

WALKING THE WIRE IN THE WORKPLACE

By Dr. Rick Warren

Have you ever heard of Jean-Francois Gravelet? He lived from 1824 to 1897, and used the professional pseudonym, Blondin, gaining world acclaim as a tightrope walker and acrobat from London, England. Blondin crossed Niagara Falls in upstate New York, U.S.A. a number of times on a wire 1,100 feet long, suspended 160 feet above the raging waters. He performed his death-defying tightrope feats with different theatrical variations: Blindfolded; in a sack; pushing a wheelbarrow; on stilts; even while carrying a man on his back.

We might not be walking a high wire across a raging waterfall, but in the 21st century workplace, it seems like that at times. There is the balance between ethics and profit; embarking into the unknown with an unproven product or service; juggling work and family priorities; economic uncertainties.

When I read about Blondin, I think of a man who also attempted a death-defying feat. His name was Peter. You might recall the biblical account where Peter and the other disciples of Jesus were in a small boat in the midst of a raging storm. Suddenly they saw Jesus walking across the water. Impulsively, Peter asked, "Lord, if it is you...tell me to come to you on the water" (Matthew 14:28). Jesus' response was simple: "Come."

"... when Peter saw the high waves he was terrified and began to sink. 'Save me, Lord!' he shouted" (Matthew 14:30). I suspect we all would have done the same. Have you ever embarked on a project or made a decision, thinking at the time it was the right thing to do, only to have circumstances immediately bring your judgment into question?

I want to remind you Simon Peter did many notable things during the course of his lifetime, but this episode of walking upon the water ranked as one of his greatest: no high wire, no rocks hidden underneath. Surrounded by obvious dangers, faced with utter impossibility, Peter found inner strength in his Lord's command: "Come." For a few moments, Peter shared with his Master in the suspension of natural laws.

Then the whole project blew up at four in the morning. One moment, his eyes fixed on Jesus, Peter was walking above the storm; the next he was "in over his head." Soaked to the skin, Peter was rescued by Jesus. He learned an important truth: A saint is not someone that never fails; a saint is someone **that is trusting in God** and gets up and goes on again every time he or she falls.

"Lord, save me!" Peter's words were simple, without time to elaborate on details, without time to observe ceremonial laws. But in reality, this is the quickest, easiest, and most desperate way to reach the heart of God.

What did Peter do wrong? He was blamed: Not for daring, but for doubting. Not for failure, but faltering. Not for lack of courage, but lack of confidence.

You may not be a Blondin or Peter, but you probably find yourself in today's fearsome workplace, in the midst of the night, and the storm is "contrary." Do not measure the waves, do not gauge the wind; do not give in to the danger, and most of all...**do not throw in the towel and sink under the circumstances.**

The Bible offers this advice: "Keep your eyes on Jesus, our Leader and Instructor...if you want to keep from becoming fainthearted and weary..." (Hebrews 12:1-3).

© 2012, Purpose Driven Life. All rights reserved. Adapted from a column by Dr. Rick Warren, author of numerous books, including the highly acclaimed, The Purpose-Drive Life, which has been translated into many languages worldwide. It affirms the importance of a carefully considered, clearly expressed purpose to guide everyday life. It has been named one of the 100 Christian books that changed the 20th Century.

CBMC INTERNATIONAL: Jim Firnstahl, President
1065 N. 115th Street, Suite 210 • Omaha, Nebraska 68154 • U.S.A.
TEL.: (402) 431-0002 • FAX: (402) 431-1749 • E-MAIL: info@cbmcint.org
Please direct any requests or change of address to: www.cbmcint.org

Reflection/Discussion Questions

1. Have you ever heard of the tightrope walker and acrobat Blondin? What do you think it takes for someone like him, or the famed "Flying Wallendas" family from Germany, to even begin to attempt such feats of danger and daring?
2. What are some of the "tightropes" you are presently encountering in your workplace? How are you dealing with them?
3. What do you think of the account of Jesus' disciple Peter and his decision to step out on the water? Does it strike you as purely an impulsive act, one of faith, or a combination of both? Explain your answer.
4. Dr. Warren states, "A saint is not someone that never fails; a saint is someone *that is trusting in God* and gets up and goes on again every time he or she falls." How do you respond to that statement?

NOTE: If you have a Bible, consider these other passages that relate to this topic:

Joshua 1:5-9; Psalm 23:4; Isaiah 26:3, 41:10; Jeremiah 29:11, 33:3; Hebrews 11:1, 13:5