

"Are not five sparrows sold for two pennies?

Yet not one of them is forgotten by God.

Indeed, the very hairs of your head are all numbered.

Don't be afraid; you are worth more than many sparrows." Luke 12:6-7

Lately, I've been dealing with fear. The questions, "How?", and "What if...?" have been part of a process by which God is testing my obedience and faith. The world has been spinning in a crazy path of uncertainty and fear for several years. I wonder if you, or someone you know, has been experiencing the same thing. . .

Perhaps you've seen the acronym for F.E.A.R.

*False
Emotions
Appearing
Real*

But isn't what I'm feeling real? I am actually feeling overwhelmed, uncertain, and afraid, after all. A good friend of mine recently reminded me that emotions can lie.

I did some research on fear. The word FEAR (Heb. *yirah*, Gr. *phobos*) has two principal meanings. The first is "the apprehension of evil that normally leads one either to flee or to fight." Wikipedia describes fear as "a distressing negative sensation induced by a perceived threat."

So fear can be a good thing - it can be a tool used for self-preservation when we're in danger. But most fear we experience is a result of a "perceived threat." That's where the falsehood comes to play. Sometimes our perception is faulty - skewed by the Deceiver. Fear isn't from our loving Father. The "apprehension of evil" or "threat" is not reflective of God's character. Apprehension means *anxiety, uneasiness, worry, trepidation, dread, misgiving* and a myriad of other synonyms. What on earth are we so afraid of? Won't God take care of us? And, pardon the flippancy, but who cares what someone else thinks? It's what God considers that matters.

How many times in scripture are told not to fear? Would you believe 365 times! That's one command for each day of the calendar year from our Heavenly Father not to fear. Hmm. . . God must know we'll struggle with it, so He gives us plenty of reminders. One of the most powerful passages comes from Isaiah 43:1-3,

But now, this is what the LORD says--

he who created you, O Jacob, he who formed you, O Israel:

"Fear not, for I have redeemed you; I have summoned you by name; you are mine.

When you pass through the waters, I will be with you;

and when you pass through the rivers, they will not sweep over you.

When you walk through the fire, you will not be burned; the flames will not set you ablaze.

For I am the LORD, your God, the Holy One of Israel, your Savior;" (emphasis mine)

Wow. Those are some pretty hefty words. Do you get that these are God's words? Do you hear the love in His voice? No one loves us like that.

In 1 John 4: 16-19, we read:

"God is love. Whoever lives in love lives in God, and God in him. . . . There is no fear in love. But perfect love drives out fear. . . The one who fears is not made perfect in love."

So if I'm afraid, then I'm not fully understanding God's love for me. Well, that's a wake-up call. So what does a Christian do with fear? Turn it around. . . That's where the second definition of fears comes in: *"that awe and reverence felt in the presence of a higher authority (be it parent, husband, or especially God)."*

Knowing who our God is - what He's capable of - puts our problems and fears in perspective. If He can create the whole earth with just a word, the thing we are fearing is nothing. If He will lay down His life, face the darkness apart from the Father to spare us from such an experience to make a way for eternal communion with Him, surely the depth of His love cannot be in question. With that kind of love to hold us, we don't need to fear the temporal things. . . Instead we should fear - show reverent awe to - God.

Psalms 34:9-19 clearly reminds us why this kind of fear brings us peace:

*"Fear the LORD, you his saints, for those who fear him lack nothing.
The lions may grow weak and hungry, but those who seek the LORD lack no good thing. . .
The eyes of the LORD are on the righteous and his ears are attentive to their cry. . .
The righteous cry out, and the LORD hears them; he delivers them from all their troubles.
The LORD is close to the brokenhearted and saves those who are crushed in spirit.
A righteous man may have many troubles, but the LORD delivers him from them all;"*

What troubles are you or someone you love facing now? Do you trust God enough to stop fearing? Do you understand how much He loves you so that you don't have to be afraid? If He'll take care of the sparrows, surely He'll take care of you. That's where I am . . . Walking in that knowledge. . . Walking out my faith and daily laying down my fear.

