

Don't Let Fear Hijack Your Faith Anymore—Cling to This Truth

While he was in college, my friend Ken Davis delivered a talk to his speech class on the law of the pendulum. This law says that when a free-hanging weight swings back and forth, it will swing a shorter and shorter distance due to the effects of gravity and friction. Eventually it will stop and hang dead unless restarted.

To demonstrate, from a pivot at the top of a blackboard, Ken hung a three-foot string with a small weight attached at the bottom, creating a simple pendulum. Setting the pendulum in motion so that it swung parallel to the blackboard, he made a mark on the blackboard at each outward point where the pendulum reached in its arc. As the pendulum continued to swing, the length of each arc decreased, causing the marks to grow closer and closer to the center of the blackboard. That demonstrated the law of the pendulum in action.

“The law states that a swinging pendulum never again reaches the point from which it began its previous arc,” Ken declared. “Who believes that statement is true?” A show of hands indicated he had convinced both the professor and the class.

But Ken wasn't finished. Next, he asked his professor to stand with his back against the wall. Using a much heavier weight, which he'd previously attached to the ceiling with a strong rope, he pulled the weight from its center point, held it just an inch from the professor's nose and let it go. The weight swung away from the professor, reached the end of its arc and started back—heading straight for the professor's face. But it never came close to touching the professor because he was gone! The sight of the weight heading straight at him was more

than he could take, and he dove out of the way.

The professor may have said he believed in the law of the pendulum, but he wasn't willing to put his faith to the test. Ken's point? Faith can only be proven by actions.

For followers of Jesus, a lack of faith is seldom a matter of disbelief; it's usually a matter of fear. As C. S. Lewis wrote, "Faith ... is the art of holding on to things your reason has once accepted, in spite of your changing moods." Our moods—that is, our emotions, such as fear—exert such an influence that unless mastered they can destroy our trust in what we know to be true.

We usually think of faith as a biblical or theological term. But we demonstrate faith every day in the routines of our life. Think about flying—the faith it takes to step into a metal tube and hurl through the air 30,000 feet above the ground while going 500 miles per hour. And the terminology defining air flight doesn't help. We end our flight at a terminal—a word we dread to hear from our doctors— which the flight attendant assures us we'll reach as we make our final approach. Then we're told to stay seated until the plane comes to a complete stop. (I always wonder what an incomplete stop would feel like.)

Who came up with this terminology? Of course, we don't help matters by choosing the airline that offers the cheapest flights. Yet despite all these opportunities for fear, we exercise faith continually by putting our lives in the hands of the airline industry.

Every day you act on faith in human beings. If you can put your faith in the pilot of an airplane, surely you can put your faith in Jesus. {eo}

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