

Day 16

A Warrior's Heart for Taking Risks with Sin

Hard Surfaces Hurt

I had the sweetest friend named Jane who lived a few blocks from me in Highland Park. Our parents decided one beautiful Saturday morning to meet halfway between our houses so that we could ride our bikes back to my house and play for the afternoon. I was so excited! Seldom in my growing up experiences did our parents walk to meet so that we could our ride bikes back to my house. I am not sure why my Dad agreed to it that day. I am sure he was completely unaware that the gravel stage had been set so that his young daughter would learn a lesson on...risk taking.

Our meeting at the corner was uneventful except for the giggly and gleeful sounds of two young girls happy for this rare opportunity. We had made plans to get our Barbie's out and decide who Ken would marry for that afternoon. We only had one Ken and six Barbie's...Ken was going to have to make a choice. Poor man of plastic! However, his choice wouldn't last long. As soon as the Barbie's...and Ken...were all put away the marriage was over. I could write on the topic of how easily marriages are over and spouses are set aside in our current culture, just like our Barbie and Ken example, but that's for another book...I'll make a note.

We laughed and pedaled our short bike ride. We were only a few houses from my house when on impulse, I began to feel competitive. I wanted to beat Jane to the corner. I started pedaling faster and faster...I could feel the wind in my face...I was almost there! The risk of speeding for just a few brief minutes was going to pay off...I had lost Jane several feet behind me. In the distance I could hear my Dad's voice start to yell for me to slow down. My mind was in its own realm now thinking only of...the one to be first to reach the corner...this risk was well worth taking, even if it broke a tiny rule about riding my bike too fast...

The Bible talks about women who took risks. Many risks were planned, guided, and specific risks that God had planted in their hearts and orchestrated in their lives. In fact, He gave many women the courage and wisdom to take the risks He wanted them to take –

Jochebed placed her three-month-old infant son Moses in a waterproof basket in the snake and crocodile infested Nile River so that he wouldn't be killed by the Egyptians. Jochebed took a risk...by faith seeking God first (Hebrews 11:23). Her risk was not sinful in nature. It was not something she just decided to do one day hoping her baby would be safe. It was not a scheme she concocted (although several women in the Bible did try scheming and manipulating to get their way...a form of risk taking and stepping into sin that always had disastrous results). The way the Bible describes Jochebed's faith she had most likely consulted God even before she gave birth. Her risk allowed Moses years later to lead the Israelites as they walked through the Red Sea on dry ground. Jochebed took a risk after **consulting** God.

Ruth, a young widow, took a risk leaving behind her own country of Moab and following her mother-in-law Naomi back to her homeland in Bethlehem. Ruth pledged to follow Naomi and worship her God as her own (Ruth 1:16). She took Naomi's faith as her own faith. After a dangerous trip with her mother-in-law returning to Bethlehem and working hard during the barley harvest...Ruth met Boaz, a kindly land owner who became her kinsman-redeemer. He married Ruth and rescued both women from poverty. In Matthew we learn that Ruth was an ancestor of King David, whose descendant was Jesus Christ. Ruth took a risk and **followed** God.

Queen Esther took a huge risk. She gave her uncle Mordecai instructions to gather all the Jewish people in Susa to fast and pray for her for three days (Esther 4:16). After they had done as she requested she took a risk and approached King Xerxes opening the door for her to tell him the truth about the plot of Haman to kill all the Jewish people. Her risk, and then obedience, spared the Jewish people. Proving God can save His people when the odds seem impossible, even through a young woman who literally won a beauty contest and became Queen. But her looks must have been secondary to her heart being obedient to God...she was willing to risk her life - even if she perished (Esther 4:16). Queen Esther took a risk and was **obedient** to God.

There are many more women in the Bible who took risks that God had placed in their lives that changed legacies. There are also many women in the Bible who took risks...that caused them to fall into sin and painful lives. They suffered as did their legacy.

In Genesis we meet Eve. Eve also took a risk. A risk that was not thought out, prayed over, obedient to God...or even discussed with God. Let's face it, God was in the Garden and Eve could have discussed with God Himself the issue she had with the Tree of Knowledge, especially *after* meeting the serpent. But, impulsively she liked what she heard from the beautiful serpent. She wanted more than God had given her. Which let's face it, was basically every single thing except the fruit from one tree. So she decided to take the risk the serpent offered to her that day in the Garden. She wanted the one thing...God said "No" to.

I don't want to judge Eve, because we've all been there...God has given us everything we need...then the enemy tempts us with something that looks (I use the term looks here because it is simply a mirage) better. A more attentive spouse, an expensive house with a three car garage, a career move that will require lots of hours...but get us closer to the glass ceiling we're trying to break through, spending money we don't have for newer cars, phones, clothes, purses, shoes, and whatever else society tells us we 'must have' to feel good about ourselves (as if being created by the Hand of God isn't good enough), gossiping about that one person who really (seriously...seriously) annoys you, a little white lie (which there is only one kind of lie...a lie)...you name it...satan is going to make it look better (remember...mirage)...it's not real. It's a hard surface that is going to smack you flat in the face.

