

Launch Your Adventure by Saying Yes to God

In the book of Ruth, a young widow made a critical decision to turn her back on her people, her country and her gods because her thirsty soul had tasted of the God of Israel. With just a taste, she gave herself to the only true God by leaving her homeland of Moab and following her aged mother-in-law, Naomi.

Ruth abandoned the only life she had known. Some might call it reckless to leave one's people with no hope to be remarried in a strange land. But Ruth abandoned herself to something and to someone.

She recklessly abandoned herself to the God of all creation: "But Ruth said, 'Do not urge me to leave you or turn back from following you; for where you go, I will go, and where you lodge, I will lodge. Your people shall be my people, and your God, my God'" (Ruth 1:16, NASB). Ruth had a determined heart. The Lord honored her faith in moving away from all that was familiar and taking a journey toward the completely unknown.

Ruth did not allow her friends, her old surroundings or her culture's dead faith to keep her from running hard after God. She did not use the excuse of a dark past to keep her from a bright future that began with her first critical choice: reckless abandonment to the Lord God. Foolhardy. Rash. Careless disregard. Withdraw support. Give up. Leave. Do any of these terms make you think of a right posture before God? They are synonyms for the words *reckless* and *abandon* that display the divine irony of our call to submit ourselves wholly unto the Lord.

The apostle Paul called himself a "fool for Christ." Jesus Himself "disregarded the shame" as He hung upon the cross (Heb. 12:2, NLT). As daughters of the King who gave Himself

for us, we are to give ourselves to Him, leaving the world, giving up our strategies and withdrawing support from the wiles of the devil and the ways of the flesh. Reckless abandon is how we fling ourselves toward God and utterly forsake our sinful nature.

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The “Shout ‘Yes’” Mom

How does a woman display her own reckless abandon to God? Does she have to leave her family, hometown and all her friends to prove such commitment? Well, occasionally God might ask that of someone, but most of the time she simply needs to wake up in the morning and shout “Yes!” to whatever the Lord has planned for her. (Now, if your family is still asleep, you may want to whisper yes to Jesus.)

In his seminal work, *Mere Christianity*, C.S. Lewis described the opportunity we face every morning—and again and again throughout each day—to “get to the ‘Yes’”: “It comes the very moment you wake up each morning. All your wishes and hopes for the day rush at you like wild animals. And the first job each morning consists simply in shoving them all back; in listening to that other voice, taking that other point of view, letting that other larger, stronger, quieter life come flowing in. And so on, all day. Standing back from all your natural fussings and frettings; coming in out of the wind.”

This “shout ‘Yes’” method may seem simplistic, but a teen girl who said yes to God was given the privilege of being the mother of Jesus, our Messiah. Mary was not chosen by God because she was superior to all the teen girls in her neighborhood or youth group. Mary was chosen because God knew she would say yes. Here is a teenager’s response to the angel Gabriel: “And Mary said, ‘Behold, the bondservant of the Lord; may it be done to me according to your word.’ And the angel

departed from her” (Luke 1:38).

In stark contrast to young Mary’s yes to a heaven-sent assignment, the Scripture tells us about an old priest who, six months earlier, struggled to say yes to his miracle when talking to that same angel Gabriel (Luke 1). An adult who was a spiritual leader resisted the prospect of the miracle God was promising—a child given in old age. And here was the consummate irony: Because of his struggle and hesitation to say the word yes, Zacharias (also known as Zechariah), the father of John the Baptist, was struck mute until his miracle son was born” “And behold, you shall be silent and unable to speak until the day when these things take place, because you did not believe my words” (Luke 1:20).

The angel Gabriel spoke with an old priest and a young girl, and the young girl responded with reckless abandon to a most amazing and challenging assignment. Saying yes to God is an act of daily surrender and a display of one’s own reckless abandon. Does your daughter know that you wake up shouting yes to God? Is your daughter growing in her love for Jesus? Are you modeling such passion? Does your daughter have the courage to say yes to God’s plan over the pressure of her own agenda for her life?

Dateless Friday Night Miracle (or, How to Avoid a Bozo)

Reckless abandon is a level of surrender that unlocks the greatest treasures God has in store for His kids. In fact, saying yes to Jesus has preceded every miracle I have ever experienced during the past 45 years as His follower.

The very message that birthed *Lady in Waiting* arrived on a dateless Friday night in 1972. I said yes to a holy nudge to stay in my college dorm room rather than go to the mall with some of my friends. I said yes to time with Jesus in the Word, and I got an amazing miracle.

Let me tell you about that miracle-producing dateless Friday

night.

Before I became a Christian, I dated pretty steadily. Then I became a Christian and the pickings became rather slim.

So, when I got a scholarship to attend a Christian college, I assumed that things would begin to pick up. How surprised I was to find myself dateless on several Friday nights! On the night already mentioned, my choice to stay in the dorm became like a date night with Jesus. As I sat in my room, my clothes were actually out on dates. Several of my cutest outfits had been borrowed so that other girls would look nice for their dates.

In fact, a friend of mine got engaged in one of my favorite outfits. On her one-year anniversary, her husband asked if she could wear that cute outfit she wore the night they were engaged. She replied, "Sure! Let me call Jackie!" He was taken aback. "Why on earth would you have to call Jackie?" "Well, if I'm going to wear that dress, I need to borrow it, because the dress belongs to Jackie." Ha! My clothes were very busy in college—very popular, always on dates. I, on the other hand, wasn't nearly as popular as my clothes were.

So, back to that fateful Friday night. I was sitting in my dorm room, thinking, "Lord, I don't want to waste this time, and I don't want to feel sorry for myself. I need Your comfort. I need a word from You so I don't have to have these pity parties on Friday nights ... Saturdays ... Sunday afternoons—all the times I assumed I would be dating!"

Although I was a young Christian, I knew the best thing to do when you want comfort. It was not to go to the mall, overeat or call a friend but to open God's Word. So in the dorm room on my date with Jesus, I decided to read the book of Ruth, because the chapel speaker that morning had referred to it as a love story and a story where a young woman broke her family's godless cycle and began a new life with the true

God.

In this precious little book of Ruth, God showed me principles that became an outline for *How to Wait for God's Best*. So, what was so miraculous about finding these principles for avoiding Bozo as a life mate? The miracle was (and is) me!

Here is how my family was described on the back of my book, *Free Yourself to Love*:

"As a survivor of severe childhood abuse, Jackie Kendall is an expert on forgiveness. A counselor deemed her family 'one of the top-ten most dysfunctional in America.' Though two siblings committed suicide and others adopted self-destructive lifestyles, Jackie wanted to break the mold and become a healthy, loving woman."

My severely dysfunctional background had prepared me to pick a loser—a Bozo! Given my upbringing, my family example and the context of everybody I ran with, my lover was destined to be one. But God took that "given" and gave me something else in its place.

He gave me an outline of His principles to protect me from settling for less than God's best! And then He gave me the privilege of sharing those principles with other single gals. And then He gave me my very own Boaz.

Many of you know this, but for those who don't, the key character, the leading man in the book of Ruth, is named Boaz. And as you can see, if you change one little letter in his name, he can go from a Bozo to a winner. God exchanged my prospects for a Bozo with the gift of my Boaz.

On a dateless Friday night, I said yes to a holy nudge to spend extra time with Jesus, and I was spared the living hell of marrying a Bozo. Instead, I have been married to my Boaz for 37 years. Through the message in the book of Ruth, I learned how to break my family's destructive cycle and

embrace, with reckless abandon, God's best for me. Reckless abandon is how we fling ourselves toward God and utterly forsake our sinful nature.

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