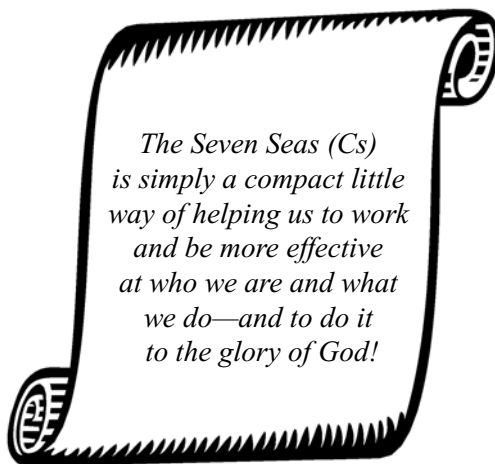
And what about your cause? Isn't admitting that your cause may not always be pure or noble or God-directed as it should be—that it's really self-oriented—a humbling thing? Pride is a stumbling block for most of us, especially if we're in any type of leadership position. Sometimes we have to ask ourselves if we are working for God, or for ourselves. That involves some courageous reexamination and confession. Motives count—especially to God.

It takes a sense of courage to develop a learning track and to seek out and receive training and coaching. But, some of us in leadership roles apparently forget that even world-class athletes have coaches. Apparently they have a desire that compels them to continue working on what they already do well. Yet, many leaders and executives do not engage in such unraveling activities. They either are too prideful, don't see the need, or feel it's too risky to expose their own vulnerabilities. You see, it takes courage to ask someone to help you.

In short, it takes courage to continually examine and work on the Cs of our life. It takes courage to learn anew, to be open to new possibilities, and to be a learner. We must be open to the fact that our old ways of thinking and doing may not be quite adequate to live a truly effective life. We need to embrace the concept that courage is not just an attribute of a strong, self-willed, self-motivated, hard-charging leader. Each of us must recognize that it takes some courage to admit that God is not finished with us, but will work on, within, and around us to make us into the people we were meant to be. It takes a bit of courage to be humble enough to admit that we just might be lacking in something.

The purpose of examining the *Seven Seas* (Cs) is ultimately not to please ourselves, but to please God. Working on the *Seven Seas* (Cs) will not make us complete, but will help us work toward that end. It will not

make us completely mature, but will help us to be more mature. The *Seven Seas* (Cs) are seven factors that will help us maximize who we are and what we do, especially during that part of our lives where we spend the greatest amount of time—our work. The *Seven Seas* (Cs) is simply a compact little way of helping us to work and be more effective at who we are and what we do—and to do it to the glory of God!



*The Seven Seas (Cs)
is simply a compact little
way of helping us to work
and be more effective
at who we are and what
we do—and to do it
to the glory of God!*

In short, examining the *Seven Seas* of our life is swabbing the deck, which involves an emotional, spiritual, relational, destiny-oriented cleaning. Swab the deck and you'll be sailing unencumbered by the dirt, grime and clutter that cloud your decisions and thwart your effectiveness.

COURAGE IN THE FACE OF FEAR

Let's face it, fear can paralyze us, it can block us and torment us. It can prevent us from moving ahead, because we can think of all the reasons why we'll fail. We talk ourselves out of things, because of what we perceive to be our inadequacies. We see huge mountains we must climb and all the Seas we must sail and we give up even before we try. Fear can hold us back, just like it held back the people of Israel before entering the Promised Land.

The myth is that in order to move ahead, we need to get rid of our fears altogether. However, Bruce Wilkinson, in his book *The Dream Giver*, comments, "In my experience, God rarely makes our fear disappear. Instead, He asks us to be strong and take courage. What is courage? As Ordinary discovered, courage is not the absence of fear; rather, it's choosing to act in spite of the fear. You could say that without fear, you can't have genuine courage."^{iv}

Every sales person faces the fear of rejection every time he or she attempts to make a cold call, to present a product or service, or to try to close a deal. I have known people who have attempted to become sales people, but who froze when it came to making a phone call. They just sat there staring at the phone, with the name and phone number in front of them, thinking of all the reasons why the person they were about to call would say no.

