

# Randomness and Risk

Randomness and risk, are they inextricably linked? The way that people have used the English language over the years has helped to give the impression that there is an unbreakable connection between the two, and that they must *always* go `hand in hand`, but is this really the case? For instance one person might say to another, `You`re taking a risk doing that`, when what they are really meaning to say is that the other person is gambling in that which they are doing, in other words they are dealing in the realms of chance, of pure randomness. Randomness means that the outcome of any given, uncontrolled event, *in every case*, cannot be *accurately* determined with any certainty, whereas risk *does not* always have to be that way. Risks can be calculated and evaluated to a greater or lesser degree, randomness is always going to be a gamble and the odds of trying to predict the outcome of a random event increase as the numbers involved increase.

*Any successful prediction of the outcome of a random event has nothing at all to do with accurate mathematical predictions or `science`, it is pure luck.*

The dictionary definition of randomness is this; `without aim or purpose`, it is, something that happens to a person or thing that is (*without intelligent intervention*), neither intentionally evil nor good. The responsibility of an act or situation that has been created/set in motion and that has random consequences evil or otherwise, is to be attributed to the person who began that act or situation. For example, when a bomb explodes in a crowded market place the intention of the person who planted that bomb is to kill and maim as many people as possible, that is a *deliberate* act on the bomber`s behalf, but who that bomb kills and maims is pure randomness. Another example of randomness would be for example, if two people are skiing on a remote mountainside and suddenly they are engulfed by an avalanche of snow and rock, pure randomness, and even more random if one died as a result and the other survived without a scratch, unless of course divine intervention had played a part, then that which began as a random act for both skiers, became for one of them, anything but random. The Lord God has intervened in people`s lives many times throughout the scriptures, even turning what began as random events into ordered ones, a good example of this is to be found in the book of Jonah.

Now Jonah, as many reading this article probably already know, was instructed by the Lord to go and prophesise to the people of the city of Nineveh and tell them to repent of their sins because if they did not then the Lord God would destroy their city and all who lived in it. Jonah though, had other ideas, he thought that it would be a waste of his time because he knew that if the people repented of their sins, (and there was every chance that they would) then the Lord would not destroy them or their city both of which in Jonah`s eyes deserved to be destroyed whether the people repented of their sins or not. And so Jonah ran away and tried to hide from the Lord God. But the Lord made His presence known to Jonah on the ship in which he was hiding and sailing away on, and the Lord caused a great storm to arise which eventually threatened to sink the ship and drown all those on board, so let`s read from the scriptures as to what happened next.

**Jonah 1: 7.** `And they said every one to his shipmate, Come, and let us cast lots (draw straws or similar), so that we may know who has brought this evil upon us. So they cast lots and the lot fell upon Jonah`. Yes, Jonah got the `short straw`. It would seem that that which started off as a random casting of lots was turned by the Lord into something that was to define beyond doubt as to who was responsible for the danger that they were all in. In other words that which was

random, in this case the casting of lots, was along the way manipulated by the Lord God and made to have a definite and desired outcome.

The dictionary definition of the word `risk` is as follows; `deliberate exposure to mischance or danger`. In other words the danger is or can be known to people, and in all probability also the consequences of being exposed to that danger. Even though randomness and risk *sometimes* go `hand in hand` with one another, there is a difference between the two, like the difference between laughing and crying. Let`s go back to the scenario of the bomb that is planted in the crowded market place. Now, let`s imagine that you are at a safe distance from that bomb and then the bomber telephones you to tell you about the bomb and you realise that you only have five minutes to get to the market place and warn everybody to get clear, so you go, knowingly taking the risk of getting killed but also knowing that there is a random chance along with others that you will not be. This sort of action by a person defines real heroism, knowing that there is not only a positive and a set in motion risk of being killed but that the `good` odds (the randomness of not being a victim) have now become less for you because you have deliberately placed yourself in a known danger zone and that the `bad` odds are now definitely stacked against you surviving intact or at all. The question that may arise amongst many true Christians is this; `are those who have repented of their sins and have been baptized and received the Lord`s holy spirit, subject to the same amount and degree of randomness and risk as those who have not been baptized?` Well, I think that we can safely take comfort in the fact that we are not, after all we do not or we should not be subjecting our lives to the same level of risk of unnecessary physical injury as others may do. (But even so, the Lord does not `wrap us in cotton wool`) Some obvious examples of this are; we do not get rolling drunk at every opportunity and stagger around in the small hours of the morning inviting the risk of being mugged, run over by a vehicle, choking to death on our own vomit or even being murdered. We look after our health as best we can by not smoking or by constantly drinking to excess and by only eating clean foods. A more extreme example of keeping away from the unhealthy and risky ways of this world would be to adopt the life of a hermit. The hermit lives within the strict and limited confines of his adopted lifestyle and never strays beyond them. He may accept offerings of food and drink from well-wishers and spends the time of his day alone and going through well rehearsed and practised duties and procedures. His daily routine is known to him and so we can be certain that randomness and risk in his life has been reduced to almost nil and that anything untoward that was to happen in his life would have happened already and so would have been dealt with and remedied by him. The hermit is not a risk taker, he has by his daily routine and his policy of no unnecessary contact with other humans, virtually eliminated every physical threat to himself. Of course accidents and illnesses will still occur, but their chances of happening have been greatly reduced.

