

Against All Odds

“And Jonathan said to the young man that bare his armour, Come, and let us go over unto the garrison of these uncircumcised: it may be that the LORD will work for us: **for there is no restraint to the LORD to save by many or by few.**”

I Samuel 14:6

Introduction

1. Probability and statistics is a math class that is necessary and useful, but contrary to faith, because your flesh, the world, and the devil want you to think that even God cannot alter overwhelming odds.
2. While math is true, $2 + 2 = 4$, math operates in the natural realm, which God may or may not use.
3. We think naturally without faith; but we must learn to think by faith, without fearing probabilities.
4. Hopelessness is the result of looking and thinking by sight and math, instead of by faith and trust.
5. Do not ever say yourself, and do not let any of us say ... “It’s impossible” ... “It can never happen” ... “We have already tried that over and over” ... “There are too many others trying for the same thing” ... “I don’t even feel that I can pray for it” ... “The odds are totally against it.”

Our need for such faith

- A. Getting a job often involves selection from tens, hundreds, or thousands of other applicants.
- B. God-fearing spouses that believe the same truth as we in such a small church are improbable!
- C. Admission into difficult educational programs, whether random or merit-based, is difficult.
- D. Correct diagnosis and treatment for physical symptoms requires many medical probabilities.
- E. Conceiving a child in general, but especially after failing through many cycles of ovulation.
- F. Selling a house can be a very difficult task depending on the economy, location, features, etc.
- G. Finding things you have lost can easily be frustrating and seem improbable or impossible.
- H. Recalling individual facts at the right time in crucial exams after studying thousands of them.
- I. Finding the true interpretation and application of a Bible passage without human direction.
- J. Seeking the conversion of an unrepentant fool that has shown little or no spiritual interest.
- K. Our political system involves millions of registered voters, but we must think one at a time.

Bible examples of such faith

- A. Jonathan gives a powerful example for two to take on a garrison of Philistines (I Sa 14:1-15).
- B. David, his friend, had similar faith when pursuing Goliath and his brothers (I Sam 17:40-48)!
- C. Asa fought against the largest army in the Bible with Jonathan’s same spirit (II Chr 14:9-12).
- D. Should we include Abraham taking on four kings with 318 trained servants (Genesis 14:14)?
- E. What about two widows who lived well against all odds (I Kings 17:8-16; II Kings 4:1-7)?

Bible examples of such events

- A. God reduced Gideon’s army from 32k to 10k to 300 to face an army of 135,000 (Judges 7-8)!
- B. A poor Moabite widow went out to glean, made several turns, and married Boaz (Ruth 2:3)!
- C. A poor orphan with numerous counts against her won the first Miss Universe (Esther 2:17)!
- D. Jacob trusted God’s economics, when dependent on good cattle begetting bad (Ge 30:25-43)!
- E. Barren? Sarah, Rachel, Hannah, and Elizabeth and others conceived anyway! Believe it!
- F. Ahab disguised himself in war against the Lord, but a chance arrow killed him (I Kgs 22:34).
- G. Darius took the impregnable city of Babylon because gates were left open (Is 44:21 – 45:7).
- H. Experienced fishers nearly destroyed their ships trying again after a futile night (Luke 5:5-7).
- I. If you seek the Lord, He will get truth to you, no matter how hard (Acts 8:26-31; Jer 29:13).
- J. The disciples were confounded by feeding 20,000 with a small lunch (Jn 6:5-13; Ps 127:1-2).

Bible principles of such faith

- A. Probabilities and statistics? Listen! Our God dominates all such (Prov 16:33 cp Jonah 1:7)!
- B. He is the God of time and chance, and He is your God, so proceed confidently (Eccl 9:11); we use this axiom of life to proceed though inferior; we neither neglect nor depend on means.
- C. Devise a way in your heart, and let the Lord direct your steps against possible odds (Pr 16:9).
- D. God promised to overrule probabilities in favor of Israel and against her (Le 26:8; De 32:30).
- E. It is not by might or power, neither by math or probabilities, but by His Spirit (Zech 4:6-10).
- F. Produce a Harvard MBA or computer that gets increase from decrease (Pr 11:24; Eccl 11:1)!
- G. Faith the size of a mustard seed is enough to cast mountains into a sea (Matt 17:20; Lu 17:6)!
- H. God saved nations by one, and would have Sodom by ten (Jer 15:1; Ezek 14:14; Gen 18:32)!
- I. No matter who says the disease is fatal, hope for mercy until the baby dies (II Sam 12:15-25).
- J. Nothing is too hard for the LORD, from conception to conversion (Ge 18:14; Mat 19:23-26)!
- K. There are no accidents, so look for God's providence for adversity or prosperity (Ex 21:13).
- L. God chose the "neighbour" for the Good Samaritan, so keep your eyes open (Luke 10:33).

Our examples of such events

- A. Do you know some of the improbable events that resulted in Titanic's disaster? And why?
- B. Are you familiar with the improbable military events at Dunkirk and the Battle of Midway?
- C. Why did Cestius Gallus lift his siege, and Titus easily gain the city (Luke 21:20; Mat 24:22)?
- D. How did you hear the truth? When? By whom? TW at ordination? GKE by circuitous tapes?
- E. How did spouses meet? MJ & GJ? JO & RA? JC & CS? DC & MN? CN & RC? AG & KT? CC & SB? MC & ET? DK & SE? and many more!
- F. Are there trophies of grace of "impossible" conversions? JRC? DKE? DR? JE?
- G. Are there examples in the church of finding lost items? DT for KG?
- H. How about conceiving when barren? GD? FH? How about birth itself? SLC catching MDN?
- I. How about job stories? MJ and SAP training with BMW, Lockheed, etc.; EC with BB&T and Burdett; ONE with short drive at IBM; NC and a Wachovia advertisement to a brother?
- J. How about a family with teenagers visiting the night of a teenage exclusion?
- K. How about reversals of financial fortune? JO and stock options? TW and business boom?
- L. How about easily selling houses with numerous difficulties? DR? ONE? JRC?

Basis for overwhelming odds

- A. The God of probabilities, our Father, is strong for those walking with Him (II Chron 16:9).
- B. It is your duty to walk, or live, by faith, rather than walking or living by sight (II Cor 5:7).
- C. Any change should be seen as the possible unfolding of God's blessed changing of the odds!
- D. Any respite or lack of change should be seen as the possible opportunity to recast your net!

For Further Study:

1. The sermon outline, "Dominion of God," ... <http://www.letgodbetruer.com/sermons/pdf/dominion-of-god.pdf>.
2. The Proverb commentary for Proverbs 16:33 ... http://www.letgodbetruer.com/proverbs/16_33.htm.