Example. It isn't often that I write to invite persons to consider partnering with the RDC ministry - usually once a year. I'm often "afraid" of doing so because people can be offended or asking for contributions might shed a negative light on RDC- especially knowing that time and finances are valuable commodities in these bleak times. But, I'm trusting God enough to send this letter to you. I believe that others besides myself are dealing with fear and want to be part of something that is fearlessly following God's call to touch the masses. So, this is your invitation. . .

If you are a prayer warrior, please add us to your prayer list. We depend on God's provision for spiritual guidance, finances and protection from the enemy. We don't want to be afraid of the schemes of the devil coming against us. We need people faithfully lifting us up in prayer in these areas:

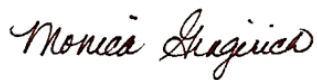
- *Direction.* Clear direction in our teaching and ministry time with our students. We desire that our dancers grow in a deeper relationship with Christ as they are equipped with the dance skills they seek.
- *Our Staff.* Protection, wisdom, sensitivity and discernment as we minister this season to our students, each other, and make plans for the remainder of this season and look to the next.
- *Future.* We want to be about only what our Father wants us to be doing. Pray for God's wisdom, provision and direction for the future of RDC.

- *Finances.* We have a conservative budget of less than \$36,000. From that amount we pay one full-time staff person and four part-time instructors, cover the costs of performance garments and production expenses as well as office and other operating costs. We'd like to increase our impact in the community and make provision for additional staff to strengthen our program, all of which takes added resources. Additionally, RDC has two immediate financial needs this year.
 - ✓ Providing scholarships to families needing assistance to pay their tuition is an ongoing need. In faith, we've given more than \$2,900 in assistance this season alone. These funds have not been covered by contributions. Pray that these funds come in to RDC for this purpose.
 - ✓ This season we have a balance of \$2,500 to pay toward the cost of our production stage which needs to be fulfilled by May. We've been able to minister to thousands of people on our stage. This asset will be used for years to come. Pray for needed funds to be given to meet this obligation.

As we move forward into a new year, we need to think fearlessly. God has had His hand on RDC to permit us to touch lives with the Gospel for nearly ten years. For a small ministry, we've done well - surviving through lean times because of God's provision and blessing while continuing to impact people of all ages with the Gospel. I'm trusting that RDC will continue ministering for a long time and that others like you will unite with us in prayer. If you've been blessed by the RDC ministry in any way these past ten years, we invite you to consider partnering with us this coming year - either as a prayer partner or through planned giving. We invite you to empty your hands of fear and instead fold them in prayer and open them in generosity. Please consider how you can unite with us.

I invite you to trust God for all you need. I invite you to stand fearlessly with me as we look to the future. If you belong to God, you have nothing to fear, for "you are worth more than many sparrows."

With much gratitude for your prayers and partnership and with fearless anticipation of what's ahead,



Monica Gingerich, Executive Director

As the new year begins, plan to join us at these upcoming events:

February 18, 9a-5p – "Cropping for Charity" - All scrap-bookers, crafters, and jewelry-makers welcome; tickets required and includes breakfast and lunch, give-aways, and fun! (see enclosed card to reserve your spot)

March 10, 1-3p – "In the Courts" – RDC ministers at Glenbrook Square Mall, bringing Christ-centered music, dance and the Gospel to the marketplace.

May 4 & 6 – Annual Spring Concert – Celebrating a Decade of Ministry!

P.S. We constantly strive to be good stewards of our finances. RDC is moving toward sending more correspondence electronically. Please join us in our cost-saving efforts by emailing us at Admin@RiverDanceCompany.org or by returning the enclosed response card with your email address.

All personal information is used solely for RDC purposes and will not be shared. Thank you!

