



ALGORITHM

Experiencing Personal Revival

ANDY RANDELL, TCL

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We'll be taking the next few weeks to dissect what it means to "live out our faith". This simple statement can get awfully complex in the sea of messages and books and authors and speakers, to the point where you just might want to throw up your hands and wonder "what the heck am I doing and how can I ever figure this out". We are going to approach this problem with an algorithm, a step-by-step process, in hopes that new connections and relationships will connect the dots in a powerfully transformative way.

SUMMARY

RECLINER FAITH

Ah, the recliner – its simple mission... your comfort. Rest is good. Rest is Holy. Rest is rewarding. Rest is modeled and prescribed by the Lord (**Genesis 2:2, Exodus 20:8-11**) and is vital to a worker's longevity. But what happens when we take the notion of Sabbath rest and turn it into something more than just a *part* of the rhythm of life? When we find ourselves choosing rest over adventure our highest aim becomes comfort. When we dig ourselves into a rut of inactivity our spiritual and physical wellbeing suffers. If we will not risk, we will not grow. We will not become strong. People are wired for a holy pattern of adventure/rest/adventure/rest/adventure/rest...this is the rhythm God has designed for us in order that we may become both vibrant and strong in our faith.



Within the circle (left) we mitigate risk, and our highest value is "how will this affect or benefit me?" – the posture is self-centered and comfort driven. Moving outside the circle means you acknowledge that comfort is not king. Moving outside the circle means you are confident in the fact that there are no coincidences - God positions you for this time, space and place. You experience moments of great courage and boldness because those qualities are required for someone who is taking risks!

"...Who can say but that God has brought you into this palace for just such a time as this?" **Esther 4:14 TLB**

DISCUSS/JOURNAL

1. What tension exists for you between the concepts of adventure and rest? What can you do to encourage someone to seek adventure even if they have physical or mental limitations?
2. What does it mean to be positioned by God? If you are a believer, you are positioned IN Christ (in His grace) but what does it mean to have confidence in and act accordingly to the notion that God has placed you in this time and space and place? For what purposes do you think He has placed you here? How can you explore this with God?

PETER MOVES OUTSIDE THE CIRCLE

Recap:

There are 2 separate and distinct paths of Christianity - an "inner" path that recognizes Jesus as God and as long as we believe, we'll go to Heaven when we die. In the meantime, we do good works for God and try to live good lives. But since it seems risky to share our beliefs, we will keep our faith private.

The outer path acknowledges that Jesus is the foundation of our faith, the savior of the world, and the King of the universe. Since we believe this to be true, He is the lens through which we read the Bible. He says if we believe, we are to follow him: adopt his priorities and perspectives, his passion, his way of life. As we do this, we come to the value proposition of Christianity -- the Gospel, and it's a lot less about going to Heaven when we die but Heaven coming to us now in the form of the kingdom of God.

In the Gospels we meet Peter. When Peter was called, he followed (**Luke 5:1-7**); he was the first to confess Jesus as the Christ (**Matthew 16:16-17**) and displayed incredible faith when he walked out onto the water to meet Jesus (**Matthew 14:28-29**). Peter also fell asleep when Jesus asked him to keep watch and pray (**Matthew 26:40**), and acted impulsively when he cut the ear off the high priest's servant (**John 18:10**) and many of us know the time he denied Christ three times after proudly declaring he would never forsake Him (**Matthew 26:33, 70-74**). Even after walking with Jesus for three years, Peter had a tendency to display cowardice, but when also displayed great courage and boldness:

"On the day of Pentecost, Peter was the main speaker to the crowd in Jerusalem (Acts 2:14ff), and the Church began with an influx of about 3,000 new believers (verse 41). Later, Peter healed a lame beggar (Acts 3) and preached boldly before the Sanhedrin (Acts 4). Even arrest, beatings, and threats could not dampen Peter's resolve to preach the risen Christ (Acts 5)."

- <https://gotquestions.org/life-Peter.html>

Following Pentecost, Peter continued to struggle against his flesh. In **Acts 10**, Peter argued with God about unclean food and eventually had to be convinced that God does not show favoritism. In **Galatians 2**, Paul rebukes Peter for pandering to the powerful Jews and betraying his friendship with the gentiles. Peter, like many of us, had seasons where he chose comfort over courage. The point of the circle isn't to question your salvation. The point of the circle is to jumpstart a curiosity for more, cultivate a desire to move from comfort to courage and develop a faith that shines brightly. Peter was human and just like us he had to live in the tension between spirit and flesh. For Peter, bringing the Kingdom to earth was a life-long journey.

