

What's It Gonna Take?

Dale Crawshaw

Here's a question I'm often asked: "What will it take for me to become the kind of person who consistently turns to God, instead of myself, for solutions to all of life's challenges?"

Simply put, "What do I have to do to be more God-centered and less me-centered? More faith-controlled and less fear-controlled? What does it mean to 'get out of the way' and let His power flow through me?"

Good question. I know a fraction of the answer from a few experiences in life where I was smart enough to exercise faith. I know more of the answer from the many frustrations I've created by trying to live this life by my very limited ingenuity. And I am one hundred percent certain that the Bible, God's textbook of true success, has all the answers.

This is what I often tell people who ask the "what will it take" question: "There are some very clear scriptural principles on becoming a person of consistent faith. You might not like what you hear, though."

This response is not intended to offend anyone, but rather to provoke some objectivity—some self-examination that prompts questions like, "Do I really want to be a person of faith? Am I addicted to my fears and anxieties, or do I want to live above those phobias, anxieties, and concerns?"

Spiritual prosperity has its demands. It may take an all-out war inside of you. Daily battles will need to be fought between the two natures within you. . .and surrender to one or the other is inevitable.

To illustrate, let's call the spiritual nature you inherited at salvation "Mighty" (see Ephesians 1:13, 14; II Corinthians 5:5, 17-21, Ephesians 4:30). Then, let's call the flesh nature—the selfish, I-I-me-me disposition you were born with "Wimpy" (see Romans chapters 6 and 8; Galatians 6:7-10).

These two guys don't get along at all. I like to think of them as the Pittsburgh Steelers and the Baltimore Ravens. When these two teams play each other, it's war!

Think about it: every day of your life you make critical choices. In each decision, problem, phobia, or devastating circumstance, your challenge is always this: "Will I yield my mind, will, and emotions to Mighty or to Wimpy?"

That's a pretty big question, isn't it? It's a big deal, too. Big because the everyday choices you make—even in the "unimportant things"—will add up to become both your lifestyle and your life-purpose. Here are some of the inside-the-mind arguments I'm talking about.

Wimpy says, “You are so inadequate. You talk big about serving God, but you never follow through. You are such a loser.”

“You can do all things through Christ Who strengthens you,” answers Mighty. “You are a child of the King. You may fall flat on your face many times, but get back up and try again. Rely on the power of God living in you.”

“Boy, does your future look scary,” warns Wimpy. “Your chances of ever getting married look pretty slim. And besides that, who are you—floundering in a dinky little career? You’re going nowhere!”

“Not so, not so, not so!” shouts Mighty. “Jesus told you not to be afraid because He would always be with you. He’s in your career. He’s interceding for you. He cares about the details of your life. Be steady, be patient, be diligent. He’ll provide all of your needs because He loves you with everlasting love.”

Wimpy wastes no time getting right back in your face. “You don’t have enough faith to believe in those promises. They may work for somebody who has a lot of faith, but for you—no way.”

“You are more than a conqueror through Him who loves you,” retorts Mighty. “It’s not how much faith you have, it’s whether or not you exercise your faith.

Because faith that is as small as a mustard seed can open doors for miracles. God can—even against the most impossible odds—do anything! Trust Him and you will see.”

Back and forth they go. Wimpy wants you convinced to live for your own ambitions, guard your “rights,” and look out for number one.

Mighty wants you to understand just how empty and meaningless it is to miss out on lasting success, true riches, and genuine happiness. . .to know and experience God’s place for your life. Mighty is there to help you choose, in the big circumstances and in the small ones, to trust God’s Word over human reasoning.

We get all caught up in the anxieties, peer pressures, and “concerns” of this life, don’t we? That is why God has recorded so many stories for us. Abraham, Esther, Job, Ruth, David, Daniel, Paul, and hundreds more ought to jar us until our spiritual teeth rattle.

Those kinds of lives of no-retreat faith give us courage to move away from a spirit of humanism and point us toward a spiritually dynamic lifestyle.

Consider this: “For everything that was written in the past was written to teach us, so that through endurance and the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope.” Romans 15:4

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