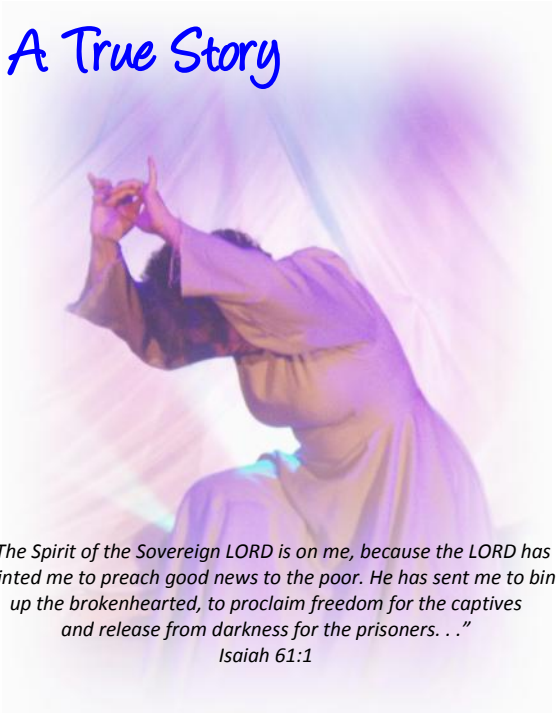
-over-

www.RiverDanceCompany.org

21412 Ehle Road Woodburn, IN 46797
260.632.5768

How RDC Changes Lives - A True Story

Overwhelmed by tears, the lady left our auditorium. She had just seen her life played-out on stage. An adulterous woman brought before Jesus forced to reckon with her sin. As the story unfolded, she was touched by love - the real kind of love not found in the bed of a stranger. Then these words: "Go and sin no more." Her heart was opened and transformation began. She had come to the performance with a father of a young dancer. Her life was a cliché - the secretary who had wrecked another marriage. We later discovered after experiencing our event, she repented, left the relationship, engaged in discipleship with other Christian women, and today walks with Christ - transformed by the power of God through the dance.



"The Spirit of the Sovereign LORD is on me, because the LORD has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim freedom for the captives and release from darkness for the prisoners. . ."
Isaiah 61:1

*This is just one example of how God is using RDC to make a difference in people's lives.
When you partner with us, you make an impact on lives for eternity.*

Your partnership makes a difference in these ways . . .

- ◇ Needed prayer covering
- ◇ Scholarships are possible
- ◇ Professional-quality performance garments provided to our students at no charge
- ◇ Professional video services provide DVDs and media to share through the internet to encourage and bless others within and beyond U.S. border
- ◇ Fees are covered so we can minister in the community marketplace
- ◇ Students receive awards and other incentives for working hard, developing Godly character, and being a part of our ministry
- ◇ Needed supplies are provided to run the ministry making it possible to equip students and minister to the community
- ◇ Necessary worship tools are available for training and performance ministry
- ◇ Advertising to the public so we can continue to reach new people

Ways you can make a difference.

- ◇ Commit to pray for RDC. **Share your email with us and we'll forward prayer requests to you.**
- ◇ Purchase tickets for our **Cropping for Charity** event on **February 18th. From 9a-5p**, Central Church. Treat yourself to a day away from the workweek to get that scrapbooking or craft project caught-up. Creative Memories consultant will be on-hand. Tickets \$20 includes breakfast, lunch, and clinic. Door prizes, too! **Contact Cindy at 437-0497**
- ◇ Purchase a **Community FunBook** - full of more than \$1,500 in coupons, freebies and discounts to Fort Wayne area businesses and attractions (see our website for more info) - just \$15! **Go to our online store to purchase yours.**
- ◇ Give a tax-deductible gift. **Now available online via Paypal or send gift to 21412 Ehle Road, Woodburn, IN 46797.**
- ◇ Place an ad in our spring program and on our website. **Contact Admin@RiverDanceCompany.org** for more details.