

1 Tightrope walking Skills

2 Traveling to Canada

- To travel from the United States to Canada, most people take a road north, cross a bridge and there they are in Canada.
- Nik Wallenda got there by tightrope and that was over Niagara Falls.

3 Tightrope Walking

- Last June, this 33-year-old daredevil walked a cable dripping with spray from the falls as 100,000 people watched his stunt from the ground.
- The crossing was broadcast by ABC on live television, so millions more were able to listen to the prayers he said into a microphone as he made his way across.
- Quoting from Isaiah, he prayed, "When you pass through the waters, I will be with you, and through the rivers, they shall not overwhelm you" (43:2).

4 Passing "Over" the Falls

- In fact, Wallenda didn't pass through the thundering waters of Niagara Falls, since he surely would have been knocked from his high wire and overwhelmed by the force of the falls.
- Instead, he passed over and above the waters, praying all the way.

5 Passing through the waters

- We know what this feels like, don't we? Passing through difficulties.
- At times, each of us is going to face what seems like an insurmountable obstacle.
 - Passing organic chemistry.
 - Running a marathon.
 - Getting dumped by a romantic partner.
 - Surviving cancer.
 - Raising teenagers.
 - Being fired.
 - Changing careers.
 - Experiencing the death of a spouse.

6 Life's Obstacles

- Like Nik Wallenda, we stand on the American side of Niagara Falls and look over the gorge into Canada. The sound and fury of the raging water is overwhelming. We begin to shake, and wonder how we are ever going to get across.
- Some people turn and run away.
- They drop the class, abandon their athletic training, avoid romantic relationships, ignore the cancer, retreat from their children, fall into a midlife career crisis or refuse to face their grief. When the waters are raging, this is understandable.
- But ultimately it is self-destructive.

7 God's Promise to Us!

- Those who retreat from the edge are ignoring the promise of God:
 - “When you pass through the waters, I will be with you.”
- Both parts of this verse are equally true.
- Isaiah says,
 - “When you pass through the waters” [not] “If you pass through the waters.”
- We are all going to face the terror of raging waters. It is absolutely guaranteed.
- But the second part of the verse is every bit as certain: “I will be with you,” says the one Lord God Almighty, maker of heaven and earth. “I will be with you.”

8 Presence & Power

- With the presence and power of God, we can survive any tightrope terror, crisis, or temptation in our life.
- According to Psalm 18, when God is there to help us . . .
 - I can advance against a troop with my God I can scale a wall. (v. 29)
 - It is God who arms me with strength and makes my way perfect. (v. 32)
 - He makes my feet like the feet of a deer; he enables me to stand on the heights. (v. 33)
 - He trains my hands for battle; my arms can bend a bow of bronze. (v. 34)
 - You give me your shield of victory, and your right hand sustains me; you stoop down to make me great. (v. 35)

9 The Flying Wallendas

- A little background: Wallenda is a member of the seventh generation of a family known as "The Flying Wallendas."
- They started as a group of traveling acrobats in Europe in the 1700s, and went on to perform numerous death-defying high-wire acts.
- Their risk-taking has sometimes resulted in death, as when Nik Wallenda's great-grandfather, Karl, died in a fall in Puerto Rico in 1978.

10 Family of Faith

- But the Wallendas do not run away from risk.
- They know that personal safety is never guaranteed, and that their fragile human lives can end at any time.
- Still, they face these dangers as a family, just as all of us should.
- Together, we are members of a community that has been created and formed by God, a family of faith that the Lord addresses with the words, "Do not fear, for I have redeemed you; I have called you by name, you are mine" (v. 1).

11 Tightrope Tips

•So, when you step up to the tightrope and start toeing the wire, here are some tips to keep in mind:

•Tightrope Tip No. 1:

- Remember that this is in your blood. Like the Wallendas, we are family. God has called us by name, and made us his own.
- This ability to pass through the waters runs in the family. All of God's family has done it before, and we can do it, too. As it says in Hebrews, we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles, and let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us. (Heb 12:1 NIV)
- Since God is with us we have this promise, I can do everything through him who gives me strength. (Phil 4:13 NIV)

12 Tightrope Tips

•Tightrope Tip No. 2:

- As the water roars around you, remember to pray and give thanks and praise to Jesus for every step of the way.
- When Wallenda left the American side of the falls, visibility was low, the wire was wet and slippery, and the winds were constantly changing.
- Not only this the roaring of the falls and the sight of pounding of the waters was a major distraction.
- So each step was a victory in and of itself.
- So let us, remember that winning battles are often the result of accumulated smaller victories. Let us not forget to look to God daily and give him thanks for the small victories as well as the larger ones.

13 Tightrope Tips

•Tightrope Tip No. 3:

- Don't panic and instead keep focused on doing the Lord's will!
- If we give into fear and to our emotions, we can end up creating more problems and difficulties, not only for ourselves but also for those around us.
- If we lose our connection to our Savior, we will certainly fall.
- So then let us keep focused on Jesus and keep trusting him and following his word.

