

Love, Like You Never Knew It

Chapter 4: When You Trust HIM Enough

Fear of Flying (or fear of anything else)

I got on a plane flight not long ago from Washington DC to Buffalo, New York. And it was a little tiny plane. It's one of those planes that, you know, has six inch wide seats. And when I get into a plane like that, I pray that God will give me, if he wants me to minister with anyone on that flight, that it be someone needing help from anorexia. That's what I pray for because I'm a recovering anorexic myself. And I don't mind helping with that. This woman gets in that's at least as big as I am, probably bigger. She sits in the seat next to me. She's already half drunk and she turns around says, "We're gonna die. We're gonna die. We're gonna die!" And said to her, "Excuse me, what do you mean we're gonna die?" She continued, "I know it. I just hate flying. I'm so scared. I just know what's gonna happen." Then I said, "Really? Really. It'll be okay."

I was reading a book at the time entitled "The Wisdom of Tenderness" by Brennan Manning. It's a fabulous book. I had been reading it in the airport before I got on the plane. I continued reading it on the plane. But this woman is just inches shy of clinical panic and anxiety. And if she didn't have whatever alcohol she had before she got there, she probably would

be over that edge. Now I enjoy flying on little planes because they make lots of noises that freak people out. When the landing gear comes up, it really feels like every piece of luggage just left the aircraft. It really does. I know when it's happening. I'm a private pilot. I got my license when I was 16 years of age. So I understand a bit of that. I don't fly now because it's way too expensive. But I know all that's happening. It's kind of fun watching people freak. But now I'm sitting next to somebody and you know what? I don't want this woman freaking any more than she's already freaking.

And I had asked God when I prayed that morning, for this particular woman. I said, "God, if there's anyone you have for me to serve today in transit, if there's anyone you would give me to love today, I'm open to that. And this woman sits next to me and she's panicked and I know everything about flying and I could really help her to get to Buffalo. And I'm already hearing this nudge of the Holy Spirit inside me saying, "Put your book away. This is not about reading. This is about loving." And so I turned to her a little bit and I said, "Well you know what? Buffalo's not that far from here. Why are you flying instead of driving?" She said, "I got a call this morning. My mom had a heart attack in the middle of the night. She's dying and I'm trying to get there before she dies." Oh man, now it's clear. I don't need a two by four upside the head. My job that

day is to get this woman to buffalo. That's all my job is.

I said, "Listen ma'am, I do a lot of flying. Let me just help you get there. She responded, "What do you mean?" I said, "Let me just tell you what's going on. This plane is absolutely safe. In fact, these planes are safer than the big ones. If something goes wrong this thing glides. We'll be fine. Just let me walk you through this." So I did. I talked her through taxi, through takeoff, little clouds coming up, little bumpy. The landing gear is going to come up in just a minute here. There was a big wine and a thud. That's the landing gear. "Oh really?" "That's it, I said. I got her through that. I saw some clouds coming up. I said, "You know what, think of those clouds like chuck holes in the roads and around DC." They've got plenty of those so they know what that is. I said, "It will be a little bumpy going through there. Just little bumps in the air. That's all it is." "Oh, really?" So we bumped our way through. There were moments when she was starting to panic and I just talked her down again. As soon as they served the beverages in the plane, she ordered two more alcoholic drinks and pulled out her pills. And she's just freaking out.

She turned to me and said, "Oh, I'm sorry I'm taking all of your time. Why don't you just go back to reading your book?" I said, "Actually, my book can wait. It's not a problem. I don't mind helping you. In fact, you're in my book." "I am?"

she asked. I said, “Yeah.” Now, here’s God’s amazing timing. I read a paragraph just before I got on this flight. It was about a woman getting on a plane consumed with anxiety. I turned to the page and read her the paragraph and it was something about learning to trust God in moments like this.

You're A Christian?!

She asked me, "Are you a Christian?" And I said, "Yeah." She said, "I'm a Christian too!" And I said, "You are?" And her expression went from a smiling, "I'm a Christian." to looking at her alcohol and her whole countenance fell in shame. "I'm a Christian," she said, "But, I know it doesn't look like it." Her emotions went from the top to the bottom. And I said, "What do you mean it doesn't look like it?" She said, "Well, look at this alcohol and pills. I said, "It doesn't not look like it." She exclaimed incredulously, "What?!"

The lady across the aisle leaned over and looked at me. And I continued, "Well here's what you're saying to me. You got on this plane this morning to get to your dying mother's bedside. And against every fear and anxiety and panic you have, you came anyway. You bought a ticket. And to somehow get on this plane today, you feel like you've have to cut the nerves a bit with some alcohol and some pills, which I understand is not too good for you to take them together. But what you're saying to me is that now you're not a Christian and God hates you and that God is somehow disappointed in you." I said, "I don't serve a God like that!" She said, "You don't?" I said, "No.

Would God prefer that you didn't need this? Absolutely. Would God prefer you knew Him well enough today that you could have

crawled on this plane and said, 'God, I'm terrified, but I'm going rest in you and somehow get through this.' Absolutely. But you're not there today. That's not where you are. This Abba, Father, is still looking at you with delight. It doesn't not look like it to me. I think God looks at you on this plane today trying to get to your mother and his heart breaks for your pain, breaks for where you're headed, breaks that somehow you needed all this today and that you didn't know him well enough to lean into him. But you know what? He's still okay with all this. He's okay with you!" And she said, "Would you pray for me?" And I said, "I will."

Transforming Prayer !

