CARE Group Feb 6, 2013 Facing the “Ifs” in Life Beth Himsworth

**Intro:** How can we prepare ourselves and our children for things that will be difficult in the future?

* The *IF* belongs to you –What does that imply?
* “…Nothing to fear but fear itself” And, “Just have faith”

On the negative side - It’s all about ME

On the other hand – what do these quotes have in common that is positive and useful?

**It matters what we think about and how we process our experiences**

1. **Why are we afraid?**

**WHAT CHANGED** when you became a parent?

***You became “responsible for their future”*** !! Really?

**WHAT ARE WE AFRAID OF?** Bottom line – pain / suffering / failure / need / loss

**We tend to protect against our most vivid fears and ignore** the vague but more likely things that will hurt us. A group of stranded sailors had to choose between the possibility of a certain island having cannibals and the probability of starving before they reached another, known island – what did they do?

* Low Likelihood, High Scary: Kidnapping
* Low Scary, High Likelihood: Self-important

**Historical perspective on pain** – OT writers in danger (Psalms)

There has never been a safer and easier era –

Childhood is a relatively new idea / Crime and danger of violence is lower

Disease / Injury **When we take a deep breath and think about it we realize that most of our fears are out of perspective.**

**There ARE real and painful situations that some of us will need to face –** (I’m not saying that the world is not broken/dangerous)**.** We (as a culture) **live on the defensive** and with great anxiety – and we don’t need to

Yes – you say – but that’s not ***really*** what I’m worried about …

**#1 Worry = Emotional / Psychological damage**

* Anguish
* They won’t love me, will reject me
* They won’t be happy – someone will hurt them in a relationship
* They won’t get a good job and advantages in life

#2 Spiritual sluggishness

#3 General Economic breakdown / Climate change

***What may happen economically is a return to earlier times.*** ***History show us that God is adequate***

I have the advantage of having spent many years of my life in the developing world – I have a category for having a decent life with no car or telephone and going out to get food every day because you don’t have a refrigerator.

2013 version -

**Joseph** – stuffed in the trunk of a car, driven over the border to Mexico and forced to do slave labor in a factory for --- 13 years!

**Daniel** – his city bombed to ashes and his people slaughtered – but he was spared so that he could be a slave to the conquering government – sent to a harsh boarding school in another language. Survivor guilt / cultural loss and confusion / loss of family (May never have seen family and friends)

**Why did these stressed teenagers become famous men of faith?**

### “He who has suffered in the flesh has ceased from sin” 1 Peter 4:1

### Suffering clears our heads – what is it like to go to a funeral?

### A person who is not fearful is freed to make decisions based on the long-term merit of the choices, not on the short-term risk of pain.

### Sebastian Junger: WAR (Perfect Storm) - Courage: The act of courage is not the individual deed but the act of becoming the soldier, fireman, etc. – the deeds flow out from the commitment. (just doing my job)

1. **How does avoiding pain drive our lives?**
* We need to protect ourselves
* We need to develop a “secure” lifestyle - ***What is this??***

How does fear make us vulnerable?

* Commercially
* Emotionally
* Spiritually

Living with the prospect of pain

* Anticipating – Realistic expectations
* Preparing – Developing character and skills
* Coping – Practice and guidance

Children are Resilient - We console ourselves with their ability to **overcome**

Children are Fragile - We feel we must intervene and **make it stop**

 ***Is there something incongruent here?***

Ex. Discipline has become incredibly complex because we have to tell them that they are wrong and still be sure we don’t hurt their feelings or make them feel guilty.

***Are they resilient, or are they fragile??*** Why do we get mixed up about this?

* **Realistic expectations and worldview -**
* Key Questions:
* Am I alone?
* Is God good? ***Why are these the real questions?***

Sometimes we are so busy teaching our children that the world is a dangerous place that we forget that, in the grand scheme of things, we are safe.

* What will the future most likely hold? ***What do you think?***

**Is she ever going to say anything *practical*?**

**Children learn what to be afraid of by watching us**

* Cory’s cast
* “Are we rich or are we poor?” Great question! Should I be worried? Is this normal?

**If we could give only one gift to our children:**

Security and contentment are not based on what we have and how things are going.

Confidence in God gives us boldness to move into the future and live well

**THEN our children’s lives will not be mastered by fear.**