

TO RISK IT ALL

By Steve Wessels

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We all face risks in this life, some by choice, some by chance.
A soldier or police officer or innocent passerby turns his head
a split second before a bullet whizzes harmlessly by.
A suddenly single mother gets someone to watch the baby as she
goes to the courthouse and files for divorce.
and then goes into hiding, afraid of the future.
A minister counsels the distraught husband to
"Give her another chance" but then learns
from the newspaper next week
of the possible murder and suicide

A father trusts in his understanding of finances
and invests heavily in the stock market
or in a third oil well site with good seismic readings,
risking it all as my grandfather did.....

A night stock clerk tells his supervisor of
a co-workers theft of company goods last night.....

A CEO gambles his career and the future of all his employees
by remodeling the factory with hi-tech machinery.

A lonely teen struggles with love and truth and chastity and
the ugly reality of fears, manipulation and deceit.....

A wife swallows her fears and leaves her extended family to
moves cross country with four young children to a
cold clime without friends to be with her husband,
who chose to take a new position in a distant land.....

I've heard the bullets whipping by at supersonic speed,
and sat helplessly as the Huey pilots dove and twisted
to the left and then to the right and up and down,
successfully gambling with his life and mine.....

I've held another's life in my gun sight while ordering him to
get out of the stolen car he was driving
moments after he rammed it into my patrol car.....
He chose not to reach for the toy Derringer on the seat.

I've prayed while chasing down a gasoline tanker, driving on a sea of gas
with four studded snow tires that miraculously didn't catch fire.

I've survived decades of risk-choices and heartaches
and victories and defeats both great and small.....

And I've lost a daughter who won't even call me on Father's Day
or acknowledge my existence or decades of care and support.

But when I look back over the past three decades
since I accepted the offer He made when I was rebellious,
When God offered me the risk of life with Him at the helm,
when I wondered at that blank wall in space and
the open door He'd just brought me through,
when He showed me all of the filth and stinking garbage
of the world on the other side of the threshold...

And as I now look back at what my life was like back then,
before Christ knocked on the door of my life,
and at what has happened since.....

I wonder anew at God's plans, of His ability to turn the worst storm
into the most beautiful blessing, the ugliest argument
into tears of repentance and peace.....

The Holocaust into worldwide empathy for His Chosen Race,
the rebirth of a nation in a single day..... just as He said....
And I look at the risks everyone in the Mid-East faces,
every day life risk-choices..... just as He said....

Have you ever risked it all and felt so abandoned, so alone on a vast sea,
struggling to stay afloat with the circumstances of life,
paralyzed with fear, exhausted, so adrift and utterly alone
with absolutely no hope of rescue?

Isn't that what life is like for those who don't love and fear God,
who haven't accepted His Challenge of risking life
with His Holy Spirit as our Pilot and internal Cop,
who have no sure foundation of right or wrong
or standard or ethics or integrity in life?

It is such a comfort to know that I'm the child of the King,
that nothing can touch me unless like Job,
it first passes by His throne and gains His approval.
There's abundant hope and joy and peace in my life, even
amidst the arguments and risks and thorns and storms....

We all face risks every day, some by choice, some trivial, some gigantic.
Even driving to church risks others running stop lights.....
But I'd much rather face His challenges than life without Him,
of guessing what God wants out of any particular storm,
of trying to find His will and His way with anticipation
by seeking the guidance of His Holy Spirit in truth
as He invades the circumstances of my life...

I'd much rather gamble with God, with the sure knowledge that
He'll forgive my mistakes and failures and shortcomings,
the times I failed to seek or listen or obey....
Risking God's path is dangerously safe. We know He wins.
No stock market gain
or lovemaking with my spouse
or rapturous music
or mountaintop success
could ever compare with

The challenge of knowing Him, the thrill of risking my life for Him,
of receiving the sweet guidance of His Holy Spirit,
aware of His Presence as my Redeemer and Savior,
watching in awe as my risk choices and His Plans
harmonize in my clients and friends and children....
Everything else pales in comparison.

And soon, oh so sorrowfully soon, I think I'll hear Him say,
*"Steve, you really did well! You listened and you learned,
and you guided many others to My path and My door!
Enter into My joy as your Master!"*

It's been a challenge to write this poem trying to steer everyone toward Home,
To focus on what will really be the central theme for eternity,
The worship and praise of Christ, our Lord, who is in Heaven and earth adored
For while down here this life He tread and for us all His blood He shed,

But ne'er turned away from God's true call, He knew His goal, He risked it all
So when our storms and strife arise we're safe to risk His sure Sonrise.
And sure of this, I choose to chance my life, my love, my worktime dance
To see if I can clearly be a mirror of His integrity

So at that final curtain call I'll know for sure I risked it all.