Every entrepreneur faces the possibility of failure when he starts a new business. In fact, statistics say that something like 75% of new businesses fail within the first three years. Talk about a real valid fear; just try to start a new business. I, myself, have felt the sting of failure in starting new businesses. Statistics like this are intimidating. The number one reason people don't start a new business is because of the fear of statistics like these.

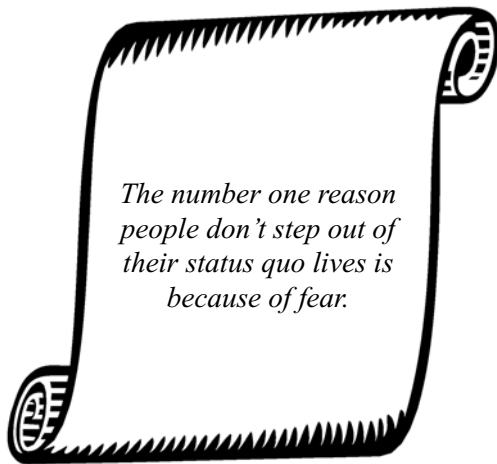
Every actor, performer, and speaker faces the fear of bombing his performance before he or she steps on stage. It is said that most major actors still have “butterflies in their stomachs” before they begin their performances. You would think that over the years and thousands of performances that the “butterflies” would go away, but not so. As a professional speaker, I still have some nervousness before I speak. I always wonder how my topic and I will be received. Will my audience be interested in what I have to say, or will they be bored? Will I have an impact, or will my words go by the wayside? Will I be average, or will I present my topic in a significant and dynamic way?

Your future is in the hands of the audience, and, begins every time you step on stage or get in front of a class. The fact is that surveys have shown that one of the top things people are fearful of is public speaking. Well, I’m

not fearful of it; I thrive on it, yet, every time I come up with a new topic, present a new seminar, and get right down to it, I experience an element of fear.

The number one reason people don’t step out of their status quo lives is because of fear. But there is still another side of fear we need to consider. And, it is a surprising side of fear, a side of fear, one we can’t live without.

The fact is that there is edginess to life. David Whyte in his book, *Crossing The Unknown Sea*, says, “Absent of the edge, we drown in numbness.”^{lv} The other side of fear is the edge that it brings to us. The fact that the edge is there causes us to focus, be alert, attentive, aware, and sends to us the emotional, physical, and intellectual adrenaline we need to pursue our dreams, and to accomplish some pretty amazing things. Without the edginess, we opt for “numbness.” Without the edginess, we choose a lounge chair life, a passive, and status



*The number one reason
people don't step out of
their status quo lives is
because of fear.*

quo life of perpetual retirement. We retire before we retire. Life becomes mechanized and we just go through the motions, duplicating every day what we had done the day before.

The questions that have been asked repeatedly throughout this book, within different contexts, are: Isn't there more to life? How can I count and make a difference? How can I be maximized? How can I glorify God and please Him in all I do? Well, let me tell you, I don't think that retirement is the answer. I don't think giving up on all of the edges of life is the answer. I don't think we stop sailing, just because the seas are choppy, storms are brewing, some ships don't come back, and there are pirates out there. To take the edginess out of life is to take life out of life. It is as David Whyte calls it, "numbness."

Yet, we look for the safe, the sure, the secure and the guaranteed. We want smooth sailing. While this is a legitimate desire, it takes out all the mystery of life. Edginess involves mystery, the unknown, and living life with some questions unanswered, some things not in place, some things yet to discover. The Bible says, "It is the glory of God to conceal a matter; to search out a matter is the glory of kings." (Prov. 25:2, NIV) The allusive quest for the guaranteed life is a quest for something other than what God Himself has designed for us. God conceals, meaning that He doesn't let us know everything that's going on, so that there *is* some mystery to our lives. To search out a matter is to explore, discover, uncover, and be involved in "crossing the unknown seas," as David Whyte's book title states.