The risk you take to go after the mirage he gives you, the sin the enemy makes look so attractive that like Eve, you must have it...do it...take it...buy it...or get it somehow...will be your undoing. Perhaps not at first, but eventually...you and your legacy...will pay a high price for sin. There's a saying...you can chose the sin, but you cannot chose the consequence. Consequences are hard surfaces...they hurt. All consequences of sin are different, but many can change the trajectory of life for years...for generations.

Whew...that's been a lot to absorb! We left 5th Street and ended up in the Garden of Eden where society fell, BUT GOD picked it back up. God already knew that Eve would take her untimely risk. He also knew that she would commit the first sin in the history of mankind...in the most beautiful Garden in the world. His first daughter would cause every living thing to be born under a curse. But in Genesis we read what God did when Eve's risk failed, when Eve hit her hard surface of sin...He called to her and Adam (Genesis 3:9). He knew exactly where they were...hiding, because of shame and guilt. The promise from satan for something better to Eve proved to be a lie...it only looked better. Remember they were hiding...that's why the enemy loves sin...it sends you into hiding from God.

After they sinned causing a curse to fall on all of God's beautiful creation...He made garments to cover them. Did you hear that...He covers their newly experienced shame, guilt, and nakedness.

Yes, there was a consequence given that day, because God is a righteous and just God, but in His great compassion He provided a covering for them. He could have angrily marched into the Garden, plopped His throne in their face, degraded them and accusing them while hurling insults...especially given the magnitude of Eve's risk and fall into sin for generations to come. But...He covered them. His son would later cover all sin forever (John 3:16) with his own life. Don't misinterpret here that God easily accepts sin because of His compassion, because sin breaks His heart. He knows it's deceptive and destructive. The Lord hates sin, but He loves His beloved creation and there is restoration for sin (discussed in our Warrior Salvation section later in this journey), but for now let's stay focused on the destruction of sin before venturing into repentance and restoration.

Sin starts with a thought...a seed planted by the enemy...and then it involves taking a risk...a bite out of something God does not intend to happen in your life. If you give into temptation...and take the risk of sin...you'll learn the hard surface of sin hurts.

Let's go back to 5th Street and the day I raced my friend Jane attempting to be first to the corner. Just as I reached the corner my bike hit loose gravel...my face hit the pavement, and then slid across it. I don't remember anything after hitting that hard surface...until I came to in my Dad's arms carrying me. My face was bloody. My top teeth had went into my bottom lip. I was a bloody, bruised up mess. That's how a risk into a sinful decision will leave you...a battered, bloody, bruised up mess. My risk...which led to a bad choice, looked like fun...until I hit the hard surface. But, there was my Dad carrying me covering my bloody face with a cold cloth. Sound familiar? Remember, that's exactly what God did with Adam and Eve. He covered them.

Avoid risks immediately that you know are not for you...because they are a mirage...only looking better up close. Like our Biblical sisters, before taking a risk and getting entangled in something God does not intend for you, pray, fast, have faith in what He tells you...like Jochebed consult with God, like Ruth follow God, and like Queen Esther be obedient to God. Walk away from the risk...

Putting this into action - Is there a risk that you're thinking of taking now, or that you've perhaps already taken and it's not turning out the way you thought? Has a child, parent, spouse, someone significant in your life deeply hurt you with a risk they've taken that's affected you? Can you think of risks that should always be avoided to stay in God's will for your life? Do you believe that God will cover every sin that you commit?

Sadly, you...me...our legacy...will never be perfect until we reach home. But we can reduce our risk to sin if we seek God and live our daily life close to Christ. We will create a legacy that hopefully, unlike Eve...does not cause another downfall of civilization.

See below for Instruction Manual and Warrior Note.

Instruction Manual

“The LORD your God is with you, the Mighty Warrior who saves. He will take great delight in you; in his love he will no longer rebuke you, but will rejoice over you with singing.” Zephaniah 3:17

Warrior Note - As I concluded this section the Holy Spirit prompted me to write the following words. I pray that He will reveal His heart to you as you read these next lines...many of you didn't have a Dad who would cover you. Perhaps, he even took advantage of you. Maybe it's hard to imagine that a Father would love you enough...to cover your risks...your mistakes...the times you fell on a hard surface and couldn't get back up. Beloved daughter of God, He loves you enough to pick you up a million times over. You may not be walking in the Garden of Eden, but He is calling you right where you are. He wants you to know that the Father you did not get here on earth...has always been in Heaven watching over you. He weeps when you weep. His heart aches when you're broken. God has emotions. He's not a superficial nonchalant heavenly king, uninvolved in your life. Adam and Eve cost all of us a perfect life, with a perfect parent like they enjoyed, until Eve took the risk...and sinned. We live in a world filled with sin. It has impacted everything and everyone around us...including Dad's. If that's you Sweet Warrior, feeling fatherless and unwanted in some areas of your life that only a Father could fulfill...you have a Father...He's been there all along...He loves you. He created you and you are cherished and beloved to your Father. You bear His resemblance and were made in His image (Genesis 1:27). When you look in the mirror there are qualities of your heavenly Dad that only you have. He's your family legacy to leave for the next generation. Here are some places in His love letter the to you, the Bible, that tell you in His own Words how much, how deeply, you are loved by your Father...(Psalm 139; 1 John 3:1; 1 John 4:18, 19; Jeremiah 29:11; Jeremiah 31:3; Psalm 86:15; Romans 5:8; Deuteronomy 7:9; Zephaniah 3:17)