

CHRISTIAN MONEY \$ENSE

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Mission Impossible?

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What are some things that you think are impossible for you to do? Skydiving? Eating a cockroach? (That would be impossible for me.) Walking on water? That would be pretty difficult, right? And to do it during a storm? That is impossible! But we know it is possible to be a water walker from what we see in the Bible.

From Matthew 14:22-31, let's look at some steps Peter took to do the impossible. First, he **took a risk**. At this point in the story, Peter had been rowing and working against the storm with the other disciples for awhile. It was about 3 a.m. to 6 a.m., and they had left the shore right after dinnertime. Then they saw Jesus walking toward them in the storm. After Jesus declared that He was not a ghost, Peter took two risks by 1) asking Jesus to call him out onto the water, and 2) actually stepping out on the water with Jesus. Talk about a risk!

The second thing he did was **trust Jesus** to hold him up. He actually got out of the boat and walked on the water toward Jesus. He was focusing on Jesus after he took the risk to go out on the water, and it worked! But it also says that on his way to Jesus, he looked at the storm and began to doubt, which caused him to sink. This caused him to cry out to Jesus to save him. He had forgotten totally what he was doing before he began to sink. He lost his focus and was not able to regain it when the turmoil began to overwhelm him. Peter turned the impossible into the impractical. Maybe he even asked himself while he was sinking, "How did I get myself into this mess anyway?" Jesus was still there to save the day.

So what does this have to do with your financial well-being? The economy has been bad for awhile, and the stock markets are not doing well. People are losing jobs. Accountants are lying about their numbers. You may be thinking, "I need to hold on to my finances so that I don't sink in this storm!" And what has that

caused you to do? Cut down on your expenses? Good—you should. But is your giving to the Lord being cut as well? If so, that isn't good.

You may feel like it is impossible to give a tithe or offering right now. Maybe you had started to give a tithe and an offering when things were good or you had more faith. But have you started looking at the storms around you now and forgotten that God is still there? Your financial portfolio or retirement plan is doing horribly (if yours isn't, please send some tips my way), your payments on the new car are more of a burden, or your raise at work this year was a lot less than you expected. Maybe you even lost your job. I will admit that those are all things that can cause concern, but has your concern turned into worry and then into lack of faith in God?

I would challenge you to think about your giving over the past year. Has your giving changed to the point where you are lacking faith in God's provision? I know there are many churches in our nation that are struggling because giving is down. Would you take a risk by giving to your church and to other Christian organizations? Will you trust Him to keep you afloat financially when you give, or will you fear the things around you that tell you to not trust Him?

"And immediately Jesus stretched forth his hand, and caught him, and said unto him, O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt?" (Matthew 14:31, KJV) In these times of financial difficulty, let's be found in faith, not in doubt. For without faith, it is impossible to please Him.

BBC Foundation has been ministering to churches and individuals regarding biblical stewardship since 1992. Send your questions on finances and stewardship to: BBC Foundation, 538 Venard Rd., Clarks Summit, PA 18411. Phone: (800) 451-8668, website: bbcfoundation.org; e-mail: info@bbcfoundation.org