

Propelled by Faith

By Rich Rice

Trust in the Lord with all your heart and do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge Him, and he will make straight your paths. Proverbs 3: 5-6

What do I have to offer? How can I possibly be of any help? I can't speak the language!

The list of doubts and excuses are often long and not dissimilar to my own prior to my first mission trip. We all have a tendency to build our own self-made road blocks that prevent us from serving others. Not me Lord, I am not smart enough; Skilled enough; In shape enough. I don't speak the language. We become paralyzed by fear and doubt.

However, when we step over that line of fear and move forward, propelled by faith, we will be blessed to witness how God prepares our path. We see how He helps us conquer our fears and doubts more than we would have thought possible. I have heard it described this way "God does not call the equipped; He equips the called." The apostle Paul challenges us to *press on*, not letting fear hold us prisoner.

Our hesitancy finds companionship in one of the most famous "Not me Lord" people in all of the Bible. Moses, talking directly to God, said "O Lord, please send someone else to do it." Moses was also paralyzed by fear and doubt. But we know Moses did take that next step beyond his fears and would eventually be inducted into the Hall of Faith recorded in chapter 11 of the book of Hebrews.

Before you let fear and anxiety stop you from doing what you sense God is nudging you to do, consider the cost. Making yourself available to love the unlikely neighbor down the street or in a far away country can be life changing – for you and those you encounter.

Twelve years ago, I raised my hand to participate in my first mission trip to Guatemala; I stepped over that artificial line and laid my doubts at His feet. In a moment's decision, I ventured out of the comfort of the church pew and spontaneously answered the call laid upon my heart. Only later did I sense my fears rising to the surface. What had I done? I could not speak the language. We were to help build houses, which I knew nothing about. My own manufactured fears and doubts began to erect a wall of anxiety, creating a mental list of all the reasons I might not be useful to the team.

That spontaneous decision to make myself available to God, to confront my fears and step beyond my comfort zone was the single most spiritually fulfilling decision I have ever made. When I stop and look back down this path I started walking in 2004, I see His handprint on each phase of the journey. Only then do I remember that I was not walking the trail alone. That the Lord opened and closed doors which kept us moving and directed our steps.

Even today as I look forward, I am easily overwhelmed by the challenges in front of me. It would be so much easier to throw in the towel – let someone else carry the ball from here. New fears and doubts fill the night time thoughts. What do I know about running a school? Will the land ever get purchased?

Where is the money going to come from to build a school? I still erect barriers, but they just look a little different.

So I obediently press forward, knowing that what seems difficult and beyond my abilities today will also be conquered in God's timing. This story continues to be written. This morning as I reflect on the challenges ahead, fear has been replaced by excitement. An excitement to see how God will lead me. An excitement to see what lies beyond the next bend in the trail. An excitement to see who the Lord will bring to join the journey. Mother Teresa once said; "I am a little pencil in the hand of a writing God, who is sending a love letter to the world." We are being used in the writing of His grand story. So cool!

Living life propelled by faith, you live with the expectancy that God will continue to open and close doors in His perfect timing. You are in His watchful care. Listen to His quiet whispers, cast aside the bonds of fear, trust the path He has put you on and take the next step. The time is now – get moving.