From the extreme life of the hermit we`ll go to the extreme life of the people who just `love to party` and live life to the full, people who are practically terrified to have a decent night`s sleep in case they miss out on something. These are the kind of people who generally work hard when they feel the need to but then that is only because they want to finance the kind of reckless and relentless lifestyle that they enjoy so much and have become accustomed to, and woe-betide anybody who gets in *their* way when *they* are trying to make money! Not only do these people often work hard but they also play hard. They like to drive fast, expensive cars and they love to be seen at all of the `trendy` night clubs and `hot` spots. They pay little or no attention to laws and regulations because they know that if they are caught breaking them then generally they can easily buy their way out of any trouble that ensues. Many of these people are the `movers` and

the `shakers` of this world having great influence over others either by direct personal power usually via big business or through the media of pop music, sport, TV or film, and many love to have a gamble either because it is in their nature or they can afford to lose, most often though it is because of both of these factors. Randomness is constantly in attendance in these people`s lives, and risk, usually harmful to others if things go wrong, is practically an everyday occurrence for them, but unlike most `ordinary` people who worry about risk, they thrive on the `adrenaline rush` that it provides for them. They appear to be immune to the harms of any risk and treat it with derision and scorn, the same way as they may treat others who are aware of risk and take steps to either avoid it all together or to minimise it. Some live a long and prosperous life-time this way whilst others crash and burn after a much shorter time. But no matter who you are, play the game of `Russian Roulette` for long enough and one day when you pull the trigger, just waiting for you, there will be that random bullet in the chamber with `your name on it`, and if not in this life then certainly in the next because nobody ever escapes the consequences of their actions, and that includes risk taking, especially callous and unnecessary risk taking which has harmful and disastrous consequences for others. When the majority of these (often arrogant and callous) risk takers die then the whole world gets to know about it as the international news media trumpets and bewails their passing, and they more often than not leave behind them an almost indelible footprint, unlike the hermit who passes away and leaves this world as if he`d never existed. So, two opposite and extreme ways of living a life, the true Christian needs to live their life somewhere in the middle ground (balance being the key) even having to alternate at times between the two as and when necessity dictates, but with one exception, no innocent people are made to suffer as a result of any actions taken.

Of course whether a person is a `high flyer` or a hermit, randomness and risk will affect them as it affects all who dwell upon this earth, but the outcome of such randomness and risk can be pre-ordained or pre-determined, as it were, and Jesus Christ Himself seems to indicate to this fact as we can read of in **Luke 13: 1-5**. `There were present at that season some who told Him (Jesus) of the Galilaeans, whose blood Pilate had mingled with their sacrifices. And Jesus answering said to them, do you then suppose that these Galilaeans were sinners above all the other Galilaeans because they suffered such things? Well I tell you that is not so, but except that you repent, then you shall all likewise perish. And what about those eighteen people upon whom the tower in Siloam fell and killed, do you think that because this happened to them that they were the chief sinners that dwelt in Jerusalem? I tell you that they were not, but unless you repent you shall all likewise perish`. The very nature of being a true Christian means that we are taking a risk, and because of the ever increasingly sick and perverted nature of this world in which we now find ourselves living, it is a risk that increases almost daily as we find more and more stumbling blocks being put in *our* way whilst any stumbling blocks are being removed from those who practice non-Christian religions and from the many false `christian` religions which now abound. Such is the way of the Satanically motivated and controlled `Babylonian system` of which the whole world is under the sway of and which is only going to become more and more prominent, controlling and powerful as we draw ever closer to the second coming of our Lord and God Creator Jesus Christ.

