

Astounding Heroes of the Faith: Could You Be the Next One?

When you think of what faith means and who demonstrated great faith, you probably think of biblical heroes such as Abraham, Moses, David or Paul. The Faith Hall of Fame in Hebrews 11 lists many of them, describing the exploits they accomplished “by faith.”

As much as you and I might like to be a faith hero, sometimes our faith gets shaken. Your infertility isn’t miraculously healed as it was for Abraham and Sarah. Your child isn’t rescued from death as Isaac was. The walls of business struggles, a troubled marriage, physical or mental illness or lack of money aren’t falling down as those of Jericho did. You aren’t ruling over any kingdom as David did, or putting the armies of social injustice or evil institutions to flight. And when your messed-up life doesn’t seem to be getting any better, you feel like anything but a faith hero.

Perhaps you hear messages from others something like, “If you only had enough faith you wouldn’t still be sick.” Or, “Just speak in faith what you need, and the money and resources will come to you.”

Faith is not some tight-fisted grasping for what you want or need in some sort of “mind over matter.” Nor is it an ethereal emotion some people feel easily and others can’t conjure up. Faith is something much deeper. It’s a matter of character, and it can be developed even in the worst of times.

The Faith Hall of Fame provides a much more varied picture than most of us have been led to believe. Here’s what it takes to be a faith hero.

More Faith Heroes

After Enoch, Noah, Abraham and Moses, the list of faith heroes in Hebrews 11 goes on:

And what more shall I say? For time would fail me to tell of Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephthah, of David and Samuel and the prophets, who through faith subdued kingdoms, administered justice, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong, became valiant in fighting, and turned the armies of foreign enemies to flight. Women received their dead raised to life again. Others were tortured and did not accept deliverance, so that they might obtain a better resurrection (Heb. 11:32-35).

Sounds pretty good, doesn't it? Conquering, powerful, strong, alive. Sounds like the kind of faith heroes you and I would want to be.

But the passage doesn't stop there.

Women received their dead raised to life again. Others were tortured and did not accept deliverance, so that they might obtain a better resurrection. Still others had trials of mocking and scourging, and even chains and imprisonment. They were stoned, they were sawn in two, were tempted, were slain with the sword. They wandered around in sheepskins and goatskins, while destitute, afflicted and tormented. The world was not worthy of them. They wandered in deserts and mountains, in dens and caves of the earth (Heb. 11:35-38).

Faith heroes put in prison, stoned, destitute, killed in terrible ways? Really?

It's the same faith. Some conquered, some were chained in prison. Same faith. Some escaped, some were put in prison. Same faith. Some were strong, some were destitute. Same faith.

Some lived, some died. Same faith.

So quit making your bank account, your physical health, or your social standing a measure of your faith!

What Real Faith Is

God is happy when His children are healthy and prosperous, but He is not the only player in this game. We still live in a messed-up world. His kingdom is here in reality, but the kingdom of darkness has not yet been eliminated. We still live in the crossfire between the kingdom of God and that of the enemy.

The only way much of our lives makes sense is to keep the end in mind. And Hebrews 11 concludes, "These all have obtained a good report through faith, but they did not receive the promise. For God provided something better for us, so that with us they would be made perfect" (Heb. 11:39-40).

Real faith means choosing to trust in God even when circumstances don't turn out how we would wish.

Real faith means trusting God with your family, your marriage, your health, your future even if it's hard.

Real faith means believing in the end of the story. And the end of the story is, Jesus wins!

Real faith means slogging through the mud one step at a time and taking Jesus with you.

Real faith means taking your stand on God's side and refusing to let any outward circumstances move you.

Real faith means making all you are and have available for God to use, knowing He makes the best investment.

Real faith means remaining focused on eternity whether your personal circumstances now are good or bad, healthy or sick,

rich or poor.

Real faith means keeping your eyes fixed on Jesus, the One who faith is all about.

The Focus of Faith

Faith is not some nebulous mental gymnastics. Faith has a focus, a point of reference.

Therefore, since we are encompassed with such a great cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight and the sin that so easily entangles us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us. Let us look to Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God (Heb. 12:1-2).

Our lives are an absurd joke unless we view them in light of eternity. As Jesus did, we will only make it as we keep looking for the joy set before us.

Keeping your eyes—your faith—fixed on Jesus will make you a faith hero regardless of what happens during the remainder of your life here.

Remember the faith heroes of Hebrews 11. Some looked “healthy, wealthy and wise” on the outside; some looked destitute, weak and even dead. Same faith!

Look beyond your circumstances. Keep your focus on eternity, on Jesus, and you will be a faith hero!

Your Turn: Is your focus too much on your circumstances? What would it look like for you to reframe your circumstances in light of eternity? Leave a comment below.

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