DISCUSS/JOURNAL

Read the following statements:

- A life lived by the Spirit is a life that begs the question, "What makes him/her so different?"
 - A life lived by the Spirit is a life that invites supernatural strength in the face of adversity.
 - A life lived by the Spirit is a life that enables you to give a testimony when the time comes.
1. What do you think enabled Peter to show great courage in the face of extreme danger? **(Acts 4)**
 2. Does living by the Spirit make a difference in your life? Do you parent differently? Fight for your marriage differently? Resist temptation differently?
 3. How does Peter's life encourage you?

PRAYING FOR BOLDNESS

Acts 4:23-30 NIV On their release, Peter and John went back to their own people and reported all that the chief priests and the elders had said to them. When they heard this, they raised their voices together in prayer to God. **"Sovereign Lord," they said, "you made the heavens and the earth and the sea, and everything in them. You spoke by the Holy Spirit through the mouth of your servant, our father David: 'Why do the nations rage and the peoples plot in vain? The kings of the earth rise up and the rulers band together against the Lord and against his anointed one.' Indeed, Herod and Pontius Pilate met together with the Gentiles and the people of Israel in this city to conspire against your holy servant Jesus, whom you anointed. They did what your power and will had decided beforehand should happen. Now, Lord, consider their threats and enable your servants to speak your word with great boldness.**

Peter and John, and their own people – their posse – responded to God as a group. They began to retell stories of God's faithfulness and prophecy, they recounted the strength and power of God in the face of adversity and instead of praying for their enemies to be silenced, they prayed for something radically different – they invited God's wonder-working power and prayed to speak with boldness! We might have been tempted to pray: enlarge my recliner, make me safe, bring punishment to my enemies, protect my family - but they prayed for BOLDNESS. Adversity's primary motive is to distort God. But our confidence in God is the antidote – the memorial stones of faithfulness that we build along the way – these are the foundation on which we stand and proclaim His name in the darkness.

DISCUSS/JOURNAL

1. One sign in hotel gym read: "At the first sign of discomfort - discontinue use" (Isn't that the whole point of exercising?) Another at a local gym read: "If it doesn't challenge you, it doesn't change you." If your faith required a plaque - what would it say?

2. At the first sign of a challenge do you ask to grow and be transformed or do you ask God to take it away? What would it look like for you to approach challenges by asking “how is this going to change me?”

PRAYING FOR POWER

Acts 4:30-31 “Stretch out your hand to heal and perform signs and wonders through the name of your holy servant Jesus.” After they prayed, the place where they were meeting was shaken. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and spoke the word of God boldly.

Praying for God to stretch out His hand is not an invitation to be weird, offensive, obnoxious or judgmental. Praying for God to reveal His power is an invitation for Him to bring opportunity your way in the most ordinary of places, and help you to act in a way that would make the Lord famous. Charles Stanley said “[Prayer] is the link between God's inexhaustible resources and people's needs...God is the source of power, but we are the instrument He uses to link the two together.” As mere instruments we will never be qualified – but by God's grace all we have to be is willing. Peter was willing to lay it all down. Peter was willing to learn and grow and change and journey to the point of death. When we resolve to be open as we encounter needs, when we don't know what to say in the face of trouble but take it to the Lord in prayer, when we invite Jesus into those little moments – heaven touches earth and by God we become mighty instruments of worship.

DISCUSS/JOURNAL

The lame beggar in **Acts 3** was resigned to his situation but Peter came along, and filled with the Spirit, he spoke to a deeper need. Have you accepted something that has crippled you spiritually or emotionally? Have you become resigned that this is the posture of your life? **Pray** that you would be provoked to see the world differently. **Pray** for boldness in the face of adversity - **pray** for healing and freedom. The Lord is saying this is not your life - He wants to do something in your life that only HE can do. Be open to His word and calling. Journal or discuss about what is holding you back and then seek out a wise friend to pray about this with you.

DEVOTIONALS & RESOURCES

PROVIDE US WITH FEEDBACK

We are excited about the potential these studies have to help each of us process the weekend message at a deeper level, and to see God change our lives in significant ways. In order to make these guides as helpful as possible, we would love to hear which elements are most helpful, which are least helpful, as well as any other comments, questions or suggestions. Feel free to send your feedback directly to Jon Holmberg at jonrholmberg@gmail.com.