Not only do non-Christian religions hate true Christians, and it has always been so, but these days we are even more hated by the false `christians` of the false `christian` churches of this world who will betray any one of us and give us up to the slaughter when motivated to do so! Why? well let`s read the words of Jesus Christ in **John 16: 1-3**. `These things have I spoken to you, so that you should not be made to stumble. They shall put you out of the synagogues: yes

the time comes (not long off now) when whosoever shall kill you will imagine that he is performing a service for God. And these things they will do to you because they have not known the Father or Me`. And why haven't they known the Father or Jesus Christ? because they are false, and the reason why they are false is because that which they practice is false! Remember that Jesus was speaking these words to His followers, true Christians, not to those of the Jewish religion, and He would be speaking those same words to the world's true Christians today, but with one big difference, He would not be warning about those who practice and keep the Jewish religion but about the world's millions of false `christians` who follow their false, Satanic `christian` churches!

Everybody upon this earth can minimise unwanted but unavoidable risk towards themselves and they do not have to live like the hermit and only have limited contact with society. Everybody in a relatively `free` society has the choice to live their lives by using their own judgement or to accept and follow others advice on any given situation that has arisen or might arise in the future. But one thing separates all true Christians from the rest of this world, *we should all be prepared*, right now, to have to pay the ultimate sacrifice for our faith. Of course there are millions living upon this earth, including all manner of pagans, who would be willing to lay down their lives for a loved one especially if it is a child, but the true Christian must not only be willing to do this but also to die for that which *cannot* be touched or cradled in the arms, and that `thing` is their faith and the love of their Saviour Jesus Christ, the `finisher` of that faith, as He is described as being in Hebrews 12: 2. Let's read the words of Jesus from **Matthew 10: 37.** `He who loves their father or their mother more than they love Me, is not worthy of Me, and he who loves their son or their daughter more than they love Me, is not worthy of Me`. Yes, we true Christians take the biggest risk of all by believing in, being faithful to and loving that which we cannot touch or cradle in our arms but which instead we cradle in our hearts, but the risk that we take is not one of uncertainty about that which we do, but it is about the way that our fellow men will treat us because of it. Now we true Christians are prepared to die for our love of our Saviour Jesus Christ, but He was prepared to die *for all* upon this earth, so that *everybody* who lives has the opportunity to come to Him! Let's read **Romans 5: 6-8.** `For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly. For scarcely for a righteous man would any of us be willing to give up our lives, perhaps for a good man some of us might dare to die. But God commends His love towards us in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us`. Life is full of risks and even sudden, random risks which cannot be calculated or debated upon before deciding whether or not to take them, in these situations that which is in a person's heart usually dictates the actions taken at these times. For instance you may see somebody in difficulty in a swollen river, do you run for help, do you jump in and risk both of you drowning, or do you search about for something to try and fish them out with? Whatever choice of those three that you make, at the very least you have not callously `turned a blind eye` to the situation and just walked away as if nothing had ever happened. Now as terrible a thing to do as that is, some people *would* do that and they are not just the `product of this modern age`. Let's read some of the parable of the good Samaritan, **Luke 10: 30-33.** `And Jesus answering them said, A certain man went down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and was attacked by thieves who stripped him of his clothes and wounded him, leaving him for dead. By chance there came that way a certain priest who on seeing the wounded man crossed over and passed by on the other side. And in like manner a Levite did the same thing. But then came a certain Samaritan that way and when he saw the wounded man lying there, he had compassion on him`. Randomness and risk, the outcome of these two things may not directly affect and injure us, but when we see their harmful

effects on others then we too are adversely affected by them if we are in a position to offer immediate, `hands on` help and we do not.

