

FUSION Devo: February 2nd, 2009

Title: Move to Encounter

Text: Matthew 14:29-31 (NIV)

29"Come," he said. Then Peter got down out of the boat, walked on the water and came toward Jesus. **30**But when he saw the wind, he was afraid and, beginning to sink, cried out, "Lord, save me!" **31**Immediately Jesus reached out his hand and caught him. "You of little faith," he said, "why did you doubt?"

Growing up in Charlotte, North Carolina, there were two things that seemed to be a constant in that culture. One was NASCAR racing and the other was professional wrestling. You know the type of wrestling I'm talking about. The pile-driving, body-slammings, jumping off the top-rope wrestling that would drive even church-attending, grey haired grandmothers to jump out of their seats and yell for their favorite "Wrasler".

It was always fun to get together with some of my buddies and watch the Saturday morning wrestling shows. We'd scream at the television, jump around the room and even from time to time try some of the wrestling moves on each other. It was good fun, unless you were the guy who had the Figure-Four Leg Lock placed on you. OUCH!!! Anyway, one thing was certain. My gang of wrasling fools had a deep appreciation for the team of wrestlers known as the "The Four Horsemen!" Man, we loved these guys. They were crazy, nasty, no holds barred wrecking machines. And their leader was the one and only "Nature Boy" Ric Flair. His blonde hair would flow in the breeze as he strutted around the ring in his flashy robe. Then he would let out this amazing "WOOOOOOOO!" Ric Flair even dubbed himself as the "Limousine rid'in, jet fly'in, kiss steal'in, wheel'in, deal'in, son of a gun!" We were fascinated with this guy. What do I mean by "were"? I still am. Haha.

Anyway, a few years ago when I served a church on the south side of Charlotte, I used to workout at a place named "Ric Flair's Gold's Gym". Yep, it was a gym owned by the Nature Boy himself. And actually every once in a while Ric Flair would enter the gym, hang out, work out and talk to people. I bet Mr. Flair probably thought I was some freaky stalker, because I would just stare at him while I ran on the treadmill. Well, one day I finally worked up the courage to walk over and say something to him. I'm not real sure why I was so afraid to make my move. Maybe I thought he'd slap the figure-four leg lock on me. WOW! How cool would that be? Anyway, I approached Ric as he stood by himself beside a bench and simply said, "Excuse me Mr. Flair. My name is Steve and I've always been a huge fan." He reached back and slapped me to the ground. Haha. Just kidding. He didn't slap me. He just shook by hand and said, "Well, Steve. I really appreciate that." The next thing I know, we had talked for about 30 minutes. We spoke about wrestling, the gym and after he asked what I did for a living, it opened up a chance to talk about God. It was a very cool experience. It was actually the last time I saw him in the gym. Maybe I scared him. Haha.

When I look back on that encounter with one of my childhood heroes, I always think about what if I had not made my move, stepped out of my comfort zone and approached him. I would have never experienced the one-on-one time I had with him. For 30-minutes I had the undivided attention of the 13-time World's Heavyweight Champion. All by simply moving.

Well guys, as cool as I think Ric Flair is, there is one who shines brighter, stands taller and is infinitely more famous. This person is the creator of the heavens and the earth. This person holds the power of time in their hands. This person breathed life into every living creature, including you and me. This person is none other than "God!" And if we will open our minds, hearts and souls, we will realize that God is right there in front of us, waiting for us to make our move and approach. But, are we just going to stare at him, or ignore him? Are we going to talk ourselves into moving next time? Sure, we can view this as a very scary thing. I'm mean, God is God. But when we take that step and move closer to God, we will get much more than the 30-minutes of attention I received from Ric Flair. We will receive the unconditional love and support and guidance of the One who knows everything about us. God is there waiting on us and loves us anyway. Will you make the move? Don't look back and wish you had. Do it now, and experience a blessing like no other.

Something to Think About:

- Have you ever had the chance to approach someone considered famous? If so, who?
- Did you make that move?

- What was the experience like?
- How can moving towards an encounter with God be better than that?
- What are your expectations when you move to encounter God?
- In the scripture for this devotional, what type of courage did Peter show to make his move? Discuss the scripture.
- Maybe you've already made that move. How can the example of your life help others make that move?
- Silently identify 2 people who you feel you can help move toward an encounter with God. Pray that God gives you the strength, words and opportunity to do that. And most importantly, when that opportunity arises, move.

A Few Minutes with God:

God, thank you so much for being so approachable. Thank you so much for willingness to welcome all of us into your presence, just the way we are. No matter what we have done or said, your unconditional love welcomes us in and then desires to shape us into the person you dream of us to be. God, if there is someone that needs my assistance to move toward you, help me to find the courage and understand that much like you called Peter to step out of the boat, you also call us to move towards you. Thank you. Amen.