

Extra Special

February 10, 2019

Welcome to where we're learning how to take action ... and direction!



Ever feel left out of the action? Relegated to an irrelevant role, a bit part, living life as just an extra, left sitting and watching the more glamorous, more heroic, more athletic, successful, and award-winning?

You're not alone. Well, actually you *are* alone ... but, we all are ... and, *that's* why you're not. We're all alone in this together.

It's easy to think you're just sitting in the audience; when the truth is, you're on the stage.

Not only are you *not irrelevant*, **you're the center of attention.**

Therefore, since 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 **fix our eyes** on **Jesus**, the **author** and **perfecter** of our faith ... – Hebrews 12:1-2a NIV

He's not only the Author; He's the Director too!



A man's heart plans his way, but the Lord directs his steps. – Proverbs 16:9 NKJ

So, get your eyes off *everyone else's* story!

Focus on the Writer/Director and perfecter of *yours*.

Stop staring and start starring!

[The angel of the Lord tells Daniel that] Those who are **wise** will **shine** like the **brightness of the heavens**, and those who **lead many to righteousness**, like the **stars** for ever and ever. – Daniel 12:3 NIV

You are the ultimate reality show! And, **the audience at home is cheering you on.** Jesus said ...

I tell you, there is **rejoicing** in the presence of the angels of God over **one sinner who repents**. – Luke 15:10 NIV

That is an ongoing, day-by-day, role of a lifetime! It's about building character.

So, what kind of *character* are you and the Author creating together?



Remember, He's the Writer/Director, and you're the *star*. So: "Action!" He chooses the challenges that will build our character, and directs the responses we should follow; but, you alone decide the direction and action you'll take.

You know His direction; but, will you act? That's the question.

Every moment of every day our Writer/Director calls "Action!" and, the world calls: "Distraction!" And you have to choose. Can you take direction? Do you even know your role?

[Jesus said to those who *believed* in Him] **Remain** in me, as I **remain** in you. [Do you want Him in your heart? Well, He wants you in His ... His Word] Just as a branch cannot bear fruit on its own unless it **remains** on the vine, so neither can you unless you **remain** in me. I am the vine, you are the branches. Whoever **remains** in me and I in him will bear much fruit, because without me you can do nothing. – John 15:3b-5 NAB

And, if we remain faithful to our Writer/Director, we'll come to understand the infinite power, wealth, and love of our Producer (a.k.a. "Dad").

Whoever acknowledges that Jesus is the Son of God, God **remains** in him and he in God [the Father]. We have come to **know** and to **believe in** [in other words: **act on**] the love God has for us. **God is love**, and whoever **remains** in love **remains** in God and God in him. – 1 John 4:15-16 NAB

Are you in love with God? Are you in God with love?

How do we "remain in love" so we can "remain in God"?



By learning *our* part and *our* role, in His "Scripts".

[Jesus said it himself] If you **remain** in my word, you will **truly** [as opposed to falsely or self-deceivingly] be my disciples, and you will **know** the **truth**, and the **truth** will **set you free.**" – John 8:31-32 NAB

Because, **you'll take on the character He's created just for you.** The role of a lifetime.

There's a shame from feeling worthless that can only be healed by a significance that can only be found in the Father's infinite love and adoration.

And we come to understand that in His Son. And, we come to understand Him in His Word.

And knowing the truth attaches us to the Vine that produces the fruit that frees us from the fear and failings that bind.

And, **the more we remain in it, the more it remains in us.** We must remain true to the One who *is* Truth, so His Spirit can remain in us, convict us, empower us, and transform us.

If we *remain* in it, we'll *believe* in it.

If we *believe* in it, we'll *submit* to it.

If we *submit* to it, we'll *act* on it.

If we *act* on it we'll see the *fruit* of it.

He's the Writer/Director. You're the actor, *so act!*



Wish you had a closer relationship with the Writer/Director?

We'll, don't confuse wishing with wanting.

I *wish* I played the piano. But I don't want it enough to practice, or set goals, or even dabble.



If you *really want* to get closer, you'll have to take action, and direction, and get into His *Scripts* to learn your part and your role.

If you *only wish* to get closer, *you won't*.



Anytime conviction comes calling, and we ignore it, reject it, or wish it away, another layer of callous builds up on our heart.

And, the more we ignore, the more calloused our heart. So, how do we make ourselves *want* to do what we don't *want* to do? Admit it. Confess it. Surrender it. "But, I know I'll just do it again." Then admit it *again*, confess it *again*, and surrender it *again*. **It often requires several takes to really nail our character.** That's normal.



It takes several takes before it takes.

Just don't sit in your sin all alone *and* by yourself, and try to wish it away; because, **an actor not taking action can't be directed at all.**

This isn't a sit-in; and you're not a stand-in; you're the *star that Daniel's angel says you can be!*

You know by how far most believers miss living in the power of God's Kingdom? One foot. The one foot they keep in the world. **We're drawn into the Word to be drawn out of the world.**

And yet, **the truth frees us so that we can engage this very world.**

Perfect love will direct you and drive you to be sincerely, deliberately, vulnerable in regard to the flawed, fearful, fiasco that you know that you are. That we all are.

Alone. Together.



I was on my own on the 20th Century Fox lot, back in my college days, and decided to check out the Love Boat while they were on break. It was so unimpressive up close. So dirty. So fake. So depressing. The world is like that. It's all show.

A giant love-boat cruising the vacuous outer darkness of space.



And everyone gets to choose their role: passenger, crew member, or captain. Want to settle for being an extra – or an extra special character actor?

And your choice determines how you relate to others.

Do you think Jesus acted like an entitled passenger, amiable crew member, or confident, compassionate, courageous Captain? **Be the captain!**

Be the truest thing on this show-man-ship.

Stride the deck. Greet your passengers. Inspire your crew. Strengthen. Encourage. And comfort.

Be the captain! Take action. Be the star.

That's your part. That's your role. That's your created purpose.

Years ago I decided to see the world and myself this way. I was practicing telling myself to be the captain. And, I was at a pharmacy in a grocery store, watching a mother, with a sick baby, being mistreated by a stressed cashier and an angry pharmacist over a prescription mix-up for the baby. Through it all, the mother kept her calm. Even said thank-you, afterwards, which was met with a cold, "Yeah."

I took care of my things and was leaving and all I could think was, "Who's the captain?" "What. What am I supposed to do?" "Who's the captain?" "She's long gone." "Who's the captain?" "It's a *big store*." I found her (with her sick baby) shopping in an aisle. "Uh ... now what?" "Who's the captain?" This is what came out: "Excuse me, I saw what happened back there, and I just wanted to tell you how proud I am of you." She just started crying. *Sobbing!* Said something about sick baby and failure as a mom. Then I was crying. Said something about God's strength and praying for her. And I left.

And all the way to my car I'm thinking: "Who's the captain?" "*I'm* the captain! "Who's the captain?" "*I'm* the captain! And, I care for my passengers, and encourage my crew!"

Be the captain! Wear the uniform of compassion, kindness, humility, and love.

Encourage. Strengthen. Comfort.

There are no extras on this crew. So, all hands on deck; and ... "Action!"