

Can you guarantee the safety of my child?

This is one of the most frequently asked questions, not so much by students, but by parents. We understand. We are parents too. We have 3 children. We, as parents, think about issues that haven't even been considered by our children. I think back on some things I did when I was 14 or 15. My best friend and I were nearly killed in a sledding accident. (Duh... we didn't think about the issue of having to stop at the bottom of the hill.) Our security was shaken on September 11, 2001. We learned in that moment that no place in our world is safe. We have developed what some psychologists call "risk-lock." We are afraid to the point that this fear causes us to lose touch with reality.

1. Reality is... there is no safe place! Reality is, we cannot protect our children or ourselves from all harm. Reality is, everyday we take risks. Thousands of people each year receive emergency room care from falling out of bed, closing the blinds, and slipping in the shower.
2. We have noticed that a human attitude is "whatever I am familiar with is safe, and whatever I am not familiar with is therefore dangerous." However, the opposite of this may be true. Sometimes in familiar situations we let our guard down and take unnecessary risks. Where do most auto accidents happen? Close to home.
3. We have also noticed that in this "risk-locked" attitude, some use unfair standards for judging "what is safe, or dangerous." For example, some will surf the internet and find all news (which is almost always bad news) about the place where they or their children will be serving. From this "research," it is concluded that this place is unsafe, therefore, they should not proceed or they should not allow their children to proceed. A concerned parent wrote one year asking about this safety issue. They were not going allow their college student to go to the Philippines, but had no problem with their child working with drug addicts and street people in inner city New Orleans.
4. Some Christians have an unbiblical understanding of safety as it relates to discipleship and obedience to the Great Commission. Jesus said, if we follow Him, we will be persecuted and sometimes killed. One student told us that much pressure was put on her by her home church "not to go to the Philippines, because God would never call us to a dangerous place." That may be an American value of self-preservation, but I cannot find that in my Bible.
5. We sometimes forget that people take risks everyday for what they believe in. Firemen, policemen, Special Forces, news reporters. We hear of stories daily of people giving their lives in the line of duty. Dozens of reporters have been killed over the last few years. They have given their lives to report mainly "bad news." How much more should we be willing to give our all to spread the "Good News?"
6. I would challenge the Christian parents to remember the commitment you made when you dedicated your child to the Lord many years ago. They really don't belong to us. They are His. We really cannot keep them safe. They are safe in Him. Let us, as parents, turn our fears and worries into prayers and let our children follow the Lord, so that they can be obedient to the Great Commission and bring glory to God by bringing the gospel to the Nations.

Having said all of that, we want to assure you (parents) that we will love your students and take care of them to the best of our ability. The students will be given a very thorough orientation and will be encouraged to use common sense in their dealings with people and in their travel. We will have contingency plans in place in the event of an emergency. Our contact information is on our website. If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to contact us.

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