

Spiritually Speaking...with James Washington Signs of Faith

Written by James Washington
Wednesday, 09 January 2013 00:00



I've been told that faith is a tricky thing to deal with. It is constantly under attack and if you're not careful, you'll lose faith, if but for nothing more than weariness due to constant grief. Life has a way of making you believe some things are just not worth the trouble. At some point each and every one of us just wants to quit.

Quit your job. End a relationship. Just stay away from those situations and people that remind you of negativity and tough times. But in the case of faith, you're always supposed to have a way through. I just believe that way through is work. By work I mean work in the name of the Lord. Use your God given gifts. It helps. How often have you been able to get yourself out of the doldrums because you decided to help someone else with their issues? How often have you been very thankful for what you have because you've seen firsthand what others don't have? God does have a way of showing you, your stuff could be really worse. Like I said, faith can be a tricky thing.

When it does kick in that now is the time, now is the test, then, comes the temptation that challenges your faith. There are no signs on life's highway that flash "faith test ahead." More often than not, we recognize faith's stop sign after we've already run through it. Maybe we should feel a little better at that point because we did at least practice our faith some weeks or months ago, or maybe just a few minutes ago. But if we're honest with ourselves, it doesn't help when you know you should have handled a particular situation or person better than you did. I know I've botched many an opportunity to practice what I profess to preach. Talk the talk and then walk the walk. This is tricky stuff. At the end of any given day will, a spiritual critique will show dozens of blown chances to witness, lead by example, help and serve. At the end of any given day, I have run faith's stop sign again and again. I am one man who appreciates that our God is a God of another chance. And you?

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Thankfully you, too, know you'll get another crack at it because you're still alive and your opportunities to serve are multiplied on a daily basis. It's called life. If you missed it this morning, another opportunity will come around this afternoon. The faith struggle is remedied by what you do as a result of knowing you can always do better. Real faith mandates a change in you. You just can't do the same thing the same way with the same people once you've accepted Christ. Even though you might make the same mistakes, you will realize and accept them as just that, mistakes. Now what? "So watch yourself. If your brother sins, rebuke him and if he repents, forgive him. If he sins against you seven times in a day and seven times comes back to you and says, 'I repent.' Forgive him. Luke 17:3-4. Further in this same passage Jesus proclaims ..." So you also, when you have done all that you were ordered to do (by God) say, 'We are worthless slaves; we have done only what we ought to have done.'" The fact that this comes on the heels of the apostles asking Christ to increase their faith is eye opening. You know how incredibly hard it is to forgive those who have repeatedly come against you? But in doing so our faith is increased. Again it's all about knowing the rules. We just need to know when they've been broken, when we break them and what to do when others do likewise. Our duty is to continue to work. We walk by faith and not by sight. Our effort is not to break the rules intentionally. The deed is the thing. Act on faith. Forgive and serve. Pretty soon our experiences teach us to recognize the faith signs. The more you do the more you see. The more you see the more you stop, pause look both ways and proceed with caution. You see, it's not so tricky. You just need to keep your eyes on the road and your hands on the wheel. Stop only to help someone else. It's the work stupid. As a result, God will take care of what you need to get through your stuff.

May God bless and keep you always.

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