The greatest thought out and planned risk that was ever taken, and I would suppose that ever will be taken, which involved complete and utter trust and faith in another `person`s` ability and power was taken by the Lord God Himself when He put His very life and existence into the hands of His Heavenly Father. Make no mistake, this really happened! It happened when God who became known to us as Jesus Christ, of His own will divested Himself of all power and eternal life and put it into the hands of God the Father. He left His `home` of the heavenly domain and was then born flesh and blood of a human mother leaving Himself just as vulnerable as any other human. But there is more, He then had to live a perfect, sinless life even though He was subject to all of the same temptations and sensual tugs and pulls of the flesh as we are. Let`s read this next piece of scripture in which the apostle Paul talks about Jesus and His human condition, **Hebrews 4: 15**. `For we do not have a High Priest who does not know of, or who cannot be touched by the same feelings of weakness as ourselves, because in all ways He was tempted the same as us, but He resisted and remained sinless`. Yes, the Lord God in the human shape and form of Jesus Christ willingly undertook to suffer a short and troublesome life, which resulted in an agonizing death, in the knowledge that if He slipped up, that is to say sinned at all, then it would all have been in vain, He would have failed in His mission and mankind would have ceased to exist from that point on!! Remember this also, that Satan and his demons tried their utmost to make Jesus fail in going through with His Personal sacrifice by making sure and letting Him know that His death would be a long and painful drawn-out affair should He chose to see it through to the end, but even as mere flesh and blood, our God, Jesus Christ proved Himself to be more powerful than that evil spirit, the arch demon Satan. Was all this then just a gamble played out by a bored God, a calculated risk, or a necessary sacrifice for the remission of sins driven by an all-consuming love for the pinnacle of His creation humankind who, through the actions of their ancestors Adam and Eve, had been committed to the sentence of eternal death because these two had allowed sin to enter into their lives and into the subsequent lives of all of their offspring by willingly disobeying the Lord because they found the seductions of Satan the devil more attractive and easy to indulge in than trying to keep the one commandment of God that they had been given? The Lord God, as Jesus Christ, could have opted out of His torturous ordeal that was to be His fate, at any time, but for our sakes He chose not to, let`s read His words from **Matthew 26: 53-54**. `Don`t you realize that I can at this very moment pray to My heavenly Father, and that He will immediately give Me more than twelve legions of angels? but if that were to happen, then how could the scriptures be fulfilled?` Jesus did however plead with God the Father for an alternative solution if there was one to be had, but as all true Christians know, there was not one offered to Him. Let`s read Jesus` words in **Matthew 26: 38-39**. `Then Jesus said to His disciples, My soul is exceedingly sorrowful, even unto death, wait here and watch with Me. And He went a way off from them and fell on His face and prayed saying, O My Father, if it be possible, let this cup (ordeal) pass from Me: nevertheless, not as I will, but as You will`. Jesus had to take the risk of dying with only the promise of His heavenly Father that He would be resurrected after three days in the grave. He risked all, but He risked it in faith! The unheard of had to happen, God had to die! but in dying and in being resurrected, He provided a way of conquering death, of abolishing it forever, death itself could and would die, and so would the bringer of death, Satan, and all of his followers! Both God the Father and Jesus Christ did not expect humankind to have to experience risk without having experienced it Themselves, randomness however, can only affect Them if They allow it opportunity to do so.

God the Son knew of the risks that He and His Father took when He came down upon this earth to be born as Jesus Christ, but They did not shy or cower away from committing Themselves to those risks. Jesus risked losing His eternal life by putting the safe keeping of it into His Father`s hands, but did He ever once doubt about this? well we`ll read this next scripture and you can decide for yourselves. **Mark 15: 34.** `And at the ninth hour, Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying, Eloi, Eloi, lama sabach thani? which interpreted means, My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?` We true Christians must also take risks but they should be for the benefit not only for ourselves but more importantly for the benefit of others, and they should be taken in faith, faith that good will somehow, someday come of having taken them. Let`s read **Ecclesiastes 11: 1.** `Cast your bread upon the waters: for you shall find it after many days`. and also this warning in the book of **Galations 6: 7.** `Do not be deceived, the Lord is not fooled, for whatsoever a man sows, that also shall he reap`. We must be very careful of the risks that we allow ourselves or others to take, *especially* if others take them on our behalf.

So what should we imagine the outcome will be for us when we deliberately take risks in order to do the will of our God? Are we in more or less danger than say Jesus Christ was? or rather is Jesus now, because of that which He risked and suffered for us as a flesh and blood human being, in a position of being better able to understand our fleshly (carnal) inabilities and weaknesses? Well I think that I will let this next scripture answer that, **Hebrews 2: 9-10.** `But we have witnessed Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels so that He could suffer death in the flesh, crowned with honour and glory, so that He by the grace of God (the Father) should experience death for the sake of every man. Because it suited Him, for Whom are all things, and by Whom are all things, in bringing many sons to glory, to make the Author of their salvation perfect (mature) because of the things that He suffered`.

