

Life On The Cutting Edge

Many of us, when we are active in our addictions, take risks which are unhealthy and a number of us are living the consequences of those risks. However, there are healthy risks that we are asked to take as we live and grow in a new and secure way of living. Someone has said, "Risks must be taken because the greatest hazard in life is to risk nothing. The person who risks nothing does nothing, has nothing, is nothing. He may avoid suffering and sorrow, but he simply cannot learn, feel, change, grow, love . . . live. He's a slave and has forfeited freedom."

Someone else has listed risks worth taking:

- To laugh is to risk appearing the fool.
- To weep is to risk appearing sentimental.
- To reach out for another is to risk involvement.
- To love is to risk not being loved in return.
- To live is to risk dying.
- To hope is to risk despair.
- To try is to risk failure.

In the Bible, we are given examples of positive consequences that came from Godly people who took healthy risks: *... who by faith conquered kingdoms, performed acts of righteousness, obtained promises, shut the mouths of lions, quenched the power of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, from weakness were made strong* (Hebrews 11:33, 34).

An old saying goes, "Nothing ventured, nothing gained." Too often when we are faced with new choices in a new way of life we wonder, "What do I stand to lose if I do it?" The healthy person asks, "What do I stand to lose if I don't do it?"

We are asked, for example, to take a risk of faith To believe that there is a loving God who is close to us and who wants to live in relationship with us so we can experience a full and satisfying life. God promises us many things about how He will bless us as we live according to His principles for life. We take a risk if we choose God's way over our own because many of those principles ask us to wait or to let God give us something different than what we've known. We've tried temporary solutions that ended in dissatisfaction and pain. God wants to build solid and long-lasting goodness into our lives. This is new and unknown to us. Is this kind of trust and faith in a

loving God a risk? Of course. But failing to step out in faith is to risk missing real life.

What aching need do you have in your life right now? Are you afraid to approach Jesus and tell Him about it? He already knows, of course. Jesus wants us to admit our need to Him without shame or fear. What is holding you back? Are you afraid He won't care? Maybe years of rejection by those around you has convinced you that your need isn't important, that you're not worth the bother. But that isn't what Jesus says, and He waits for you to come to Him. We'll have to take the risk of changing our behaviour, our circumstances, our attitudes to match what God says works. It's work. It's a challenge, but the benefits are deeply satisfying.

Are you going to focus on your circumstances and the things you wish you could change but cannot? It doesn't do any good to dwell on the negative. If you have suffered for years, you understand the truth behind this statement. Are you going to let Jesus, the tender Savior, carry your pain and lead you into a secure future in His love? You didn't have a choice about the hurt you've already endured, but you do have the choice of allowing Jesus to bear it for you. Jesus understands. He looks at you with love in His eyes and says softly, *"Come to Me, all who are weary and heavy-laden, and I will give you rest ...learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for our souls."* (Matthew 11)

It's a risk to give up control of our life and our way of doing things and hand them over to Jesus Christ. It's a risk to believe He can and will heal our pain. It's a risk to trust that His new way of living will give us deeper satisfaction and meaning than we have yet experienced and then follow God's principles even when we don't feel like it. Many healthy and faithful people stand as witnesses to the positive life-giving truth that these risks are worth taking. These are risks that will actually give us life.

Questions for Reflection and Discussion

1. What does "taking a risk" mean when we are active in our addiction?
2. Why do healthy risks sometimes seem harder to take than unhealthy ones?
3. What am I willing to do about this "risk of faith"?
4. What behaviours will I need to change if I am to risk choosing to live God's way this week?