

You Can Start 2010 With Fresh Faith

*The late Oral Roberts used to say, "Expect a miracle."
That's good advice as we enter this new season.*

When Pentecostal healing evangelist Oral Roberts died a few weeks ago I was shocked that some Christians pounced on his legacy so quickly. They didn't even wait a few days for friends and family members to mourn. While Billy Graham—a true Christian gentleman—was offering kind remarks about Roberts, the heresy hunters were denouncing him as a charlatan.

Besides being incredibly rude, these harsh judgments were unfair. While I am sure Roberts made plenty of mistakes in his six decades of ministry, I'm grateful that he dared to believe God for the impossible. He pioneered the use of television to reach millions for Christ in the 1960s. He built a successful Christian university. And, in spite of the naysayers, he challenged a doubting church to believe in divine healing.

"As you enter 2010, I encourage you to write down every promise God has given you from Scripture."

Roberts was not a sophisticated guy. Men of faith rarely are. He was born in poverty, and his early years in ministry were not glamorous. One Pentecostal Holiness preacher who was alive in the 1930s says he remembers when Oral and Evelyn Roberts moved from Georgia to Oklahoma. They tied everything they owned to the back of a car, and modeled the kind of pioneering faith that requires sacrifice and humility.

I found it intriguing that Roberts died just as we were about to enter a new decade. His death on Dec. 15 seemed to represent the passing of an era. The pioneers of the modern charismatic movement are leaving us. And it causes me to wonder, with some concern, whether we are armed with the kind of faith needed to carry on.

I never identified myself as part of the faith movement, although I listened to my share of messages by Kenneth Hagin Sr. and Norvel Hayes when I was in my 20s. I was turned off when some faith teachers began to focus so much on financial prosperity that they became materialistic and manipulative when taking offerings. I didn't buy the so-called "name it and claim it" philosophy because I don't believe I should reduce my relationship with God to a formula.

I was also grieved when proponents of the faith message started suggesting that we can't admit when we're sick or when we're having a bad day. That is not faith; that's denial.

What I want in my life, and what I am sure you crave as well, is genuine faith. Paul told Timothy: "The goal of our instruction is love from a pure heart and a good conscience and a sincere faith" (1 Tim. 1:5, NASB).

That word "sincere" is translated "unfeigned" in the King James Version. It means real, pure and undisguised. It's not pretend. And it's not mixed with carnality.

Some of what we called faith in the past was mixed with greed and selfishness. One prosperity preacher encourages his followers to wear a T-shirt that says: "I WANT MY STUFF." That immature attitude is a poor excuse for biblical faith. Real faith, the genuine variety, is focused on the kingdom of God, not ourselves. It grows steadily inside us as we hear the promises of God's Word and then build our lives on spiritual reality.

I started studying the life of Abraham when 2010 began. I've been reading and rereading passages in Genesis, Romans, Hebrews and Galatians that describe the journey of the man we call "the father of our faith." Abraham proved to us that if we want to please God we must believe Him—and we must patiently trust God's timetable instead of insisting on ours.

As you enter 2010, I encourage you to write down every promise God has given you from Scripture. You may be praying for a better job, an open door for ministry or a spiritual turnaround in your church. Or you may be asking God to restore a broken relationship or bring a

prodigal child back
to Him. Or maybe you are one of the thousands of Christians
who are praying and
fasting this month for a spiritual awakening in our nation.
That will require
faith!

Whatever challenge you face, grab hold of God's specific
word to you. Read it, meditate on it and declare it. And when
the ravenous
birds of doubt come to steal the promise, stand your ground
and shoo them away.
Remember that with God, nothing is impossible.

Oral Roberts used to tell his listeners: "Expect a
miracle." I believe that is sound advice for us today. Let a
holy expectation
arise in your heart. God will supply you with fresh faith to
face every
challenge in this new year.

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out our scrapbook of Oral Roberts [here](#).