So, what about randomness? Are those who are true Christians and who are predestined to be saints subjected to the same whimsical random events that affect everybody and everything else upon this earth? Well, before I go any further let me try and get one thing straight, every true, faithful, called and chosen Christian is predestined to be a saint, and we can read of this fact in **Romans 8: 27-30.** `And He (Jesus) that searches the hearts knows what is the mind of the spirit, because He makes intercession for the saints as according to the will of God. And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to those who are called according to His purpose. For whom He did foreknow, He also did predestine to be conformed to the image of His Son, so that He might be the firstborn amongst many bretheren. Moreover, those whom He did predestine, them He also called, and whom He called, them He also justified, and whom He justified, them He also glorified`. What a great promise awaits the true and faithful Christian, and so to help them remain true and faithful are the Lord`s chosen one`s to be given any special dispensation as regards randomness which is something that is beyond any human`s capability of controlling whether they be saints or devil worshippers? Or to put it another way, if a life is predestined, is any randomness in that life possible at all or has it all already been planned? And if that is the case, then for the person living that life, effectively harmful randomness does not exist, at least to the extent that any evil effects of any allowed randomness will not be permitted to be permanent. So, has the true Christian`s life, from the very day that they were created, been `set in stone`? Well, maybe the outcome has, but the initial journey that each and every individual one takes will vary tremendously and each will, when finally called and chosen, discover that the only lasting and worthwhile thing that they have in common with one another is the love for our Saviour Jesus Christ and for God the Father, because They, are the `tie that binds`. True Christians may not be subjected to randomness that is to say potentially fatal

*physical* randomness as the rest of the world is subjected to it, but we are subjected to it enough to allow our character as individuals to develop, after all, the Lord does not want every one of us to be like identical pencils in a box, He wants us to be `characters` in our own right, and this is where the `lessons of life` play their important part. The Lord could have created us all the same, but what would be the point of replicating the same person over and over again, billions of times? How boring, not only for Him but for those He created! As mentioned before, our troubled journey through this life is, for the greater part, a chance for us to build and develop our character, and not just any old character, but our Godly character. I should imagine that quite a lot of true Christians can look back on the early parts of their lives (as I can) and see it as having ended in a `shipwreck`, but instead of being abandoned and left to drown in a storm-tossed sea we were rescued by our Almighty Saviour Jesus Christ, and so we who have been saved `a second time` as it were, recognize who our Saviour is and continues to be. We have experienced sorrow, hardship and loss in this present life and we will more than likely, continue to do so, but there is a difference, for now we know for certain that we have a faithful and a loving Saviour who has helped us before and will continue to do so throughout the rest of our lives, and that whatever happens next it can never be as bad as that time of our `shipwreck` when we were in desperate trouble and began to lose all hope of survival. Sure most of us believed in Jesus Christ before our `shipwreck`, but that `shipwreck` was for most of us the first time that He had ever been `felt` to have directly intervened in our lives. However one thing that is crucially lacking in any *actual* shipwreck at sea, and that is cruelty, man`s inhumanity to his fellow man. This inhumanity, this cruelty can as we know manifest itself in the form of mental torture, including bullying and threats, taunting and humiliation, and of course the more obvious, agonizing physical torture. The Lord God, in the shape and form of Jesus Christ, suffered all of these things, we true Christians should be eternally grateful that we only have to suffer that which the Lord knows that we as individuals *need* to suffer in order to make us acceptable in His sight. Let`s read something that indicates this as being so in **Zechariah 13: 8-9**. `And it shall come to pass that in all of the land, says the Lord, two parts of it shall be cut off and die, but the third part shall be left therein. And I will bring the third part through the fire, and I will refine them as silver is refined, and I will try them as gold is tried: they shall call on My Name, and I will hear them: I will say, It is My people, and they will say, the Lord is my God`.

