

News Story Summary

On November 2, Nik Wallenda, of the famous Flying Wallenda family, once again broke world records—this time in two categories: Highest Incline Tightrope Walk and Highest Blindfolded Tightrope Walk. The 35-year-old, 7th generation Wallenda daredevil walked 500 feet above the ground between two skyscrapers in Chicago (the Windy City!), crossing the span in just 6 minutes and 52 seconds. Winds were gusting up to 25 mph. Then, after adding a blindfold, he walked 94 feet between two more towering buildings in a mere 1 minute and 17 seconds! Wallenda did both walks without a harness or a safety net.

These dangerous and hair-raising feats are all in a day's work for Nik Wallenda. He has previously walked a tightrope over Niagara Falls and last year he became the first person to successfully walk a wire across the Grand Canyon.

(For more on this story, search the Internet using the term "Wallenda Chicago walk.")

Focus Attention

Begin with this question: *What is your biggest fear?* Record responses.

Confirm with group members that most all of us have fears. Ask: *How can we take a fear and change it into a celebration?*

Share information about Nik Wallenda's most recent tightrope walk. Include facts about the height, length, wind conditions, breaking the world records, and so forth, as well as insights about his family background and the training he goes through in preparation.

Ask: *Why does he do these things? Why do you think he refused to use a harness or safety net? Did you watch this event on TV? Why or why not?*

Emphasis that, for the Wallenda family, Nik's attempt and completion of these two death-defying walks turned any fears they may have experienced into a time of celebration.

Make the connection between today's study in Hebrews 12 by saying: *Approaching God under the old covenant was a time of dread and fear. Today's passage contrasts the old covenant with the new covenant when believers can approach God with joy and live in community with one another.*

Challenge

Recall the Wallenda story you shared earlier. Remind learners that most of the people who gathered in Chicago or watched these events on television did so with a measure of fear for Nik's safety.

Comment: If you were watching, you probably breathed a sigh of relief when he completed the walks and was safe! The celebration did not begin until the task was complete. That coincides with the truth of today's passage as well.

Call on a group member to read aloud the summary statement for today's study (p. 121 of the Personal Study Guide): *Believers can have joyful fellowship with one another and with God because of the blood of Jesus Christ.*

Say: Because of the sacrifice on the cross, our fears have turned to celebration.

Ask group members to silently consider their personal response to this question: *How do I most often relate to God—out of fear or in celebration? Why?*

Encourage believers to examine their hearts and evaluate their relationship with God. Remind them how acknowledging the sacrifice of Jesus Christ allows believers to approach Him joyfully, knowing we are accepted.

Close in prayer.