The fact of the matter is that if we want to have courage in the face of fear, we need to *embrace risk*. John Eldredge says, "Most men spend the energy of their lives trying to eliminate risk, or squeezing it down to a more manageable size."^{vi} We want to eliminate the edginess of life and make everything neat and tidy, and we also want to "manage risk," which is pretty much a contradiction in terms.

God has designed a life that is full of risk; it's just unfamiliar risk we are afraid of. There is risk every time we drive on the highways, risk every time we board an airplane, risk every time we enter a tall building, risk every time we put our money in a bank, risk every time we eat in a



restaurant, and risk every time we venture out. But most of us manage this risk (or manage the fear of it) by doing things we are familiar with and doing things that everyone else is doing; therefore the risk doesn't seem so risky.

But, in order to rid ourselves of the numbness of life, in fact, in order to live life fully, we need to do things that are a little risky, and a little edgy.

Let me ask you a couple of questions: what is the riskiest thing that you've ever done? And; when is the last time you did something risky—something out of your comfort zone? How did you feel? Were you nervous, anxious, uptight; or thrilled, focused, captivated, excited, and exhilarated with blood pumping, adrenaline flowing awareness? Usually the answer is both, and to sail the *Seven Seas of Life* you should expect both.

I know you've probably heard this summary of Abraham Lincoln's life before, but let's look at it from the perspective of risk and edginess. I will recant the historical brief and in brackets [] I will place comments as if Lincoln was talking to others and himself about risk. Again, these are my comments, surmising what Lincoln could have said “thinking out loud,” if he was afraid or defeated by the risks he continually took:

1816: His family was forced out of their home. He had to work to support them. [He could have given up]

1818: His mother died.

1831: Failed in business. [Could have made him timid]

1832: Ran for state legislature - lost. [Why try again?]

1832: Also lost his job - wanted to go to law school but couldn't get in. [Loser?]

1833: Borrowed some money from a friend to begin a business and by the end of the year he was bankrupt. He spent the next 17 years of his life paying off this debt.

1834: Ran for state legislature again - won. [Something went right]

1835: Was engaged to be married, sweetheart died and his heart was broken.

1836: Had a total nervous breakdown and was in bed for six months.

[At this point he could have totally given up—after all that's happened why risk anything more?]

1838: Sought to become speaker of the state legislature - defeated. [See, I told you I shouldn't have tried again!]

1840: Sought to become elector - defeated. [Why do I keep trying?]

1843: Ran for Congress - lost. [I must be crazy for trying again!]

1846: Ran for Congress again - this time he won - went to Washington and did a good job.

1848: Ran for re-election to Congress - lost. [My success is fleeting-so why pursue it anymore?]

1849 Sought the job of land officer in his home state - rejected. [See what I mean?]

1854: Ran for Senate of the United States - lost. [Maybe I should do something safe?]

1856: Sought the Vice-Presidential nomination at his party's national convention - got less than 100 votes. [This isn't worth it...is it?]

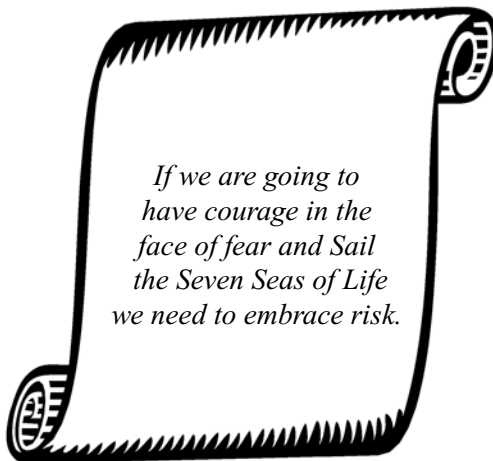
1858: Ran for U.S. Senate again - again he lost. [See what I mean?]

1860: Elected president of the United States.

Now, here's the million dollar question: If Abraham Lincoln had given up in 1832 after several repeat failures, where would this country be? Wouldn't it have been legitimate for him to have given up and not risk any more failure?

What would you have done?

