



The Interplay of Ruthless Trust and Common Sense©
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“Trust in God but tie up your camel”
Ancient Arabian Proverb

Too often we split the concepts of ruthless trust in God and following simple sound strategy. We drive a wedge between them and make people choose as if voting on party politics. I am not certain to the source of the deep philosophical division between these two, but simple practical observation tells us there has been a divorce. That is unfortunate. Why? Because the Bible is full of everyday lessons of people who approached life and work with a married model of both/and not an inferior model of either/or. These two concepts were meant to travel together as one family of thought and practice.

The Old Testament holds a rich and colorful story of a man named Moses. His mark on our world is incredible. Even Disney has gotten in on his legacy. But the early days of his life is the part of his story that captures our immediate attention. Framed around Moses' parents is a wonderful demonstration of melding a strong right hand of faith and prayer with a strong left hand of common sense and strategy.

Exodus 2

1 Now a man of the house of Levi married a Levite woman, 2 and she became pregnant and gave birth to a son. When she saw that he was a fine child, she hid him for three months. 3 But when she could hide him no longer, she got a papyrus basket for him and coated it with tar and pitch. Then she placed the child in it and put it among the reeds along the bank of the Nile. 4 His sister stood at a distance to see what would happen to him.

5 Then Pharaoh's daughter went down to the Nile to bathe, and her attendants were walking along the river bank. She saw the basket among the reeds and sent her slave girl to get it. 6 She opened it and saw the baby. He was crying and she felt sorry for him. "This is one of the Hebrew babies," she said.

7 Then his sister asked Pharaoh's daughter, "Shall I go and get one of the Hebrew women to nurse the baby for you?"

8 "Yes, go," she answered. And the girl went and got the baby's mother. 9 Pharaoh's daughter said to her, "Take this baby and nurse him for me, and I will pay you." So the woman took the baby and nursed him. 10 When the child grew older, she took him to Pharaoh's daughter and he became her son. She named him Moses, ^[a] saying "I drew him out of the water."

Let me recount the story:

- The people of Israel had a surge in population such that they outnumbered their masters...the Egyptians.
- The ruling Pharaoh had no warmth for the people of God. Long gone were the days of the shadow and influence of Joseph on the Pharaoh.
- The Pharaoh became nervous and issued a birth control/ murder edict. All baby male Hebrews were to be thrown in the Nile.
- The Nile wasn't some lazy backwater with no risk. It was full of currents and gators meant to destroy the baby boys.
- Moses parents Amran and Jocabed hid baby Moses for 3 months until they could hide him no longer.
- They decided, by faith, to put baby Moses in a water proof basket and place him in the Nile.
- Pharaohs daughter was taking a bath and noticed the child.
- Her heart was mysteriously "warmed" toward the young baby.
- Moses moved to the palace under the supervision of his birth mother and with his sister along his side.
- Moses was also in the middle of the most sophisticated secularized couture in the whole world for all his early upbringing.

In this story we find a 4000 year old model unfolding a terrific blending of raw and ruthless trusting God with intentional strategizing.

Common Sensing and Strategizing

Someone in Moses family did some pre-work, strategy and thinking.

- They knew which day and what time Pharaoh's daughter bathed. They also knew where on the river she went to bathe. They didn't just toss little 3 month Moses out any where in the Nile at 9 PM when alligators fed.
 - She didn't bath only at one spot in the palace and or the river
 - She was heavily guarded and hard to 'get to'.
 - She didn't have a ton of exposure to the Jewish community
- They already thought thru the long range impact of mother and daughter being assigned to the palace to care for young Moses. We know they probably were with baby Moses and the Pharaohs daughter the first few years way more than they were with the husband and father. There had to have been a family commitment in place when they pushed the basket out in the Nile with mother and sister hiding in the weeds.
- They had thought about the up-sell presentation of not only "you get the beautiful baby, but you might need a mid wife also." There just happens to be a mid wife waiting behind that bush over there. What a coincidence.
- The mother and daughter stood close enough to be able to immediately respond to the request to find a mid wife but not so close as to get caught and carried off.

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Praying and Faithing

- But make no mistake the best laid plans of man are never enough They also prayed like crazy that the Lord would work. And He did.
- They prayed that God would warm the heart of the Pharaohs daughter that day toward their child. Ultimately the heart of Pharaohs daughter had to be warmed with love and tenderness toward a little baby Jew (out of the ordinary for her) but also steeled in such a way she was courageous enough to take on the risk and danger of the Pharaohs anger. Remember he was the same guy who ordered the murder edict.
- It is OK for us to pray specific things for specific people, days and events.
- There are no facts that to make us think that this was a normal run of the day occurrence for a Jewish boy and/or Pharaohs daughter. When young Moses/Pharaoh elect gets to the palace he doesn't discover a bunch of half brothers. Nor does he uncover this 'underground train' of sorts for Hebrew boys into some orphanage. This plan was a one of a kind plan. It ran against the traditional plan and was very risky. Moses' parents obviously had enough faith to allow their young son to be raised in an Egyptian world.
- They prayed for God to guard young Moses during his very impressionable developmental years.

Most of us, if not all of us, practice some blend of the two concepts mentioned above. Regardless if you're a Calvinist or an Armenian, a conservative or liberal, an analytical person or a mystic...regardless of the size of the issue or the stakes of the deal we all tend to pray as if it all depended upon God and work as if it all depended on us, to quote a father of the faith.

We analyze and measure. We calculate, contemplate and consternate. We plan and re-plan. Make lists, place calls, shoot emails and test messages. We create budgets and design forecasts. We think down, out and around what is in front of us.

But at the same time we fall to our knees. We mumble an arrow prayer of desperation driving down the road. We pray and seek any help we can get from the God who sits on top of the universe. Our prayers range from little trivial things to life and death pleas. Without the gaze upward to the heavens, our plans and dreams can either become too human or too small. It is amazing to discover what God does when he finds a man or woman who is stranded on childlike dependence and faith.

“All deep earnest thinking is but the intrepid effort of the soul
to keep the open independence of her sea, while
the wildest winds of Heaven and earth conspire to
cast her on the treacherous, slavish shore.”
Herman Melville, Moby Dick

