

Last Saturday the Devotional Thought centered on the Word Faith. Today I received this reflection upon the word faith written by The Reverend Dr. Gerald Kieschnick. I invite you to join him in a further reflection and meditation upon the word faith. This is sent to you with his permission.

Faith

In one of my favorite prayers, I pray: *“Thank you, Lord, for faith, in a world where many live in fear.”* This portion of that prayer is the fourth in a series of six *Perspectives* articles, each dealing with one of the blessings for which I thank God every time I pray that favorite prayer.

Is it surprising to you that I’ve chosen the word *fear* as the emotion for which *faith* is an antidote, instead of *doubt* or *uncertainty* or *disbelief*? Cases could be made for each of these. I chose *fear*.

Every time I prepare to sit in a chair, I have faith, not fear, that it will support my weight and not collapse. That faith is based on years of experience sitting on chairs. When I go to the garage every morning, I have faith that my car will start. I do not approach it with the fear that it won’t.

Faith is a complex composite of hope, assurance, confidence, and trust. Fear is a word that diminishes each of those emotions. Faith goes hand in hand with each of them.

The best-known definition of *faith* comes from the Bible in Hebrews 11:1. Here are two translations:

- *“Faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.”* NKJV
- *“Faith is being sure about what we hope for, being convinced about things we do not see.”* EHV

The word *faith* is full of spiritual overtones, many of which relate to the importance of faith in God:

- *“Without faith, it is impossible to please [God].”* Hebrews 11:6
- *“For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast.”* Ephesians 2:8-9

In addition, regular human beings in post-biblical times have waxed eloquently about faith:

- *“The smallest seed of faith is better than the largest fruit of happiness.”* - Henry David Thoreau.
- *“Faith and prayer are the vitamins of the soul; man cannot live in health without them.”* - Mahalia Jackson
- *“It is a masterpiece of the devil to make us believe that children cannot understand religion. Would Christ have made a child the standard of faith if He had known that a child was not capable of understanding His words?”* - Dwight L. Moody
- *“O God... make me a child again, even before I die; give me back the simple faith, the clear vision of the child that holds its father's hand.”* - Israel Zangwill
- *“The more we know of God, the more unreservedly we will trust him; the greater our progress in theology, the simpler and more child-like will be our faith.”* - John Gresham Machen
- *“Faith is a living, daring confidence in God’s grace, so sure and certain that a man could stake his life on it a thousand times.”* - Martin Luther
- *“God gives miracles to those who believe, courage to those with faith, hope to those who dream, and love to those who accept.”* – Author unknown

Perhaps you'll join me in praying: *"Thank you, Lord, for faith, in a world where many live in fear."*

Dr. Gerald B. "Jerry" Kieschnick

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