

Faith like a Child

Dan Nelson - pastor

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It seems that we are too sophisticated sometimes. Global interconnectivity through our various electronic leashes keeps us dialed in on everything that is going on around the world. Whether it is international news, or simply a life event of close friends or family, our media keeps us in the loop. We live in the information age where knowledge of the world around us is at an all time high. Ironically, with all of our advancements and achievements, there does not seem to be any correlation to increased wisdom. The word itself might cause some to scratch their head in wonder if there is any room for "wisdom" in our modern era.

Faith is another one of those terms loaded full with meaning. More than a creed, a doctrine, a blind trust, or a crutch, properly applied faith is life transforming. The Scripture says that without faith it is impossible to please God. (Hebrews 11) But we don't manufacture faith – it is a gift. The question is whether one will use what has been given for its proper purpose.

Our lives are full of faith – most of it non-spiritual, and often misdirected. Every time one walks into a building, faith is applied. There is a trust that is placed in, often unknown, individuals concerning workmanship and processes that were utilized to ensure structural integrity. By entering a home or shop, I am placing faith in people that they built a solid structure. If one has good reason to believe this, it may be considered "intelligent faith." If there are obvious signs of weakness or a history of safety issues, this trust may be "unreasonable." Similarly, we place various levels of faith in government, teachers, physicians, first responders, employers, and many others throughout our lives.

The call of Christ is fascinating to me. Jesus not only invites us to an intelligent faith in God, and to the salvation that flows by His grace through properly applied faith, He deepens the assignment by exhorting the faith of a child.

Children are amazing, but far from perfect. They are cute, yet selfish. Kids know how to have fun, but also have skills in testing boundaries. They can be stubborn, and demanding, but children usually don't carry the baggage of days gone by from hurts they are unwilling to forgive. Most importantly, children know what it means to "believe." Having been a child, you used to be an expert in this too. The question is that with all of your accumulation of knowledge

and information, have you lost the simple wisdom – that there is power and joy in unconfused belief. It is interesting that Jesus says the path to return to this place is one of humility. (Matthew 18) Pride keeps us stuck.

We don't need to become "childish" to have faith that is "child-like." Although I continue to love the twinkling lights at Christmas, and the awe of walking down Main Street at Disneyland, and a game of tag can still make friends faster than talking about politics, Jesus' message goes far beyond all of this. It cuts through the mystique of religion, and the vanity of intelligence; Jesus calls us to "believe." When all of our sophistication fails to bring meaning and purpose to life, nor satisfies the thirst of the soul, the profound wisdom of Christ will remain – we will never regret placing unwavering faith in Jesus.

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Dan Nelson is a frequent contributor to the Ojai Valley News and currently serves the Ojai Valley Ministerial Association and community as editor of the Religion Column. Permission is freely granted to reprint the article in its entirety. Dan Nelson is pastor of Calvary Chapel Christian Church of the Ojai Valley.

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