

Unique Possibilities of Faith

Who through faith conquered kingdoms, administered justice ... quenched the fury of the flames ... whose weakness was turned to strength. ... Women received back their dead, raised to life again. **—Hebrews 11:33-35**

Hebrews 11 gives us three unique possibilities of what true faith looks like:

1. True faith is always original. It sets its own pace and loves to treat existing molds with contempt. It mocks precedents and transcends our own projections. The same God who loves each person as though there were no one else to love also challenges each person as if there were no one else who could succeed. True faith challenges us to be unique and to set our own pace.

2. True faith is unlimited in its potential. Faith refuses to accept the “inevitable”; it marches to a different beat of the drum than what the masses hear. To grasp the nature of true faith is to understand its opposition to nature and the way we naturally think. In the natural, we say, “It cannot be done.” But faith says, “It can.” Faith builds its domain with the stone that the “builders rejected” (Matt. 21:42). Faith is not threatened by the solitude of seeing what others are blind to.

3. True faith is unrewarded obedience. Faith is obedient to the God who gave it. This obedience is not contingent upon results or calculated success. It is not at work because it “works”; it is at work because its motivation is pleasing God. Faith is not motivated to do what it does because it anticipates a certain payment in this life in return; it just does it.

What emerges as a common thread in the events described in Hebrews 11:33-35 is that they were unprecedented. When Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego were bound and cast into the

fiery furnace, there was no precedent that they would be seen walking loose with the Fourth Man. But their faith “quenched the violence of fire” (v. 34, KJV). This is the essence of true faith.

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