

Faith is Spelled R I S K

John Wimber, the late founder of the Vineyard Movement, popularized a phrase that has been a part of our vernacular for half a century.

When it came to the Christian walk, John's forte was to live at the intersection of the profound and the practical.

He wasn't just content to read about healing the sick, casting out demons, and doing miracles; he believed that what Jesus did was model for us was possible if we came alongside Him doing the work of the Kingdom.

Jesus came to train us –average, ordinary people – to become his apprentices (disciples) to do the works of the Kingdom of God just as He did, and then train others to do the same.

John believed, and I believe that Jesus was showing us that anything He could do, we could do also.

Faith is Spelled R-I-S-K reminds us that the mystery of faith is expressed in the realities of everyday life. Faith is more than just believing in the right things; faith is about belief in action.

James 2:14-18

What good is it, my brothers, if someone says he has faith but does not have works? Can that faith save him? 15 If a brother or sister is poorly clothed and lacking in daily food, 16 and one of you says to them, "Go in peace, be warmed and filled," without giving them the things needed for the body, what good is that? 17 So also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead.

18 But someone will say, "You have faith and I have works." Show me your faith apart from your works, and I will show you my faith by my works.

1. Faith is spelled R-I-S-K is a motto for Kingdom living.

Faith in Jesus was never meant to be understood as a standalone, sing-it, say-it, pray-it-and-go-home kind of faith

Jesus had no intention of founding an anemic Church that would become highly skilled at doing religion without true spiritual power, always expressed in love, backing it up.

Gal 5:6

For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision counts for anything, but only faith working through love.

The Gospel faith Jesus gave us, modeled for us, and distributes through us in our homes, neighborhoods, churches, and cities, is real power for real life.

To be a disciple of Jesus is to become His apprentice – learning to do what He did and to do it smack in the middle of everyday life as we know it.

In other words, we are to be naturally supernatural.

This is a Monday through Saturday faith.

2. Power Encounters

What are we trying to communicate, by connecting the words Faith and Risk, to our church?

If you want to see God do miraculous things, through ordinary people like you and I, you're going to have to practice going out on a limb, taking leaps of faith, and diving in headfirst.

- a) To do this we have to learn to hear the voice of the Holy Spirit
- b) We have to respond with action to what He says to us
- c) We have to take bold risks with God

Mark 6:7-13

And he called the twelve and began to send them out two by two, and gave them authority over the unclean spirits. 8 He charged them to take nothing for their journey except a staff—no bread, no bag, no money in their belts— 9 but to wear sandals and not put on two tunics. 10 And he said to them, "Whenever you enter a house, stay there until you depart from there. 11 And if any place will not receive you and they will not listen to you, when you leave, shake off the dust that is on your feet as a testimony against them." 12 So they went out and proclaimed that people should repent. 13 And they cast out many demons and anointed with oil many who were sick and healed them.

Every time we are obedient to the Holy Spirit and share the love of Christ with someone, or pray for someone, we are involved in a power encounter.

The Kingdom of God is doing violence to the kingdom of this world.

Matt 11:12

From the days of John the Baptist until now, the kingdom of heaven has been forcefully advancing, and forceful men lay hold of it. (NIV)

3. Learning to take risks together

Vineyard Churches become communities where people learn to hear and trust the voice of the Holy Spirit.

They become communities where people even practice taking risks with God.

They become communities where everyone, regardless of age, gender, ethnicity or position, can play on the field of Kingdom living. Everyone gets to play

They become communities inspired by what God is doing in their midst and begin to look for every opportunity to show God's love in practical ways, taking risks of faith and seeing God "show up"! Or as Sam likes to say, "God shows off"!

Taking risks of faith with others, especially with those who have learned to hear God's voice and to act on what they hear, can give us the confidence we need to make "Faith is spelled R-I-S-K a motto for our own Kingdom life.

Reflection Questions

Is there a risk that you've taken, believing the Holy Spirit was guiding you, that you took because you saw someone else model it first?

How did seeing someone else risk boost your confidence?

How exciting is it to think that you can actually do this stuff?