Is there anything you can see in the myriad of "failures" that God ingeniously designed or built into his life? I can think of a few: incredible persistence, strong belief, and deliberate risk were all character traits that were needed in order for a leader to bring the Civil War to a halt and to unlock the shackles of slavery that had plagued this nation.



If we are going to have courage in the face of fear to *Sail the Seven Seas of Life*, we need to embrace risk. What risks are you facing? What challenges await you? What trials are on your doorstep? Are you willing to take a risk?

As of this writing, I have spent two and a half years and a great deal of money developing resources to enhance the lives of Christians, to equip them with a sense of meaning and fulfillment,

You can go to my website, www.realitycheckresources.com and see the resources I have developed. Or you can become one of our Ambassadors. Go to www.wideopenfaith.com and sign up.

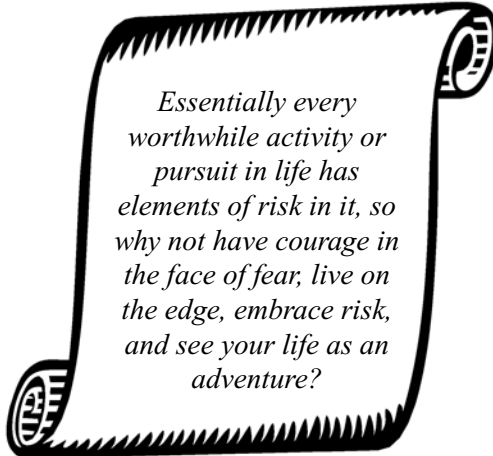
and to free them from the guilt and shame often inflicted upon them because of self-righteousness, legalism and judgementalism. I have poured myself into developing resources, including this book, which will encourage Christians to be maximized and enjoy a life in which they can live fully and freely for God.⁵ And yet, I have faced insurmountable obstacles and challenges. Some have said I should give up because the financial risks are so great. Certainly, I need to consider wise counsel and be discerning in the steps that I take; yet, I believe God has called me to this work. So what do I do?

Well, I will tell you that I have seen success and I have seen failure in my life. I have excelled at some things, and at other times I have lost everything I had. Unfortunately, during those times my family has experienced the consequences of loss. But did I retreat? Did I become a mealy-mouse creature that hides in a hole? Did I crawl into my shell, becoming timid and afraid to do anything meaningful? Did I take down the sails of my ship and not venture out beyond sight of the shoreline?

But, if I am called to do it, I am compelled to do it—I can't help myself. The call is all-consuming and burns within me. And so, I keep on, looking for ways to support this effort, and pray that some have been helped, lifted, encouraged, enabled, empowered to lead a life fully and completely for God. I must keep risking—to do otherwise would be to die.⁶

In order to Sail the *Seven Seas of Life* successfully and have courage in the face of fear we need to see that *sailing is adventure*. Having an adventurous spirit is a powerful antidote to fear. As John Eldredge points out, "Life is not a problem to be solved; it is an adventure to be lived. That's the nature of it and has been since the beginning when God set the dangerous stage for this high-stakes drama and called the whole wild enterprise good. He rigged the world in such a way that it only works when we embrace risk as the theme of our lives, which is to say, only when we live by faith. A man just won't be happy until he's got adventure in his work, in his love and in his spiritual life."^{lvii}

The question here, of course, is not what I would do, nor what I have done, but what will you do?



We have recently reconfigured the “tag line” of Reality Check Resources to this: *Ambassadors of a Wide Open Faith!* When we approach life with a sense of adventure we have a wide-open faith. Wide-open, full throttle, all the sails in active duty from the main sails to fore sails, jib topsails, to jib sails—all taking in the wind, sailing at top speed. Life is an adventure! What’s out there, what yet remains to be dis-

covered, what does God have planned for my life? Adventure *is* the antidote for fear. And within every adventure there is risk. In short, risk is unavoidable so why not embrace it and make life an adventure?