There is a particular example within the scriptures where Jesus did not allow a *seemingly* random event to continue, remember the storm-tossed waters of the sea of Galilee? **Luke 8: 22-24**. `Now it came to pass that on a certain day, that Jesus boarded a ship with His disciples, and He said to them, Let us go over to the other side of the lake. And so they launched the boat. But as they sailed, Jesus fell asleep, and there came down upon the lake a storm of wind, and the boat became swamped with water and they were in danger of sinking. And His disciples came to Him and awoke Him saying, Master, Master, we perish. Then Jesus arose and rebuked the wind and the raging of the water, and they stopped, and there was calm`. Now this may have been a random event caused by a freak storm or it may have been brought about deliberately by divine will, but either way it gave great opportunity for Jesus to show to His disciples just exactly whose presence they were in and what power He could wield if He really wanted to! Yes, Jesus calmed the storm, but He chose not to calm mankind`s hatred towards Himself. Make no mistake, as God the Creator in the flesh He could have done this but that would have meant having to alter the whole mental make-up of those in the country, if not the whole world at that time, and for that to have had any lasting effect, Satan and his demonic forces would have had to be destroyed right there and then but that could not happen, because according to the prophetic

divine plan, over two thousand years had still to pass before that event took place. Although the bretheren of the Lord`s true church are indeed predestined to sainthood, this does not mean that we shall live a life that is totally free of danger and risks, indeed the scriptures indicate that towards the end of this present age, these `latter days` in which we now live, members of God`s true church will be taking enormous risks as regards their personal well-being and safety, and this will be because they stand firm in and remain loyal to their faith by keeping the Lord`s festivals and holy days particularly the seventh day weekly Sabbath which will have been outlawed in favour of the pagan and demonic (and by now obligatory to observe) `sunday`. In the book of Daniel we can read of the indications that point to the fact that the bretheren of the Lord`s true, end-time church will be persecuted as a result of their none acceptance of the demands of the newly introduced common laws of the whole of Europe (which will have come into existence by then) which will demand such obligatory things as `sunday` worship being put into practice. These new and demonic laws will have been brought about by the beast power which will have the Roman catholic church as its` spiritual guide and head. Let`s read **Daniel 11: 32.** `And such as do wickedly against the covenant (the once accepted laws of God), shall have been corrupted by flatteries; but the people that do know the Lord their God shall be strong and perform acts of bravery`.

Life is never easy, but for many who observe the deeds of the unrighteous and the wicked, it oftentimes appears to be a lot easier for them than it is for the rest of us. Even when or if they are caught and prosecuted for their crimes the `punishment` that they receive is often lamentable, and in most instances of so-called `petty` crime their `punishment` even encourages them to continue in their evil ways. Everybody on this earth at some point in their life will start to journey along a road which is unknown to them, the righteous and the unrighteous alike. This journey may even have been planned out for a person by their overbearing or well-intentioned parents even before that person was born, but even so, it will rarely go according to their plan. Let`s take this scenario for an example. Sooner or later on this journey along the road of life everybody will come to an unsignposted crossroads, which direction any of us then decide to travel will at least appear to be totally random. Let`s now imagine that at these crossroads we are amongst a group of people, some have chosen their road to travel and you or/and I have chosen our road. Now the road that we have chosen gradually becomes overgrown and choked with thorns and briars. The going gets really tough, there is no turning back, we have to constantly hack and saw a path through until eventually we emerge into a landscape that is ravaged with warfare, famine, death and misery. We begin to suffer along with the people that we meet, but all through this terrible ordeal our faith in the Lord never deserts us and it sustains and strengthens us. We continue journeying. Eventually, after much grief, hardship and wretchedness things begin to ease and we realise that an end to this terrible suffering is now in sight. Alternatively, way back at the crossroads, our fellow travellers are now on the road that they chose to take. The road that they have taken turns out to be very easy going. There is bright, warming sunshine almost everyday along with a pleasant breeze, there is really nothing to complain about, the people that they meet are all happy with their lives and they want for nothing. One day we travellers all meet again. What stories *some* of us have to tell, some of us have been `through the mill` and are full of many varied life experiences which have given us deep and unmoveable love and understanding and empathy for others which in turn has given us wisdom. As for the others who travelled their road of sunshine and contentment, they are full of gushing good cheer, joy, untested love and generosity of spirit. Unfair? Well consider this, when difficulty, hardship and suffering once again arise but this time for all to experience, (and it will) which of us will be best

