

LETTERS FROM GRANDPA
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Dearest grandchild,

Today's letter will encourage you to walk carefully like an "acrobat". Our English word "acrobat" comes from a compound of two different Greek words, The first part of the word is "akros" which means "highest," It refers to the "topmost point" or "extremity." The second part of the word is from "bainein" which means "to go." An acrobat is therefore someone who goes high. They walk a tightrope high above the ground, or swing from a flying trapeze high above the admiring crowd below.

It is most interesting to observe that this is the very word chosen by the Holy Spirit to describe the way that Christians are to walk. "See then that ye walk CIRCUMSPECTLY, not as fools, but as wise . . ." (Eph. 5:15). The Greek word translated "circumspectly" is "akribos" which is basically our word for "acrobat." It is translated in the King James Version as "diligently, perfectly, and circumspectly." Other versions use "accurately" and "carefully," but the idea is still the same. The man on a tight rope cannot be nonchalant about the way he walks and survive. This is precisely the illustration used by the Holy Spirit to show how that we as Christians are to conduct our lives. We are to be as accurate and careful about what we do as an acrobat.

The Christian is like a soldier in combat, an athlete in competition, a pilgrim in a strange land, or a voyager on a stormy sea. Time after time the Scriptures probe our thinking and stir our intellect with the necessity of extreme diligence and utmost care. We are not to be like someone "beating the air" but with genuine effort we are to be deliberate about every move we make (1 Cor. 9:24-27).

Not too many are acrobats in the literal sense of the word, but virtually everyone of us has been exposed to danger which has tested our abilities and concentration. As children it might have been a jungle gym, a slide, or climbing a tree. As adults, of course, we sometimes find ourselves in situations which are more demanding. The Scriptures warn us, however, to be careful at all times for when we think we stand, we had better take heed lest we fall (1 Cor. 10:12).

We will illustrate the importance of caution by the sad story of Courtney Edwards. She was a 34 year old mother of three, who was sucked into a jet engine and killed at Alabama's Montgomery Regional Airport on New Year's Eve 2022. She worked for Piedmont Airlines which is a subsidiary of American Airlines. She was killed by an American Eagle plane that had just landed on a flight from DFW. Since the plane's auxiliary power unit was inoperable the captain elected to leave their engines running until they were able to connect with ground power. Courtney was warned repeatedly! She as a part of the ground crew and received two briefings ten minutes before the flight arrived. They were warned to not set up the safety cones until the engines were shut off and the rotating beacon on the plane was shut off. The American Eagle's ground operating manual emphasizes the same points. However, *"According to the NTSB as a ramp agent for American Airlines commuter carrier American Eagle, was on the tarmac and had apparently set up a safety cone at the rear of the parked aircraft right before she was pulled into an engine and killed."*

Within a few days family and friends had set up a GoFundMe campaign and raised \$100,000 for Courtney's children. This, of course, in no way compensates them for the loss of their mother! Her tragic death should be an eloquent reminder to everyone to pay attention to warnings!

- Shortly after 2 p.m. on Jan. 6, 2023 a six year old boy at Richneck Elementary School in Newport News, Virginia, pulled out a gun and shot first-grade teacher Abigail Zwerner while she was teaching. Eight different warnings were ignored that could have prevented this tragedy.

- The Captain of the Titanic ignored five different warnings that there were icebergs ahead!
- On Dec. 26, 2004 a tsunami killed over 230,000 in 14 countries. The death toll would have been much less if only warnings had been heeded. The warnings, however, were ignored as they were seen as a threat to tourism.
- On January 28, 1986, the Challenger space shuttle exploded killing all seven astronauts. The accident resulted from ice forming on a critical O-ring. Engineer, Bob Ebling, warned them not to blast off but his warnings were ignored.
- As early as 1930 German researchers discovered a connection between smoking and cancer. The U.S. Surgeon General did not admit the health dangers of smoking, however, until 1989. Sadly, 100 million people have died because they ignored warnings about the harmful affects of smoking.
- Sadly the warning “be careful” given by parents, and the answer “don’t worry” given by children are but throw away phrases that too often mean nothing.

David once said to Jonathan: **“Yet as surely as the Lord lives and as you live, there is only a step between me and death” (1 Sam. 20:3).** David needed to walk like an acrobat, and so do we! **“A man who remains stiff-necked after many rebukes will suddenly be destroyed – without remedy” (Prov. 29:1)**

I love you,

Grandpa Boyce