

As a mother, and even more so as a Christian, there is nothing more gratifying than to hear my grown son tell me that when others might lay it all down and walk away, he never saw me give up because of my great faith, and that he wished he could have the same type of faith. Those words were a sweet sound to my ears, and my son, I was about your age when I was still very lost. It is my prayer that you will find the answers you need and will find that same faith you have witnessed in me.

But I digress, he has not been privy to my periods of doubt, when I cried my heart out and asked God to give me strength and courage. He hasn't witnessed the times when I was in my deepest valleys, having full-blown pity parties, asking God, "Why me?" I'm thankful for that. It's hard to come back from those ugly tantrums with the same respect for me that he sweetly expressed. Thankfully, God sees it all, and still wipes my tears and my runny nose. He still kisses my forehead and hugs me gently, then tells me to pull my boots up and get back out there. He is so good.

I would never compare myself to the patriarchs from the Old Testament, because they were such great people in the pages of history. But they were also people, just like me, who also had great faith. Found in the New Testament, Hebrews, chapter 11, you will find these great men (and women), who 'by faith', overcame great doubt and fear and did what God told them to do. Just a few examples include Noah, who built a huge ship with specific instructions from God. He was to prepare for a deluge of rain with such force that mankind would be wiped from the face of the earth. That is an incredible amount of faith, given the fact that it had never rained on the earth before, ever.

By faith, Abraham was told by God to leave his home, where he had been his entire life, and journey to a land that was virtually unknown. He gathered his entire family and all of their belongings to set out on a journey to 'only God knew where', simply because he believed and trusted in God and his promises. That same Abraham, who was given a promised son in his old age, by faith offered up his own son at God's instruction. His faith was so strong that he knew God was able to raise Isaac from the grave. As he was preparing to lower the knife, God told Abraham not to go through with it because of his great faith.

I cannot leave out one of the women who showed great faith. A prostitute (yes, prostitute) named Rahab, by faith helped hide and protect the spies for the Israelites, and was spared her life because of her actions. God does care about what we do and the choices we make, good and bad, but his main concern is what he sees in our hearts. When the prophet Samuel was instructed to search for the next king, everyone assumed that one of David's older brothers would best fit the part because they were handsome or stronger than the others. Not much has changed, has it? But God looks on our hearts and does not look at our outward appearance.

Hebrews 11:1

Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen.

Hebrews 11:39

*And all these *(the heroes of the faith), did not receive what was promised, since God had provided something better for us, that apart from us they should not be made perfect.*

*Added by me for clarification

When I read these two verses, the 'assurance of hope' as mentioned above can be a hard thing to understand. When we read that they 'did not receive what was promised', can make that kind of hope and faith so very difficult. But then you see that "God has provided something better for us", and it all seems to make sense.

This life is temporary my friends. These earthly bodies are wearing out, and the time we spend living is but a vapor that appears and disappears in a moment. I share this only to say that life is so hard, but it is nearly unbearable if you don't have faith. What are we doing all of this for, if not preparing for what is eternal? Yes, I get that many don't believe in eternity, or life after death. If that's the case, what is your purpose? Personally, I choose to believe that I am not here simply to take in oxygen.

In my gut, I know there is a God-given hole, meant only to be filled by him, because he is our Creator. Why do you feel guilty when you've done something wrong? Because it is instilled in you by God. Why do you love? Because God loved you first, and placed that emotion in your heart. Why do you stand in awe when you see a beautiful sunrise or sunset? Or the ocean, or the mountains? Because they are awesomely placed there for your pleasure, by God.

By faith, I try to share my heart in this blog, hoping just one person may read it and dig deeper. I pray that if you're reading it now, you will think twice before doing something you know you'll regret. My life is a living testimony to what faith in God can do. The first half of my life was completely shattered. Since I have walked with God, I'd love to say that everything was perfect. But it wasn't and isn't. The difference now, is I know I don't have to walk through this life alone. By faith, I know this world is not my home, and I have the hope that as promised, I will live in Heaven where there are no more tears, no more pain, no more sickness. One day I will see my God face to face, and I will live with him forever. By faith, I pray you will find this same hope.

Blessings,

Lisa Jo

