

Don't Neglect Your Most Precious Possession

How do we select an adjective to describe faith?

New Testament writers chose words such as "great," "common," "genuine" and "most holy." At least no one described faith as "awesome."

The apostle Peter used a word that is hard to surpass: "I am writing to you who share the same precious faith we have. This faith was given to you because of the justice and fairness of Jesus Christ, our God and Savior" (2 Pet. 1:1b, NLT).

I don't think I've ever thought of my faith as "precious," but when I see it in Scripture, I realize the word is well-chosen.

I reserved the word "precious" for children. I remember holding my grandson, born two months early. I cradled him in my palm and thought about the miracle of birth.

I also recall the honor of baptizing many children throughout my ministry. I talked with each child before the dunking, splashing and celebrating. The best word to describe baptizing children is "precious."

Jesus spoke to us often about children. "Let the children come to me. Don't stop them! For the Kingdom of Heaven belongs to those who are like these children" (Matt. 19:14). "I tell you the truth, anyone who doesn't receive the Kingdom of God like a child will never enter it" (Mark 10:15). Childlike faith is precious. A child with a strong belief in God requires no "evidence of things not seen" (Heb. 11:1b, MEV).

I've seen common faith; it doesn't seem precious. Instead, it seems conditional, blown about by rumors and feelings. Precious faith flows with a purity untouched by painful

experiences and curveballs of doubt.

The precious faith Peter writes about is a gift for all of us to receive. Too many of us toss this great gift aside. Faith builds confidence in our calling, not because we have self-confidence, but because we have confidence in God. People who are full of precious faith also tend to be full of joy and walk in victory. Consider the words of the writer of Hebrews:

“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” (Heb. 11:32-34).

We may not have needed the kind of faith necessary to stop the mouths of lions, but we all have challenges that demand strong faith. God wants us to live with the knowledge that we “can do all things through Christ who strengthens [us]” (Phil. 4:13, NKJV).

Precious faith helps boost our courage and reminds us of our power and call to spread the gospel. We need to let go of our own thoughts and, through faith, seek the mind of Christ.

In Peter’s second letter, he couples “precious faith” with the promises of God: “And because of his glory and excellence, he has given us great and precious promises. These are the promises that enable you to share his divine nature and escape the world’s corruption caused by human desires” (2 Pet. 1:4, NLT).

I don’t think Peter’s use of the word “precious” is accidental here. He wants us to see that precious promises should enlarge our faith.

Precious promises produce precious faith. Our human desires rarely produce anything we could call eternally precious. The promises of God enable us to “share his divine nature” and reduce our belief that the world has anything to offer.

“For God has said, ‘I will never fail you. I will never abandon you’” (Heb. 13:5b).

God’s promises become precious when we understand His message is personal. It speaks to us today and applies to every problem or situation.

“I will never fail you” is a promise only God can make. Man can say it with all his heart, but we know man will fail.

The most powerful aspect of the word “precious” is that it is most special when shared. As we share the gospel, we share our precious faith. We tell stories of how God was there for us in our time of need. We speak about our personal memorial stones and victories in battle.

Our Lord does not abandon us. His Word reminds us He fights for us: “The Lord will go before you, and the God of Israel will be your rear guard” (Isa. 52:12b, MEV).

Our faith is built on nothing less. {eoa}

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