equipped to deal with it? The Lord God knows each and every true Christian, personally, and He knows that which we oftentimes have to go through and suffer, but there is a scripture that tells us that He will not have us endure anything above that which we as individuals are capable of dealing with, and that He will provide a way out for us, let's read from the book of **1 Corinthians 10: 13**. There has not been any testing of you except that which is common to all men, but the Lord is faithful, He will not allow you to be tested beyond that which you can endure, He will, as a part of your testing, make available a way of escape for you so that you will be able to bear it. Now we realise that not all people or true Christian bretheren are the same, some are better able to cope with certain aspects of this life and all of its `nasty `surprises` than others, and that last scripture lets us know that the Lord recognizes this fact and that He has made allowances for us because of it. Even so, it is the Lord's desire that each true Christian should persevere through our individual troubles and misfortunes that we must encounter along the road that we have been given to travel, none of us giving up until He provides us with a way out from them. The apostle Peter asked Jesus what manner of death the apostle John would suffer because he (Peter) had just been told by Jesus about the manner of death that would be *his* particular fate, perhaps Peter hoped that John too would suffer a similar death as his own and that he could take some sort of comfort in that fact, (as we humans often do, we don't like to suffer alone!) we can read of Jesus' reply in **John 21: 21-22**. Peter seeing him (John) said to Jesus, Lord, and what about this man's fate? Jesus said to him, If I wanted him to live until My second coming, what business would it be of yours? you follow Me. When Jesus said those words, `you follow Me`, He indicated to Peter that his death was to be one brought about by persecution, including the horror of crucifixion, so is it any wonder that Peter tried to find some sort of comfort in the fact that maybe he would not be `alone` in this trial that he now knew awaited him.

Even so, for all that awaited the apostle Peter, the Lord God can be very gracious to His chosen ones, even though it is our *own failings* through the sins that we commit that oftentimes makes life so very difficult for us by leaving us wide open to the ravages of non-predestined randomness and risk, and as we know, only the Lord can forgive us of those sins because ultimately it is against Him *only* that we sin as this next piece of scripture informs us. **Psalm 51: 3-4**. For I acknowledge my transgressions, and my sin is ever before me. Against You, You only, have I sinned, and done this evil in Your sight: that You might be justified when You speak, and be blameless when You judge. Jesus made it perfectly clear to Peter about what Peter's fate was to be, and we can read about some of that in **John 21: 18-19**. Truly, truly, I say to you (Peter), when you were young, you girded yourself and walked where you wanted to walk, but when you are old you shall stretch forth your hands and another shall gird you, and carry you where you do not want to go. This spoke Jesus signifying by what kind of death he (Peter) should suffer in order to glorify God. And when Jesus had spoken this He said to him, Follow Me. Jesus was not being nasty by telling Peter this, Peter *desperately* wanted to be like Jesus, but he was lacking in the courage to be so, and so if we think about it Jesus was merely demonstrating to Peter what He (Jesus) had had to live with all of His adult life, the knowledge of His own death and the method of it, and if Peter could live with the knowledge about *his* own death, then it could only make him a stronger person and bring him closer to Jesus. Poor `old` Peter, ignorance of certain things can indeed be bliss.

So what about those of us living now, the true Christians who are predestined to be saints, what if we were to somehow fail or begin to realise that we are failing to reach our full potential in becoming something like Jesus Christ? What if all of life's randomness and risk has

overwhelmed us or is beginning to do so? Now I'm not suggesting for one minute that some of us, just because we *feel* as if we are failing, will give it all up by going `back into the world` and start giving ourselves over to becoming thieves, liars, fornicators etc. No, it is just that many of us reach a crisis point in our faith when we look back over the years and realise that maybe we have not progressed along our spiritual road as far as we would have liked or as far as we thought that we had, and that because of this the Lord is probably so terribly disappointed in us because we have failed Him and lost the chance that He gave us to become one of His children. We feel as if we are unforgiveable. Well, is this so, have we committed the `unforgiveable sin`? No, no we have not, the Lord is very patient with us all, yes He expects His chosen ones to rise above the rest, but He is gracious towards us even when we fail, let's read from the book of **Joel 2: 13.** `Rend your heart and not your garments, and turn to the Lord your God, because He is gracious and merciful, slow to anger and of great kindness. . . ` The Lord is so gracious that He even forgave a prostitute who repented of her way of life, and we can read of that in the book of **Luke 7: 47.** `Wherefore I (Jesus) say to you, Her sins (the prostitute`s) *which are many, are forgiven, because she loved much*; but to whom little is forgiven, the same loves little`. As we can understand from that last scripture, the love *within an individual* is the one thing that can `cover` sins, and this is further stated in

