

When You Have Trouble Believing God's Promises, This Hebrews 11:1 Secret Can Help

All of Christmas seems to be one big promise wrapped up in a beautiful bow. It's a season that carries the promise of hope—God cares. It's a season that carries the promise of grace—we have a Savior. It's a season that promises peace—Jesus came as the Prince of Peace. It's a season that carries the promise of joy and gladness—Jesus brings good news of great joy! The question is, how do we claim these promises and trust that they are relevant for today?

Over the next few weeks, I'll be taking a look at the great promises wrapped up in the Christmas story and considering how we can internalize them for ourselves.

Earlier this week, I was reading and meditating on the story of Zechariah in the temple (Luke 1:5-25, 57-66). He and his wife Elizabeth had been praying for a child—for years. Infertility is one of the saddest plights couples face. It leaves them discouraged and feeling like God has not heard their prayers.

You remember the story. One day while Zechariah is in the temple, an angel appears to him and proclaims that Zechariah's prayers have been heard—his wife Elizabeth will have a baby! The angel promises that the baby will be a boy and that he will be a delight and joy to both Zechariah and Elizabeth.

Zechariah, however, is not so sure he can trust the message of the angel. He asks, "How can I be sure of this?" (Luke 1:18b, NIV). Such a profound and human question! It's the question you and I ask all the time:

“God, how can I be sure you’ll provide for my finances?”

“God, how can I be sure you have declared me forgiven and free?”

“God, how can I be sure I am chosen, holy and dearly loved?”

Here’s something to consider: Faith fills the gap to certainty.

God calls us to have faith to believe what He’s promised, even when we don’t see the promised thing. “Now faith is confidence in what we hope for and assurance about what we do not see” (Heb. 11:1).

If you’re having trouble this Christmas believing God’s promises to you, may I suggest these three faith-boosters?

Write out your prayer requests and then record the answers. In my own life, this has been a huge faith-booster. Way back in my college years, I began to keep track of my prayer requests. Then I waited with anticipation. As God answered, I recorded the answers. On days when doubt clouded my faith, I would go back to the tangible answers I had seen from God; though I couldn’t see God in that moment, I believed He was present and answering the cries of my heart. This holiday season, try writing out your prayer requests. Ask the Holy Spirit to strengthen your heart as you wait. Then anytime God answers, write down the answer and the date. This will become a faith journal you can look back on when doubt fills your mind.

Memorize a few promises during this Advent season. Steve and I both make it a continued habit in our lives to memorize Scripture, because doubt won’t always hit you when you have your Bible handy. Do yourself a favor and fill your mind with Scripture. Memorizing is the intentional choice to detox your mind from doubt and fear. Satan will always try to fill our minds with fear, doubt and unbelief. But you have a weapon—the sword of the Lord—Scripture! Take a few quiet moments during

this holiday season and give yourself the gift of God's promises. Dare to memorize a few.

Praise God that every promise God has given, He has fulfilled. Praise expands our faith capacity. As you praise God intentionally, your faith will grow. You can't praise God and not be changed. Fill your home with faith-filled, Christmas worship music this Advent season and dare to believe that what God has promised, He will do.

Lord Jesus, fill my heart with renewed faith this Christmas. Strengthen me to believe that all You have promised You will do.

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