

Outline of a Biblical Theology of Risk

Foundational Elements of Risk Theology

1) **We truly have something worth risking for!**

- a) Phil. 3:7-11 - “the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord”
- b) Rom. 5:1-8 - “we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, ... we have gained access”
- c) Eph. 3:8-11 - “the unsearchable riches of Christ”, “[God’s] eternal purpose”
- d) Eph. 2:4-7 - “God ... made us alive together with Christ”
- e) Col. 1:27 - “Christ in you, the hope of glory”
- f) Matt. 13:44 - “like a treasure hidden in the field ... from joy ... sells all that he has and buys”

2) **God calls all believers to take risks! Risk-taking is an integral part of our Christian faith.**

- a) Matt. 10:16 - “Behold, I send you out as sheep in the midst of wolves” (Read Matt. 10:16-39)
- b) Matt. 28:19 - “Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations”
- c) Luke 10:25-37 - “love the Lord your God ... and love your neighbor”, “Go and do likewise”
- d) John 20:21 - “as the Father has sent Me, I also send you”
- e) Acts 1:8 - “you will be my witnesses ... to the ends of the earth”
- f) Matt. 10:38-39 (16:24-25) - “If anyone wishes to come after Me, he must deny himself, and take up his cross and follow Me.”

3) **Taking risks may lead to suffering or persecution. We should be willing to suffer and know that God may allow us to suffer. Persecution is a normal part of being a Christian. We should not think that God has abandoned or betrayed us if we end up suffering or being persecuted.**

- a) Matt. 10:21-25, 34-36 - “You will be hated by everyone because of me”
- b) John 15:20 - “If they persecuted Me, they will also persecute you.”
- c) 2 Tim 3:12 - “Indeed, all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will be persecuted.”
- d) Phil 1:29 - “For it has been given to you for Christ’s sake, not only to believe in Him, but also to suffer for His sake.”
- e) 1 Thess. 1:6 - “you welcomed the message in the midst of severe suffering with the joy given by the Holy Spirit”
- f) Rom. 8:35-36 - “For your sake we face death all day long” “we are more than conquerors through him who loved us”
- g) John 16:1-3 - “I have told you so that you will not fall away. They will ... kill you ...”
- h) 2 Cor. 11:23-27 (1:8; 4:11) - Paul’s Experience “servants of Christ ... in prison, beaten, danger of death, stoned, shipwrecked, [other] dangers ..., sleepless, hunger and thirst, cold, concern for churches”
- i) 2 Tim. 1:8 - “join with me in suffering for the gospel according to the power of God”

Biblical Way to Treat Risk

4) **God expects us to do logical risk assessment and risk reduction. We are not just to passively “trust God” to protect us. There is an expectation of human cooperation, wisdom, and stewardship in risk assessment and reduction.**

- a) Matt. 10:16, 23 - “sheep in the midst of wolves; so be shrewd as serpents and innocent as doves,” “whenever they persecute you in one city, flee to the next”
- b) John 7:1 - “[Jesus] was unwilling to walk in Judea because the Jews were seeking to kill Him.”
- c) John 11:53-54 - “they made plans to put him to death. Jesus therefore no longer walked openly among the Jews”
- d) Acts 9:24-25 - “his disciples took him [Paul] by night and let him down through an opening in the wall, lowering him in a basket.”
- e) Acts 14:5-7 - “There was a plot ... to stone them. They learned of it and fled”

f) Acts 23:12-33 - “some Jews ... bound themselves with an oath not to eat or drink until they had killed Paul.” “Paul called one of the centurions and said, ‘Take this young man to the commander’” “So the soldiers ... took Paul with them during the night.”

5) There are many factors that should be included in an effective Biblical risk assessment.

- a) **God** (His overarching presence; leading of Holy Spirit; fellowship with Christ)
 - i) God’s presence with love, peace, grace, joy, and hope (Rom. 5:5; John 14:27; 2 Cor. 9:8; 1 Thess. 1:6; Rom. 15:13)
 - ii) Leading of Holy Spirit (may speak in many ways) (Acts 16:6-10; Acts 21:12-14)
- b) **You** (your abilities; your mental/emotional/spiritual condition; understanding risks)
 - i) Wisdom and Stewardship (Matt. 10:16; Col. 1:25)
 - ii) Logical risk assessment (understanding threats, impact, likelihood) (Acts 9:30; Acts 23:16)
- c) **Others** (input from others [risk assessment; wise counsel, etc.]; needs of others [locals, family, etc.])
 - i) Wise counsel of others (Acts 9:29-30; Acts 19:30)
 - ii) Knowledge and insights from local believers (or residents) (Acts 9:24-25; Acts 19:31)
 - iii) Needs of those whom we serve - potential benefit from taking the risk (Acts 14:21-23)
 - iv) Impact of risk decision on others: team, family, locals (Acts 8:1-3)

Dealing with Risk Situations/Events

6) It is not more spiritual to remain in a high-risk situation (and even take on more risk); nor is it more spiritual to reduce risk (or even avoid risk). We should not carelessly allow ourselves to succumb to the impacts of a dangerous situation.

- a) Jesus both avoided risk and took on risk (John 7:1 & John 11:53-54 vs. John 18:5,12)
- b) Paul both avoided risk and took on risk (Acts 14:5-6 vs. Acts 14:19, 21b)

7) We should not be influenced or motivated by fear when dealing with a risk situation. However, we must honestly deal with our fear and situations that cause us to be afraid. (We should live a life of faith and trust in our loving heavenly Father.)

- a) Matt. 10:28-31 - “Do not be afraid of those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul.”
- b) Acts 4:13, 18-21 - “When they saw the courage of Peter and John ... they took note that these men had been with Jesus”
- c) Phil. 1:20-21 - “with all boldness, Christ will ... be exalted in my body, whether by life or by death”
- d) Acts 18:9-10 - “the Lord spoke to Paul in a vision: ‘Do not be afraid; keep on speaking, ... For I am with you’”
- e) Matt. 14:30 - “But when he [Peter] saw the wind, he was afraid, and beginning to sink he cried out, ‘Lord, save me.’”
- f) 2 Tim. 1:7-8 - “For God has not given us a spirit of fear ..., but of power, love, and self-discipline”

8) Biblical Examples of Dealing with Risk

- a) The word "risk" used three times in N.T. – Acts 15:26; Rom. 16:4, Phil. 2:30
- b) See examples in #6 above (Jesus and Paul both embracing and avoiding risk situations)
- c) Acts 9:10-17 - Ananias risking by speaking to the newly-converted Saul of Tarsus
- d) Acts 9:24-25, 29-30 - Paul avoiding/mitigating risk
- e) Acts 19:30 - Paul avoiding risk in Ephesus, based on counsel of local believers
- f) Acts 23:12-23 - Paul avoiding/mitigating risk of plot to kill him in Jerusalem
- g) Acts 10:28-29 (Acts 11:2-3) - Peter taking on risk by associating with Gentiles

Application to Computer Security

9) These same principles should be applied to information and our digital environment. We should take steps to apply practical computer security and digital risk management/reduction.

- a) Acts 23:12-24 – v.22 “Tell no one that you have notified me of these things.”