Moving to another location away from family and friends is a risk, but it also is an adventure. Finding another job, with an unfamiliar company, supervisors, and colleagues is a risk, but it is also an adventure. Applying to a college is a risk, but it is also an adventure. Searching for new friends is risky...but it is also an adventure. Getting married, at a time when there are high divorce rates is risky, but it is also an adventure. Getting involved in church activities can seem risky, but it is also an adventure. Essentially every worthwhile activity or pursuit in life has elements of risk in it, so why not face the fear, live on the edge, embrace risk, and see your life as an adventure?

COURAGE IN THE MIDST OF DOUBT

We all struggle with doubt at various times in our lives. The doubt that I am talking about is not the same as fear, but there is a relationship between the two. The doubt I am talking about is the doubt that God is working in our lives. It is the hesitation we feel, wondering if God is “in it.”

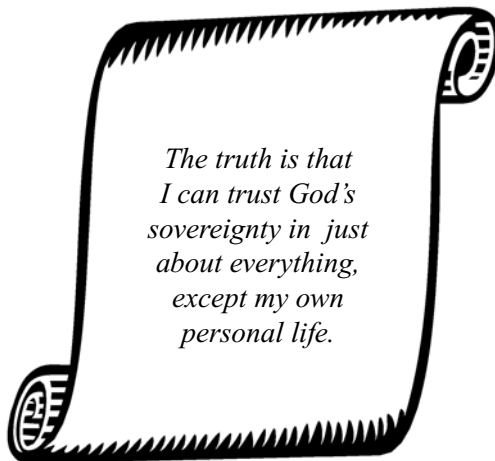
It is the lack of action or intense vacillation that holds us back from doing something. It is that argument we have within ourselves, wondering if we have God's favor, wondering if God cares; "after all, there are much greater needs in this world than my own concern," we think. This kind of doubt revolves around a lack of trust in God, questioning the degree of His sovereignty. It culminates in a half-hearted, cautiously pessimistic belief that we will end up on the wrong side of something, a belief that accentuates and feeds our fear. In view of this we need to understand that *trusting God is the only way to move ahead.*

To trust God is to develop courage in the midst of doubt, knowing that this kind of courage, or the lack of it, can make or break our lives. It involves a mind-set, a sense of will, or willingness to believe that God is involved in all the circumstances and all the intricacies of our life. It is, usually, a habit of doubt that holds us back. We have operated for so long with doubt that we have dug a hole and we don't know how to get out of it. We have held back, because of our habitual lack of faith, that we don't know how to launch out in faith or trust that God's sovereignty (control) includes us, our lives and our plans.

Os Guinness, in his book, *God In The Dark*, comments, "Habit is built-in second nature, and what is built in, whether it is a good habit or a bad habit, a dull rut or a positive strength of character, depends entirely on what we choose. Repeat an active habit and you grow strong; repeat a passive habit and you grow weak. In this case, the habit we are building is the practice of trusting God despite our feelings, so that in every situation trust becomes "second nature" to us. Faith will then be the controlling principle of our lives and not the victim of our fluctuating emotions."^{lviii}

Trusting God, however, is sometimes easier said than done. We trust God for some things, but not for others. Rarely are we completely full of doubt, nor are we totally trusting. We have doubts, and we believe. We believe, but we have doubts. It's usually a mixture of both with us. Trusting God with my salvation, I can do, but trusting Him with my paycheck, well, that's another thing. Trusting that God gave us His Word, we can do, but trusting in His Word, well, that's a little harder. Trusting that God will

keep your child safe, I can do, but trusting that God will take care of my child, well, you know, I've got some anxiety about that. Trusting God when He's performing miracles, we can do, but trusting Him when nothing's happening, well, we're not too sure. Trusting God when we can see clearly, that's one thing, but trusting Him when we're in the dark, well, that's a whole different thing. The truth is that I can trust God's sovereignty in just



about everything, except my own personal life. After all, I know about Job and who wants to be another Job. I've never heard of anyone pursuing what Job went through as a goal for his life. Sure, we know he said, "The Lord gave and the Lord has taken away, blessed be the name of the Lord," and we all admire and hope that we can say that when we lose something or someone. But really, I don't want this kind of

faith because it involves the risk of giving up everything I am hoping to gain.

