

TRANSCRIPT FOR PODCAST EPISODE 82-DO SOMETHING THAT REQUIRES FAITH

I'm Jill Baughan, and you're listening to the podcast called Find Joy...No Matter What.

This is Episode 82.

If you're in a tough place right now, your joy may seem like it's hiding--or gone.

I understand. But it's still there, I promise, just waiting to be resurrected. And this podcast is designed to help you do just that...no matter what else is going on in your life.

For just a few minutes each week, I'll tell you a story--one that just might inspire a way to uncover a piece of joy you might be looking for. Then, we'll consider how it might speak to your life, because even though you'll hear quite a few of my stories during our time together, I believe you'll find your own in every one of mine.

Finally, I'll offer a benediction to send you into your day--or into your night.

So. If you're up for doing joy shots with a friend today...have a listen.

How do you know if you're trusting God...or just being stupid?

I love this question so much.

It's the title of a blog post by leadership coach Carey Nieuwhof, and sums up what so many people--me included--have asked when we're trying to live a life of faith, and finding it hard to figure out what direction God might be pointing.

And, as Carey says, even *the Bible sometimes makes things...complicated.*

Ever really read the Bible? he asks.

So when you read it...what do you see? Faith or foolishness?

What was Abraham thinking when we set out with his entire family to go to a land he'd never been to, risking everything for a voice he thought he'd heard?

Who was Moses to think he could stand up to the most powerful king in the land, or to even attempt it after he had so much doubt about his calling?

Would you have advised your kids to do what Peter James and John did, leaving it all (including you, mom and dad!) to follow a man who had just burst onto the scene and some are starting to think is God?

How about Paul, who went from place to place, prison to prison, painfully misunderstood but absolutely committed to proclaiming this Jesus so many people rejected?

We say we want our kids to lead faithful lives, but do we even have a clue what that means?

None of our biblical heroes were exactly on the top college/stunning career track.

If you were advising any of these biblical figures, what would you have told them to do?

What is a Godly decision? Carey asks.

*Is it always wise, prudent, restrained, responsible?
Or is it always risky, edgy, out-there, half-crazed?
Or neither?
Or both?*

For the record, I don't believe there's an easy way, five step, bullet proof way to resolve the tension between faith and foolishness.

Pivotal decision making should be navigated through prayer, Scripture and through seeking advice of trusted people around you. But sometimes that even lands in a place of uncertainty.

Here are two questions I've started asking myself to help when things aren't clear:

1. Is 'wisdom' killing my trust in God?

2. Does my 'trust' in God disregard all wisdom?

About "Is 'wisdom' killing my trust in God?" Carey says,

You can get to a certain season in which you no longer want to take risks in the name of being 'wise', 'prudent' or 'responsible.'

But the truth is you don't want to rock the boat. If you examined your motives, you'd be honest and say you don't want to lose what you've already gained. You simply don't want to sacrifice what is for the sake of what could be.

And you've allowed 'wisdom' to become a substitute for trust.

In Episode 50, I mentioned that in 2007, my daughter's husband left her 18 months after they were married. Again, I will say that that story is hers to tell, but suffice it to say that when your child hurts, you hurt too. More than I have words to describe. And I felt so helpless in the middle of these awful circumstances.

One morning, in 2008, during my prayer time, I thought I felt God leading me to start a prayer journal for Jamie's future husband. I wasn't totally sure if it was a) God telling me to do this or b) me telling God to do this, and I hesitated, my brain struggling with the logic-the "wisdom" of it all. As I thought it through and reasoned it out, I kept asking myself, "If I do this and no husband appears, what will happen to my faith in God? What will be left, when I thought I was doing what He was directing me to do, and nothing ever came of it? Will it destroy what little faith I have right now?"

I was really scared of losing what belief I had in God's goodness, in His love for me and for my daughter.

Well, despite my questions, I gave in to that irresistible impression, bought a journal and started in anyway. I prayed for everything: his health, his family, his problems and worries.

But as time dragged on, through 2008....and 2009....and 2010...my faith-pendulum started swinging the other way. My expressions of gratitude and trust sometimes turned into strong suggestions to the God of the universe that He "get the lead out" regarding this issue.

I really did begin to think that my "trust" in God was disregarding all wisdom.

