

Take a Risk!

A monthly publication from Risk Takers for Christ

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Fear Strikes Out

by Rev. Dale M. Glading, President

"He that condemns himself, God absolves. He that stands self-convicted may look to Christ hanging on the cross, and see himself hanging there, and see his sins forever put away by the sacrifice of Jesus on the tree."

- C.H. Spurgeon

I recently used Jimmy Piersall as an illustration in two different messages, one to a small group of at-risk youth and one to a much larger group of inmates. Piersall was a Major League outfielder whose career spanned 17 seasons. His final statistics include a .272 batting average, 104 homers, and 591 RBI's. Piersall also won two Gold Gloves for his outstanding defense and was twice named to the American League All-Star Team. He is also a member of the Boston Red Sox Hall of Fame.

Good numbers, but not great, so why even mention Piersall in my messages? Well, Jimmy's dad was an authoritarian figure who demanded perfection from him in every aspect of the game. No matter how well Jimmy played, his dad was rarely satisfied. This constant pressure caused Piersall to have a nervous breakdown in 1952, for which he was institutionalized in a psychiatric hospital for seven weeks.

Even after his discharge, Piersall's career was marred by fistfights and bizarre behavior including wearing wigs, "talking" to a long-dead Babe Ruth, playing "air guitar" on his bat, and, most famously, running the bases facing backwards after hitting his 100th home run. After that last antic, Commissioner Ford Frick ruled that, in the future, running

the bases backward was not permitted.

I used Piersall as an illustration to make the point that there is only one way to do certain things - such as run the bases - and there is also only one way to get to heaven, and that is through personal faith in Jesus Christ (see John 14:6). I also used Piersall to make a connection with the young men in the gym and the slightly older men in the prison, many of whom have a bad (or nonexistent) relationship with their father. Thankfully, our Heavenly Father - who also demands perfection - has provided a way for us to "bat 1.000" through the shed blood of His Son.

In 1955, Piersall co-authored a book about his life and struggles with bi-polar disorder titled, *Fear Strikes Out*. It was made into a movie in 1957 starring Anthony Perkins as Jimmy and Karl Malden as his dad. Comically, Piersall once said the following: *"Probably the best thing that ever happened to me was going nuts. Who ever heard of Jimmy Piersall until that happened?"*

Piersall's self-effacing humor belies an important point. Simply put, he admitted his shortcomings. Spurgeon makes the same point in today's quote - that when we are hard on ourselves and confess our sins... admitting our total inability to change in our own power... God grants us mercy. As a result, we no longer need to be afraid to face Him, because fear has struck out!

"There is no fear in love; but perfect love casts out fear..." I John 4:18 (NKJV)



Hoops Du Jour

Camp of Champs International, the newest ministry of Risk Takers for Christ, held a two-day basketball camp for kids, December 27 & 28. Tabernacle Ministries of Vero Beach hosted the event in its indoor gym.

Led by E.J. Tarpey, RTC's Director of Camps and Clinics, the camp drew 15 kids (ages 6-13) on their Christmas break. Here's what EJ had to say about the event...

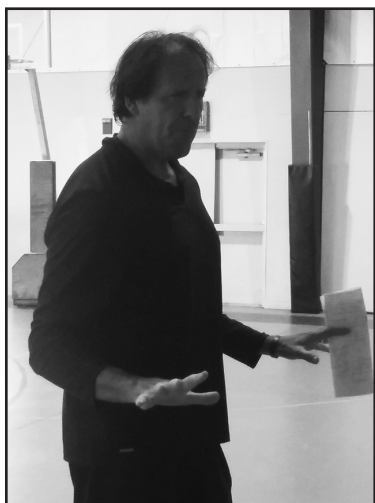
"It was an amazing time on and off the court! The kids were taught basketball FUNDamentals - including shooting, passing, cutting, and dribbling - in a Christ-centered atmosphere. I think their favorite drills were 'Dribble

Knockout' and the 'Bean Bag Game,' both of which were thrilling to watch and be a part of."

"Dale and I got to share the gospel during the timeout session each day and Chris Glading, our Director of Programs and Publicity, also helped run the drills. The kids all had a blast and they can't wait for the next clinic."

"It is amazing to be able to work and encourage every kid by showing God's amazing love with a basketball. It doesn't get much better than that!"

If your church would like to host a C.O.C camp or clinic, please contact ej@risktakersforchrist.org.



Chinese Food and Golf

by Rev. Dale M. Glading, President

What do Chinese food and golf have in common? The answer might surprise you.

Actually, the common thread between those two seemingly dissimilar things is our Living H2O Initiative, our basketball outreach to at-risk youth. Twice a week for the past seven years, we have visited a local park to play pick-up games and hosted an open gym night at an area church, all for the purpose of sharing the Good News of Jesus Christ with young men in their teens and twenties. Most of them are minorities, and many of them come from broken homes and dysfunctional families.

Out-of-wedlock birth and fatherless homes are the leading predictors of future incarceration and lifelong poverty. That is why, in addition to sharing the gospel, we also try to provide positive male role models for these young men.

Which brings me to Sammy and DeAndre...

Recently, Deanna and I were running some errands in Vero Beach and decided to grab a bite to eat. Deanna felt like Chinese, so we stopped at Chef Lin's, a Vero mainstay that offers a delicious lunch buffet for just \$7.99. Well, no sooner had we filled our plates for the first time, but in walked a tall young man in his late teens along with his parents.