The fact of the matter is that if I am going to Sail the Sea of Courage, I have to move out into the waters in the midst of my doubt. The kind of courage I need is:

THE COURAGE TO LAUNCH OUT

The Sailor:

Listen mate, I can't tell you how many want-to-be sailors I've left behind, standing on the dock as we've sailed out to sea. They want to sail and even sign up. Ah, but when the day comes, even to the last moment when we launch out, they hesitate. It's sad really. Here we are ready to sail, there they are, wanting to sail; yet they don't get on board. They have potential to be great seafaring people, to enjoy the vastness that the seven seas have to offer, yet they stand there, staring like statues on the dock, unable to move and immobilized by some inner nemesis, unable to muster up the courage it takes to get on board.

Os Guinness says, “In the New Testament, however, faith is synonymous with the obedience of faith, so that faith also involves both the understanding and the will. Doubt is therefore tackled primarily at the point of action and not solely at the point of reflection.”^{ix} It’s when we move out in faith that we really have faith. Faith is not faith until it is tested. Trust is not trust until we yield control. We must act upon the faith that we have, not in ourselves and our ability, but in the absolute control (sovereignty) of



God. With this in mind, there are two elements—two exhortations—I need to bring into the picture, if we are going to have the courage to launch out. If anything, these two elements of exhortation should provide the initiative and the push we need to launch out. I will take them in succession.

First, *don't be a halfway Christian*. Because of doubt, because of fear, because we don't trust God, and because we try to

downsize our risk as much as possible we become insecure, uncertain, and paralyzed—we hold back. We hold back from doing and being all that God intended us to do and be. This is what I mean about a halfway Christian. I am not insinuating that a halfway Christian is a lesser Christian or is someone who doesn't love the Lord. And, by halfway I am not implying anything about their salvation, spirituality, or sincerity. What I am talking about is doing things in a halfway fashion, not pressing hard, not being passionate, not following through, and not giving it one's all. It's hard to launch out when we hold back. It's hard to be passionate when we vacillate.

1 Kings 18:21 talks about the people of Israel and their vacillation between God and the idol worship of Baal, “Elijah went before the people and said, “How long will you waver between two opinions? If the Lord is

God, follow him; but if Baal is God, follow him.” But the people said nothing.” Now granted, this Scripture *is* about salvation and choosing which god to follow. But the reason I use this Scripture is that it shows how we as humans can be on the fence about things—in this case even about God. As mentioned before, one of the reasons we don’t launch out is because we are on the fence about the degree of God’s involvement and interest in our lives. We’re really not sure—nor confident—in the fact that God is involved in even the minutest details of our lives. To repeat a Scripture I used earlier in the book, “Are not two sparrows sold for a penny? Yet not one of them will fall to the ground apart from the will of your Father...So don’t be afraid; you are worth more than many sparrows...Indeed, the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Don’t be afraid; you are worth more than many sparrows.” (Matt. 10:29, 31; Luke 12:7, NIV) If God is concerned about sparrows falling to the ground and the hairs on your head, then, He is for sure concerned about and involved with whatever you are doing. So, there is a reason not to vacillate—God is in it.

Another Scripture that brings this point to bear is Revelation 3:15, 16, “I know your deeds, that you are neither cold nor hot. I wish you were either one or the other! So, because you are lukewarm—neither hot nor cold—I am about to spit you out of my mouth.” This Scripture is talking about deeds, and not salvation. It’s about your deeds, your actions, and your everyday life. Grab onto this, I don’t believe this has to do with just “spiritual” deeds as we typically talk about them, but ALL the things we do. The message is, don’t do things halfway, don’t be mediocre, and don’t be lukewarm! The Scripture even says, “I wish you were one or the other [hot or cold]!” Don’t be in the middle, don’t let yourself be average, don’t settle for the status quo, and don’t be on the fence about things particularly about *Sailing the Seven Seas* (Cs) of your Life. To have the courage to launch out, you first need to understand the absolute detriment and the futility of having a mediocre approach to life, or to anything.