There were times when I was writing that I wondered if I was too presumptuous, being so very specific in my request. Sometimes during the worst times, it was hard to pray because I couldn't understand why He would let such difficult things happen to my daughter, and I had no idea how He was working through those prayers. I'm guessing that you yourself probably know how this feels, when life seems so unfair, going all wonky and awry.

I asked myself countless times, "Should I really be doing this? Am I crazy? Have I lost all sense of reason in deciding to do this...and even tell my daughter that I'm doing it?"

And when you're feeling like this, you might consider Carey's second question: "Does my 'trust' in God disregard all wisdom?"

Because, he says, *The opposite can also be true. You have so much 'faith' that you're...well, reckless.*

What people claim to be 'trust' can easily be:

*their ego
their insecurity
a cruel disregard for other people
deep disobedience
irresponsibility*

Just because you label it 'faithful' doesn't mean it's faithful.

If you are disregarding wisdom entirely and likely to hurt a bunch of people you're likely not being faithful.

Trust still looks like Jesus...and it should have outcomes consistent with his character and with scripture.

Well, nobody was getting hurt, and I didn't feel like God was directing me to do anything immoral or illegal.

I pressed onward.

In 2011, Jamie decided it was time to move from Charlotte to Boston to go to Boston University, And I kept praying for this young man we didn't know although, I won't lie, after three years I could still be found giving God the side-eye, saying, "Really? Was I just hearing things from you?"

In 2012, Jamie, in a wedding in Charlotte and on crutches, asked for some assistance from Josh, an old friend, in carrying her stuff. Next thing we knew, the two of them were funding JetBlue, making a LOT of trips between Boston and Charlotte.

In 2013 I was, not coincidentally, just about at the end of the journal—five years after I started it—when Josh asked Jamie to marry him under the Christopher Columbus Park Trellis in Boston.

Soon after, I wrapped up that journal and gave him to him as a present so both he and Jamie could see what God had done.

I'm just being honest when I say that we still don't know--and may never know-- every single way He answered each prayer because, as you yourself may also know, a whole lot of God is a whole lot of mystery. But I am certain of this: In the process of our praying, here is what happened: God grew in me a heart for this man. I loved him before I knew him, and that was more than enough for me to know.

What about you? Is there an act of faith you're feeling led to put feet on? Something that would involve some radical trust in God to provide...in some way?

Have you ever really trusted God with a decision you had to make? Are you trying to trust Him now, and finding yourself in a wrestling match with Him or even your own mind and heart, trying to discern what you're "supposed to" do, what's best to do, and still not getting any clear direction?

Well, Carey has one final piece of advice for all of us who struggle. He says,

So...you can go through all of these steps and still not be clear. You knew that, didn't you?

So what happens if all of this (prayer, scripture, wise counsel and questions like the two questions above) doesn't lead you to a conclusion?

Here's what I do.

I just make a decision. So should you.

So many dreams have died because people were terrified to make the wrong decision. Don't be.

Whatever decision you make, offer it up in faith. Make it faith. Dedicate the decision and the outcome to God..

A prayer like that can sound something like this:

'God I'm doing this (or not doing this) because I trust you. If it's wrong, I trust you will show me. If it's right, I trust you will show me. I'm trusting you with the outcome.'

Then go for it. With confidence and faith. Don't hold back.

(Expressive Piano eases in.)

And so, my friend,

May you take to heart this final thought:

There's more to this story that I'll tell you about in next week's episode--more twists and turns and questions--because life (even our faith life) is seldom a straight line.

But here's what I want you to know for now: In my mind and heart, the point of trusting God was not that we got the "happy ending" we wanted.

Because I assure you that **the presence of the ultimate joy did not negate the sorrow that became a permanent part of us along the way.**

My *hope* was for a happy ending, but my (often faltering) *faith* was in a God who hears and comes near and somehow brings redemption out of brokenness.

May it also be so for you.

Thanks so much for joining me.

If you know people who might be considering taking a risk by exercising some white knuckle trust in God, I invite you to share this podcast with them, and subscribe yourself on iTunes, or wherever you listen to podcasts. Or you can go to my website at jillbaughan.com, click on a podcast episode and sign up to receive episodes in your inbox. Just don't miss a single one, because I so look forward to being with you again soon.

Do something that requires faith, my friend. And always, always remember, if you go looking for joy, you'll most likely find it.

Till next time...