14 Tightrope Tips

•Tightrope Tip No. 4:

- Accept the safety line offered by God.

- Fortunately, we have been given a safety line because some of life's most daunting challenges are going to knock us off our feet.
- A failed college course. An unexpected breakup. A cancer diagnosis. A pink slip. The death of a spouse. Any of these occurrences can cause us to slip and fall.

15 Safety Line

- Because of the danger of the Niagara Falls crossing, ABC required that Wallenda wear a safety harness.
- Although he said he felt “stupid” wearing it, the television network had invested \$1.3 million in the event and clearly wanted the walk to be successful.
- Wind and water whipped at Wallenda as he crossed the falls, and at the halfway point he said, "I'm strained, I'm drained. ... This is so physical, not only mental but physical. ... My hands are going numb. I feel like I'm getting weak."
- There was no guarantee that he was going to be able to make it across, but his harness would have averted disaster.

16 Safety Line

- God offers a similar safety line through the prophet Isaiah.
 - Since you are precious and honored in my sight, and because I love you, I will give men in exchange for you, and people in exchange for your life. (Is 43:4 NIV)
- God makes a serious investment in the safety of his people, saying to the Israelites that he has paid a ransom of entire nations to buy them back from slavery.
- This is similar to the safety harness God offers us in the New Testament, when Jesus tells us that "God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life" (John 3:16).

17 Tightrope Tips

- Tightrope Tip No. 5:
 - Remember that you are blessed.
 - When Wallenda neared the end of the tightrope, he was greeted by the roar of the crowd in Canada.
 - With the pump of a fist he ran a few steps to the end of the wire and embraced his family. "I am so blessed," he concluded. "How blessed I am to have the life that I have."
 - The God of all creation has given you the gift of life, and he says to you, "Do not fear, for I am with you" (v. 5).
 - Even when circumstances threaten to overwhelm you, God promises you his presence and his power.

18 Inspirational Life

- Wallenda is already the holder of six Guinness World Records, and last year he completed the walk that killed his great-grandfather, on a high wire stretched between two towers of the 10-story Condado Plaza Hotel in Puerto Rico.
- Nik considered his walk over Niagara Falls to be a "tribute to my ancestors and my hero, Karl Wallenda."
- He described his crossing of Niagara as a dream come true, and said, "I hope what I do and what I just did inspires people around the world be overcomers."

19 Tightrope Tips

•Tightrope Tip No. 6:

- Know that even in the face of the most insurmountable obstacles, you do not walk alone.
- "I will say to the north, 'Give them up!' and to the south, 'Do not hold them back.' Bring my sons from afar and my daughters from the ends of the earth — everyone who is called by my name, whom I created for my glory, whom I formed and made." (Is 43:6-7 NIV)

20 Community of faith

- Whenever you stand at the edge of an enormous personal challenge, know that the community of faith is all around you.
- They are there to offer encouragement, guidance, empathy and inspiration.
- We always face these challenges together, as people created for God's glory, formed and made by a loving Lord.
- So then, Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another — and all the more as you see the Day [of trouble] approaching. (Heb 10:25 NIV)

21 Summary

- Tightrope Tips
 - Success in overcoming obstacles is in our blood.
 - Remember to be faithful in prayer and thankful toward God.
 - Keep an eye on your walk with God.
 - Accept the "Safety Line"—God's promises of protection.
 - Remember you are already blessed.
 - We don't walk alone—we live in a community of believers.

22 That Sinking feeling

- We all probably know the story of Peter walking on water.
- As long as he kept his eyes on the Lord he was ok.

- But once he became distracted by the storm and focused on the problems around him— fear and anxiety took over and he began to sink.
- Nevertheless, when Peter’s faith failed him, Jesus was there to pick him up.

23 That Sinking feeling

- Jesus has promised,
 - “Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you.” (Heb 13:5 NIV)
 - And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age. (Matt 28:20 NIV)
- So why do we forget this when trouble comes our way?
- Because our faith in God’s goodness is still under construction.

24 God is for us!

- If God is for us, who can be against us? He who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all — how will he not also, along with him, graciously give us all things? (Rom 8:31–32 NIV)
- Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall trouble or hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword? (Rom 8:35 NIV)
- No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am convinced [nothing is] able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord. (Rom 8:37–39 NIV)
- The only thing that can separate us from God is unconfessed sin. As Isaiah says, Your iniquities have separated you from your God; your sins have hidden his face from you, so that he will not hear. (Is 59:2 NIV)

25 Pledge

- In this new year that is before us, let us not be surprised by trouble, problems, or set backs.
- God has not promised us a trouble free life, but help in the midst of trouble. God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble. (Psa 46:1 NIV)
- So then, let us not give in to fear and allow our emotions to lead us into sinful or faithless responses.
- Instead, let us pledge to live uprightly in all things, keeping our focus on God and allowing God’s people around us to encourage us and support us in whatever comes our way.