

# *Dancing on the Waves*

## Risking Life with Jesus

### **Dancing against the Crowd**

### **Getting to know you Question**

Describe a time when you felt out of step with what was happening around you.

### **The RISK of being against the Crowd**

Other people will think I am weird.

### **Boat Story**

Keuka Lake is a beautiful, y-shaped Finger Lake southeast of Rochester, NY. For a period of time, we were lucky enough to dock our boat at Penn Yan on the tip of the east finger about an hour's drive from downtown Rochester. One beautiful summer Friday, I took a half-day vacation from my job in Rochester and drove to Penn Yan for an afternoon boat ride. I released the dock lines, eased my way through the marina, and hauled in the fenders. Once I assured myself all potentially loose items were well-secured in the boat, I turned my bow towards the south and opened the throttle wide. It was glorious! I was flying down the lake at full speed with not single other boat in sight.

And then I noticed a small flock of geese directly in front of me. I became confused when the geese did not fly out of my path as every other flock of geese had done. As I neared the flock, I suddenly notice it was not a flock of geese at all. It was several deer swimming across the lake directly in my path. Needless to say, I pulled up on the throttle immediately so I did not need to explain to my insurance company how I sank the boat in the middle of Keuka Lake by hitting a deer.

### **Louise's Experience Dancing against the Crowd**

I worked in a newly-established office of an organization with several long-standing offices and employees boasting of years of service. As you might imagine, the animosity among the offices was intense. In my office rumors about the foibles and mis-deeds of people from the other offices were rampant. It was nearly impossible to avoid the gossip mill as much as I tried.

One of my final assignments was to work with a contractor hired by an original office who had previously worked in that office about whom there was significant gossip. In addition, the person had recently openly criticized one of the other folks on my team. Needless to say, I got an earful; and I have no doubt rumors about my office floating around her office reached her.

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Our assignment was to chat daily to review the hundreds of programs in an old system and recommend ones to be retired and ones whose function must be replicated on the anticipated new system. Our conversations were primarily focused on our assignment; but we did have a few chances to talk about our personal lives e.g. vet appointments for her two dogs and boating on the St Lawrence. Shortly before I left the project, I happened to mention my husband was a pastor. I was shocked by her response, 'No wonder you are so nice to me.'

Frankly, I did not purposely set out to be 'nice to her'; however, unlike some of my team mates, I had no reason to be rude to her or cause her stress.

God did not call me to an outrageous counter-cultural act. He simply called me to be kind and loving to a person on a telephone call.

### **Your experience Dancing against the Crowd**

#### **The back story: Acts 7:54-60**

<sup>54</sup> When the members of the Sanhedrin heard this, they were furious and gnashed their teeth at him. <sup>55</sup> But Stephen, full of the Holy Spirit, looked up to heaven and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God. <sup>56</sup> "Look," he said, "I see heaven open and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God." <sup>57</sup> At this they covered their ears and, yelling at the top of their voices, they all rushed at him, <sup>58</sup> dragged him out of the city and began to stone him. Meanwhile, the witnesses laid their coats at the feet of a young man named Saul. <sup>59</sup> While they were stoning him, Stephen prayed, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit." <sup>60</sup> Then he fell on his knees and cried out, "Lord, do not hold this sin against them." When he had said this, he fell asleep.

#### **Acts 8:1-9**

And Saul approved of their killing him. On that day a great persecution broke out against the church in Jerusalem, and all except the apostles were scattered throughout Judea and Samaria. <sup>2</sup> Godly men buried Stephen and mourned deeply for him. <sup>3</sup> But Saul began to destroy the church. Going from house to house, he dragged off both men and women and put them in prison.

#### **Acts 9:1-9**

Meanwhile, Saul was still breathing out murderous threats against the Lord's disciples. He went to the high priest <sup>2</sup> and asked him for letters to the synagogues in Damascus, so that if he found any there who belonged to the Way, whether men or women, he might take them as prisoners to Jerusalem.

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<sup>3</sup> As he neared Damascus on his journey, suddenly a light from heaven flashed around him. <sup>4</sup> He fell to the ground and heard a voice say to him, “Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me?” <sup>5</sup> “Who are you, Lord?” Saul asked. “I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting,” he replied. <sup>6</sup> “Now get up and go into the city, and you will be told what you must do.” <sup>7</sup> The men traveling with Saul stood there speechless; they heard the sound but did not see anyone. <sup>8</sup> Saul got up from the ground, but when he opened his eyes he could see nothing. So they led him by the hand into Damascus. <sup>9</sup> For three days he was blind, and did not eat or drink anything.

### Ananias Lives Counter Culturally

#### Acts 9:10 – 19

<sup>10</sup> In Damascus there was a disciple named Ananias. The Lord called to him in a vision, “Ananias!” “Yes, Lord,” he answered. <sup>11</sup> The Lord told him, “Go to the house of Judas on Straight Street and ask for a man from Tarsus named Saul, for he is praying. <sup>12</sup> In a vision he has seen a man named Ananias come and place his hands on him to restore his sight.”

When has God called on you to do something you think is unwise?

<sup>13</sup> “Lord,” Ananias answered, “I have heard many reports about this man and all the harm he has done to your holy people in Jerusalem. <sup>14</sup> And he has come here with authority from the chief priests to arrest all who call on your name.”

What is your favorite excuse for ignoring God’s call on your life?

<sup>15</sup> But the Lord said to Ananias, “Go! This man is my chosen instrument to proclaim my name to the Gentiles and their kings and to the people of Israel. <sup>16</sup> I will show him how much he must suffer for my name.”

<sup>17</sup> Then Ananias went to the house and entered it. Placing his hands on Saul, he said, “Brother Saul, the Lord—Jesus, who appeared to you on the road as you were coming here—has sent me so that you may see again and be filled with the Holy Spirit.”

<sup>18</sup> Immediately, something like scales fell from Saul’s eyes, and he could see again. He got up and was baptized, <sup>19</sup> and after taking some food, he regained his strength.

Ananias obeyed and healed Saul’s eyes. When has your counter cultural obedience brought healing to others?

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### The beginning of the rest of the story

#### Acts 9: 20 – 21

<sup>19</sup>Saul spent several days with the disciples in Damascus. <sup>20</sup> At once he began to preach in the synagogues that Jesus is the Son of God. <sup>21</sup> All those who heard him were astonished and asked, “Isn’t he the man who raised havoc in Jerusalem among those who call on this name? And hasn’t he come here to take them as prisoners to the chief priests?”

### The second person acting in a counter-cultural way:

Refer to the ‘back story’.

Who were mentioned sanctioning the persecution Saul was delivering?

Who are the people you view as authorities in your life?

When does God call you to act counter-culturally?

How do you recognize it is God calling you to action?

### Scripture

**Matt 7:12** <sup>12</sup> So in everything, do to others what you would have them do to you, for this sums up the Law and the Prophets.

### To fully experience and enjoy our life in Christ we must know:

1. Living in community often requires us to act counter-culturally,
2. Sometimes we think your call has embedded danger,
3. The simplest act of love is often counter-cultural,
4. We are blessed when we view our actions through the filter of your love,
5. When I Dance against the Crowd others may catch Your beat.

### Prayer

Jesus, Lord, we anticipate your call to live in a way our friends and neighbors do not understand. Help us to hear and heed your voice whether your call is for a small act of love and a huge act of ???  
Amen