I recognized Sammy immediately, but he didn't see me because of the way our tables were situated. However, when he glanced my way, I caught his eye and gave him a friendly wave. Honestly, I don't think I've ever seen a brighter smile!

Without hesitation, Sammy ripped out his earbuds and walked over to our table. I rose to greet him and was welcomed with a handshake and a hug. I then introduced Sammy to my wife, who teasingly asked if Sammy puts up with me every Thursday night at our Living H2O Initiative.

"Oh no, Dale's my man!" he responded, shaking his head. "We're buddies!"

Sammy returned to his table and I sat back down, amazed - and very grateful - that this young black man

who I've been ministering to for the past several years wanted to publicly acknowledge our close relationship.

Two days later, I was playing golf with my two sons on a rare day off. As I drove the ball down the 9th fairway, I heard someone call out my name from behind.

Now you have to understand that I was playing as a guest at a private golf club that I couldn't begin to afford any other way, which is why I was so startled that anyone would recognize an obscure prison minister in such lavish surroundings.

And yet, there was no mistaking that it was my name that was called and so, I turned around to see who it was. There, beaming from ear to ear, was DeAndre, another of the young men from our Living H2O Initiative.

Apparently, DeAndre works at the golf course as a groundskeeper and he couldn't have been more excited to see me and my son Chris, who helps run our Living H2O Initiative. In addition to the same handshake and hug that Sammy offered, DeAndre added a compliment about our golf games.

"You guys look like Phil Mickelson out there," he said with an infectious laugh. And with that, DeAndre went back to working with the rest of his crew.

It may not seem like much to some people, but I was on Cloud 9. Not because DeAndre had said something nice about my golfing ability, but because he - like Sammy - had publicly and enthusiastically acknowledged me. I'm 59 and white, while Sammy and DeAndre are 20ish and black. And yet, because they know how deeply I care about them, they care deeply about me.

And that's how our Living H2O Initiative works!

Prison Report

On our recent prison ministry trip to DeSoto Correctional Institution in Arcadia, FL, we shared the gospel with an estimated 300 inmates and saw 26 of them make professions of faith in Jesus Christ! Our next prison trip is scheduled for February 9th to Tomoka CI in Daytona Beach.

The Decay of Conscience

by Rev. Charles Finney, 1873

"Brethren, our preaching will bear its legitimate fruits. If immorality prevails in the land, the fault is ours in a great degree. If there is a decay of conscience, the pulpit is responsible for it. If the public press lacks moral discrimination, the pulpit is responsible for it. If the church is degenerate and worldly, the pulpit is responsible for it. If the world loses its interest in religion, the pulpit is responsible for it. If Satan rules in our halls of legislation, the pulpit is responsible for it. If our politics become so corrupt that the very foundations of our government are ready to fall away, the pulpit is responsible for it."

"Let us not ignore this fact, my dear brethren; but let us lay it to heart, and be thoroughly awake to our responsibility in respect to the morals of this nation."



Old Hickory Golf Tournament "Step Back in Time"

Saturday, April 27, 2019
Sandridge Golf Club, Vero Beach FL

Step back in time for a 1920's era golf tournament featuring Bobby Jones replica golf balls and hickory-shafted clubs. Four-man scramble format including greens fees, unlimited range balls, continental breakfast, buffet lunch, putting contest and prizes. Proceeds benefit Risk Takers for Christ's outreach to prisoners and at-risk youth.

More information coming soon!

Our Staff & Board Members

Rev. Dale M. Glading, President

Rev. Larry "Chap" Lilly, Vice President

Christopher Glading, Director of Programs and Publicity

Ed "EJ" Tarpey, Director of Camps and Clinics

Rebekah Bailey, Director of Communications

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Coming Out of the Stronghold

by Os Hillman, TGIF Today God Is First Volume 1

"Do not stay in the stronghold. Go into the land of Judah."

(1 Samuel 22:5)

David and his fighting men had been hiding in the cave of Adullam. He was fleeing Saul. Many of life's down-and-out had come and joined David's army. David was content to stay in the stronghold of safety. Then, God's prophet came to David and told him that he must leave the stronghold and go into the land of Judah.

When life beats down on us and we get to the place where we want to hide in a cave, God often places people around us who prod us into moving in the right direction. He does not want us to remain in the place of discouragement. He wants us to move into the land of "praise." Judah means "praise."

I recall when I went through a very difficult time. It seemed to drag on and on with no change until finally I wanted to retreat to a cave and forget pressing on. It was a great time of discouragement. A godly man came to me and said, "You must keep moving! There are too many who are depending on you in the Kingdom." I didn't totally understand what he meant at the time. Now I know he was saying that God is preparing each of us to be the vessel He wants to use in the life of another person, but we will never be that vessel if we give up and hide in our cave of discouragement. Not only must we keep moving, we must move into a new realm. Our attitude must move from discouragement to praise. It is when we move past discouragement to praise that we begin living above our problems. Make a decision today to go into the land of Judah.

Reprinted by permission from the author. Os Hillman is an international speaker and author of 15 books on workplace calling. To learn more, visit <http://www.MarketplaceLeaders.org>"

Upcoming Risk Takers Events:

- ♦ February 9: Basketball at Tomoka CI, Daytona Beach FL
- ♦ March 9: Basketball at Putnam CI, East Palatka FL
- ♦ April 13: Basketball at Hardee CI, Bowling Green FL

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