**1 Peter 4: 8.** `Above all things have fervent love amongst yourselves, because love shall cover a multitude of sins`.

There will be times when any true Christian will think that they are failing the Lord, and when this is the case they may well go on to think that there are no longer any more risks as regards their faith, worth taking, and that anyway, randomness along with the risks that oftentimes come with it affects the sinner as well as the saint because it is as common as the air that we all have to breath. Well, all true Christians should think on this, that although we tread the same earth as every other living creature we have a choice, and it stands to reason that because of our faith we have more choice than people who do not possess any faith at all. The biggest choice or decision that any true Christian has to make is *when* to let the Lord *totally* guide our footsteps, and for us to be able to do this without `tempting` the Lord. This can only be done by having complete faith in the Lord and of us believing that He is able and willing to perform something that we have asked of Him, and to then have the patience to sometimes have to `go through all of the hoops and over the hurdles` before that which we have asked for is either granted to us or the situation has changed so that what we initially asked for is no longer necessary for us to have. So how can a person`s faith tempt the Lord? Well let`s have an extreme example, If I were to say to God, `Lord, I'm now going to jump off this the highest mountain in the world, but I have the faith that you can save me`, and I went ahead and jumped, should I really suppose that the Lord *would* save me? I know that He could, but *would* He? No!, because to do such a thing would be tempting the Lord, or to use another word, `testing` Him. Even Jesus Christ would not tempt His heavenly Father when Satan tried to get Him to do so, as we can read of in **Matthew 4: 6-7.** `And Satan said to Him, If you be the Son of God, cast Yourself down (from the top of the temple), for it is written, He shall give His angels charge (a duty of care) concerning You, and in their hands they shall bear You up, less at any time You should dash Your foot against a stone. Jesus said to him, It is written, *You shall not tempt the Lord your God`.* If we let the Lord God guide our footsteps, even though randomness along with risk will always be with us to interfere with our journey through life, they alone can never *prevent* us from reaching our final destination. Randomness and risk will always in this present life, provide us with difficulties to overcome and with hard decisions that we will have to make, but with the

Lord's help we should not worry overmuch. The comforting reassurance that the true Christian's faith gives them helps their journey through this life to 'get up to speed'. Notice how time drags when you are 'down in the dumps' or in pain, and how quickly it passes when you are enjoying yourself? A true Christian's faith can provide them with the 'middle ground' that they will need if and when their lives start to become too difficult for them, and they can then begin to pick themselves back up from there. No matter what the randomness or the risk in *any* person's life, they have a duty of care not only for others but also for themselves, and this is particularly so for the person who is, or who is trying to be, a true Christian. True Christian's should not only be interested in protecting their spiritual life but also the fleshly body which they inhabit which enables them to live that life, because not one of us, true Christian or otherwise, has *any* right of claim to *anything* in this life, and that includes our own body! as we can read of in

**1 Corinthians 6: 19-20.** 'What? don't you know that your body is the temple of the holy spirit that dwells within you, which was given to you by God, and that you do not own it? For you have been bought for a price, therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit which are God's'.

And so to sum up. Randomness is the 'thing' in everybody's lives which oftentimes allows unsolicited risk to occur. Having to take risks calculated or otherwise is an essential part of a person's life. If there were to be no risks taken then there would be no difficult and/or oftentimes vital decisions being made, and if that was to be the case, where would an individual's character-building be along with any sense of achievement or *true* honour, but more importantly, where would any *need* for an individual's faith in God be? After all, if everything was to run smoothly, and trouble and evil never bothered anybody at any time, who, under these conditions, would ever feel any need for faith in the Lord? We live in an evil world which is governed by an evil system which is 'hell bent' on destroying us *all*, good and bad, **permanently**, and the ones who are the easiest prey for this evil Satanic system are *the ones who only have faith in themselves!*

Let's have a couple of last scriptures starting with the words of the Lord first voiced by Him in the old testament and repeated in the book of **Hebrews 10: 38.** 'Now the just shall live by faith: but if any man draw back, My soul shall have no pleasure in him'. and now the words of the apostle Paul **Hebrews 11: 6.** 'Without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he that comes to the Lord must believe that He exists and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him'.

Now just one observation to close with. If randomness and risk have not eventually changed an individual's life for the spiritual better, (and it will take time) then that individual can be sure that our Great God has had very little or nothing at all to do with allowing any of it to happen.