I use the following in a customer service seminar I have developed called *Capture the Heart of the Customer*⁷ and taken from Betty Sanders book, *Fabled Service*⁸:

1. If 99.9% is good enough then:
 - a. 22,000 checks will be deducted from the wrong bank account in the next 60 minutes
 - b. 1,314 phone calls will be misplaced by the phone company
 - c. 12 babies will be given to the wrong parents each day
 - d. 286,500 defective tires will be shipped this year
 - e. 20,000 incorrect drug prescriptions will be written in the next year

This is if 99% is good enough! And that's the point; "good enough" isn't good enough! "Good enough" denotes a mediocre attitude. And if 99.9% isn't good enough, then what happens if we do things half-way? Lukewarm is a halfway, somewhat, sort of, almost, pretty good, when I get around to it, and sooner or later approach to things.

Imagine, if God said, "Listen, I don't expect much out of you, so don't worry about how you do it." Or, "Do things when you get around to them." I just can't image such a scenario. God wants us to do things wholeheartedly. Speaking about working for our earthly "masters," God says, "Slaves, obey your earthly masters with respect and fear, and with sincerity of heart, just as you would obey Christ. Obey them not only to win their favor when their eye is on you, but like slaves of Christ, doing the will of God from your heart. *Serve wholeheartedly*, as if you were serving the Lord, not men, because you know that the Lord will reward everyone for whatever good he does, whether he is slave or free." (Eph. 6: 6-8, NIV, emphasis mine) Wholeheartedly means passionately, aggressively, with great determination, all the way, completely, and with excellence.

This transitions us to the second element of initiative, which will provide us with the courage to launch out. This concept came to me during an intense struggle for direction early on a February morning during my quiet time. I was struggling between two options and two different possible directions. In fact, I was on the fence! This statement provided just the

For information about this customer service seminar you can go to www.lifeworkbreakthrough.com or call my office at 866-587-8412.

push I needed to launch out on a particular direction in my life. Are you ready?

Quit crying and get moving!

If this sounds blunt, it is! The scene was Egypt. The people of Israel had been released from 400 years of slavery. Four hundred years of agonizing, back-breaking, and thankless work. They experienced four hundred years of waiting to hear from God, wanting Him to breakthrough, praying for deliverance and looking for a miracle. So God sent Moses to lead them out of the land. In the process, Moses brought twelve miracles in the form of plagues to convince the Pharaoh to let God's people go. The last plague was the angel of death, sent to kill the firstborn male of all the families in Egypt. To spare the Israelites from this, He told them to put the blood of a lamb on their doorpost the night the angel was to come. The angel, seeing the blood on the doorpost, passed over that home and moved on to the next. The firstborn male children of the Israelites were spared.

Experiencing the death of even his own child, Pharaoh finally let the people of Israel go. And so they fled, heading out into the desert, and on their way to the Promised Land. They got about as far as the Red Sea, and the Egyptians decided they made a mistake and still wanted the Israelites to be their slaves, so Pharaoh's army headed out to get them and bring them back. Feeling pent in, cornered, and backed up to the Red Sea, the people of Israel panicked. They thought there was no way out and that they were going to be slaughtered out there in the desert. "They were terrified and cried out to the Lord. They said to Moses, was it because there were no graves in Egypt that you brought us to the desert to die? What have you done to us by bringing us out of Egypt? Didn't we say to you in Egypt, Leave us alone; let us serve the Egyptians? It would have been better for us to serve the Egyptians than to die in the desert!" (Ex. 14: 11, 12, NIV) In other words, they were complaining and crying, "Hey, why did you bring us out here? At least back there we knew what we were getting. We could have just as well died back there then out here!"

After all that God had just done and after all the mighty miracles God had performed, they lost confidence in HIM! Oh, how weak we are, how short lived is our confidence and trust in God. How easy it is for us to get stuck, backed into a corner, unable to decide or move ahead because of our fears. How quickly we lose our courage.

Well, do you know how God responded?