And I started praying for her. The woman across the aisle was looking imploringly at us. And the person in front of me had his ear crammed between the seats listening. (You have to talk pretty loud in those planes.) So, I'm communicating more than just to this woman. And I just prayed, "God be good to her. God be good to her Mom. Give her a chance to get there. Heal her Mom if at all possible and it is in Father's heart to do so. And, God, please make Yourself more known and dear to this woman. I pray that she would know how loved she is by You, Father." Then we started our descent into Buffalo. And I helped her through all that about the landing gear coming out again and then landing on the runway. And we finally got her down and she turned to me and said, "Thank you so much. Don't think I don't know what you did for me today!"

A lot of time we just talked about her and family and her mom. I just kept her mind off of flying. Other times we talked about what was going to happen in the plane. And she finally got off the plane. As she gets off the plane ahead of me, the woman in the aisle across waited. When I got up, she came over to me. She was a small woman. And she gave me a hug. And she said, "I've never heard anything so wonderful in all my

life. Thank you for showing me the Father today.” She walked off the plane.

When I got up to the front of the plane, the flight attendant pulled me aside into her station. She asked, “Can I talk to you for a minute?” I said, “Yes.” I turned in and she said, “You know what? We would not have gotten to Buffalo today without you. On behalf of the airline, I want to thank you for what you did and how you helped that woman.” I didn't even know the flight attendant was paying any attention.

Is this difficult work? Do I get off that airplane saying, “Wow, gosh, God, that was really tough. I'd rather read my book.” You see, the Wayne that graduated from high school, would much rather read a book. But, the way that God is making me to be, out of this incredible affection, is transforming me. I wouldn't rather have done anything on that flight than to help that woman. Not for any other reason than here's another life that's broken and needs help. If God uses it to invite her closer to himself so much the better.

My brothers and sisters consider the pictures in your wallet or smart device of someone doting on their favored child or significant other. That's how Father looks at you. And that's how he wants you learning to look at him. He'll win you. But until you know you're loved, He's not expecting you to love anyone else out there. Until you know you're loved, You'll

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have no idea how to love others. So get that right. I call it the first relationship.

You will talk about lots of other relationships for the rest of your life. But until you get that one right, the rest of them don't matter. The rest of them will just be more of yourself bleeding into people trying to do good for them, to please God, which is really different from loving people in the freedom and pleasure of how much God loves you.

And I don't care what you've done. I don't care how broken your life is. I don't care how much you're hiding when you sit in church on a Sunday morning, this Father delighted in you when you woke up this morning. And never stops delighting in you. God wants us to live day by day like toddlers with our little hand in his great big one.

“Father change me. Father lead me. Father love me. Lord Jesus, I put it all in your hands. God, this is just so many words, if you don't make it real in the hearts of my brothers and sisters who sit here and in me today. I know you love me a little bit. I want to know even more today. And I want my brothers and sisters to know even more today. Would you show your love to us? Would you win us with your affection and transform us with your love? Amen.”

Driven By Emotions

Fear is the single most-likely emotion to make a person sin, that is, to commit crimes against relationship. It has been said, that insecurity often causes us to do bad things to others. In any case, the human instinct is to survive at all costs. And when my survival requires your loss of life, limb or other valuables, you lose! Further, few people make significant changes in their beliefs or lifestyles unless they become desperate enough to make changes.

We may not realize that we are primarily emotional (spiritual) creatures. But if we will step back and try to observe our behaviors objectively, we might see that nearly everything we do is either triggered by emotion or at least affected by our emotion. Some have suggested that there is a general pattern of human expression. The pattern is consistent with our basic DNA sequence or map. Expression, which is one aspect of our creation in the image of God, is that which reveals to others what we feel in our soul. Consider this possibility. The image of God might be summed up as four attributes or characteristics. These four are Choice, Compassion, Rationale and Expression. Another way to say it might be these four words: Will, Emotion, Thought and Body. NOTE: (Since we are **not** God, we have a body which is our means of expression. God can express Himself without words and therefore does not need a body.)

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The most common sequence of events of the expressions of people is this. We make a choice of the will to believe some particular belief. When our belief is either challenged or affirmed, a feeling is stimulated. The feeling will be negative or positive respectively. Our mind then processes thoughts regarding what we will express and how strongly we will express it. And finally, we verbalize expletive words or physically react or respond. In this model, it is our belief, which we have willfully chosen (relative or absolute not withstanding) which spawns expressions in the manner described here.

Now this particular perspective actually provides a solution to things such as depression, addiction, bizarre behaviors and even anger management. One ministry, Transformation Prayer Ministry, developed by Ed and Josh Smith, relies on this theory. When we get tired of being out of sorts, frustrated, angry or other negative sensation, we can explore within ourselves until we find what it is that we believe which causes our misery. We can begin with a memory, a feeling or other stimulus and explore until we navigate all the way back to the belief which has been 'hurt.' If and when we are willing and able to change that particular belief, the associated feeling will also be changed and following the pattern, so will the expressions.

The importance of these last few paragraphs is that they clarify what happens when

we change our faith about various things, especially relationships with God, people and even animals. So Wayne's entire presentation about receiving and dispensing love, not only could but also would bring greater love, joy and peace to everyone in the world. Just as most wars can be traced to religious perceptions, so can peace.

[Whether you are religious or not, if you search the Internet for Transformation Prayer Ministry to obtain resources which will help you explore your inner self, you will discover at least some things which will help you become a happier person. Unlike any other psychological training I have ever discovered, TPM even goes so far as to teach that a person can become one's own counselor and using TPM methods, solve distresses of the soul.]

So, you don't have to pay or even wait for a professional counselor. The Spirit of God in you will guide you into truth about Yourself that will set you free. And it is mostly the truth about yourself that will set you free! As you discover God's truth which trumps relative truth, which you received from your relatives, you will find peace creeping in. Your fear of the **unknown dissipates when you know**, who you are, who God is and thereby who others are too.