

In search of...



Truth & Right

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Faith Renewed by Grace

Why Does Our Faith Need to Be Renewed?

In Genesis 12, God calls Abram from Ur of the Chaldees in Mesopotamia and provides a covenant of great promise to him, but just three chapters later (Gen. 15), we see God renewing his covenant and his promises to him. Thus, he serves as one of many, many examples of one whose faith needed renewing, since we find God saying at the very beginning of the chapter, "Fear

not, Abram: I am thy shield, and thy exceeding great reward" (Gen. 15:1). In other words, since fear is the opposite of faith, evidently Abram needed his faith renewed.

The apostle Paul points out the need for faith being renewed in Galatians 6:1: "Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such a one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted." Since Christianity demands giving God our heart,

soul, mind and strength (Luke 10:27), then from time to time, our faith needs renewing. We are prone to falter along the way. Thus, as we consider the overall theme of "Renewing our Faith," let us seek to answer the question, "Why does our faith need to be renewed?"

Our faith needs to be renewed because of the continual need for the grace of God. Paul denotes the conditional nature of grace when he declared, "Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost; Which He shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Savior; That being justified by His grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life" (Titus 3:5-7). In such, he connects our salvation by "the washing of regeneration" with our justification by grace. Naturally, "the washing of regeneration" is an allusion to our faithful response of obedience to God by submitting to the act of baptism. While God supplies grace void of any merit on our part (Eph. 2:8-9), "the washing of regeneration" is a condition of our redemption. Again, Paul clearly gave both the divine offer for salvation ("For by

grace are ye saved ..."), as well as the human responsive condition for acceptance ("... through faith ..."), which he later links with the fact that we were "cleansed by the washing of water with the word" (Eph. 5:26). While scholars almost universally acknowledge the washing to be an allusion to baptism, we can clearly see the condition of our reception of His grace includes baptism.

However, add to this the fact that certain conditions exist for one to continue in His grace. Far too many believe that once God demonstrated grace in their lives, God would never allow them to fall away (perseverance of the saints). Yet, the Bible is clear that a child of God can fall from grace (Gal. 5:4). It is possible to deny our Lord who bought us to the point of destruction (2 Pet. 2:1). If one cannot fall from grace, then why did Paul and Barnabas urge their brethren to "continue in the grace of God" (Acts 13:43). Therefore, God has established parameters for his children to keep ourselves in the love of God (Jude 1:21) and to give diligence to make our calling and election sure (2 Pet. 1:10) so that our reception of the amazing grace of God is not in vain (2 Cor. 6:1). If so, it surely would be our fault and not His!

Our faith needs to be renewed because we often falter along the way as those who are prone to the temptations of the world. Consider the case study of Simon the sorcerer from Samaria in Acts 8. He heard the same gospel preached by Philip and submitted to its conditions as did others. In fact, Luke describes his conversion in precisely the same language as he did the other believers (Acts 8:12-13). However, shortly thereafter, Simon succumbed to the temptation before him when he was fascinated at the ability of the apostles to convey miraculous gifts through the process of laying of hands. Thus, he attempted to bribe Peter and John with money to purchase this unique ability. As a result, his faith needed be renewed: "But Peter said unto him, Thy money perish with thee, because thou hast thought that the gift of God may be purchased with money. Thou hast neither part nor lot in this matter: for thy heart is not right in the sight of God. Repent therefore of this thy wickedness, and pray God, if perhaps the thought of thine heart may be forgiven thee. For I perceive that thou art in the gall of bitterness, and in the bond of iniquity" (Acts 8:20-23). In other words, he needed his faith renewed because he was

in danger of "perishing" with his money. One author defined the term and declared that Simon was on the road to destruction unless he repented!

James declares frankly when he wrote, "Brethren, if any of you do err from the truth, and one convert him; Let him know, that he which converteth the sinner from the error of his way shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins" (James 5:19-20). Thus, speaking of brethren, one can "err" in such a way that he needs "converting," which would indeed save his soul and avert his destiny. May we all caution ourselves from those things that would destroy our faith, avail ourselves of the resources to renew our faith when we falter, and appreciate the love and grace of God every day of our lives!

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- Jesus left the temple and lodged there (Matt. 21:17)
- Once Jesus was at the house of Simon the leper (Matt. 26:6)
- Coming from there, he was hungry (Mark 11:12)
- He then cursed a fig tree for having no fruit (Mark 11:13-14)
- Bethany was the home of Mary...
- Her sister Martha...
- And their brother Lazarus (John 11:1)
- Jesus was anointed with ointment (Mark 14:3)
- It could have been sold for more than 300 denarii (John 12:5)
- It was by Bethany that Jesus ascended (Luke 24:50-51)
- Jesus said that the anointing was for His burial (Matt. 26:12)
- The town of Bethphage lay just to the south (Luke 19:29)