*“Then the Lord said to Moses, “Why are you crying out to me?
Tell the Israelites to move on.” (Ex. 14:15, NIV)*

For me, it was early in the morning and I hadn't quite woken up yet, but when I read these words I was shaken because here is what I thought I read:



Did I hear that correctly (I mean *read* that correctly)? Well, that same day, I was reading one of the most profound intellectual books of our time, *The Yogi Book*^{lvi}, by Yogi Berra. Here is one of Yogi's famous quotes, "When you come to a fork in the road, take it." I didn't anticipate receiving a word from the Lord through Yogi's words, so let's just say that Yogi's

words echoed what I sensed was more than a very strong prompting from God. If you are stuck between two equally good choices, pick one. Since God is sovereign and God is with you, He will guide you through whichever choice you chose. And if it's the "wrong" choice, God will also correct the situation and ultimately send you in the "right" direction. He just wants us to get moving!

If you want to have the courage to launch out, to set sail, and to chart your course then get moving! There comes a time when we have to decide to decide. We need to display courage in the midst of doubt, courage in the face of fear, and courage to swab the deck. We need to grab our maps, look at our compasses, calibrate our sextants, trim the sails, pull the anchor and set sail. There is no time to lose. To *Sail the Seven Seas of Life* we need to set sail. I've already given you a map which will help you find your own map. Start with the Sea of Clarity and sail on from there.

But by all means, get moving!

Your Sailors Log: Sailing the Sea of Courage

1. What is your biggest challenge in “swabbing your deck?” What have you uncovered so far?
 2. What are you fearful of? What paralyzes you? Have you experienced “numbness” in your life? What are the edges that scare you?
 3. What’s the riskiest thing you have ever done? How did it make you feel? What risk do you need to take right now?
 4. Do you trust God FULLY or are you plagued with some doubt? Has doubt crept into your habitual and conditioned way of thinking? Does it hold you back?
 5. Read Exodus Chapter 14, especially verses 11 and 12: When you read “Quit crying and get moving,” how does that prompting resonate with you? Are you ready to launch out? What will you do?
-

Sailor's Epilogue

A long, long time ago, when I was yet a lad, I used to watch my father sail out to sea. We had at our home all the evidence that we were a seafaring family: the pictures on the wall, compasses used for decoration, and model sailboats sitting proudly on the shelves. And there was the smell—fragrance if you will—of the sea, the essence that only a salted sea can bring. If you met my father, you would see his weathered face, feel his callused hands, and hear the raspyness in his voice. You could tell he was a world traveler, exposed for many years to the elements. He embodied a unique combination of seriousness and joy, intensity and satisfaction, longing and fulfillment. I never understood how he displayed this mixture of personality traits in such a way that it seemed, well, normal.

I used to imagine, having heard all the stories my father would tell, that I, like he, had traveled the Seven Seas. His stories were filled with images of adventure, intrigue, mystery, and danger. There were also stories about everyday things, uneventful days, daily chores and calm winds—in fact, more of these than the other. Watching him go out to sea and hearing his stories, I thought I knew all there was about the Seven Seas. I thought there was nothing for me to find out there.

Why go out to sea when I have heard it all before? But there was something I had neither seen nor understood; something hidden from me all those years. There was something so profound, yet unnoticeable. There was something out there for me...and the sea was waiting.

My father used to say, "God talks to you out there, on the open sea." Adding to that, he would sigh, and say almost under his breath, "Yea, and if He's not talking, you can feel His heavy hand leading, and His breath blowing the wind into the sails." You know, "He walks upon the wings of the wind," he used to say, "Just look it up; it's in His great book of Psalms, one hundred and four, verse three, to be exact". And my mother would nod her head suggesting "yes." She knew, for she had been out there, too.

What I discovered that is so profound is that you will never know what God has for YOU until YOU sail the Seven Seas. Hearing the stories of others, even those of your father's, cannot replace the experience of Sailing those Seven Seas. You may never hear God's voice or sense His hand of direction until you sail the Seven Seas yourself.

So if you don't want to miss out, if you want to find what only you can find out on the open sea, I suggest that you get on board, and set sail for the Seven Seas of your life.

Good Sailing!