

The Leafless Twig

by Daniel Broyles

As living beings, we understand that growth is essential for everyday life. We see growth all around us. My wife and I picked up a tree on Arbor Day, two years ago, that looked like a twig. We planted it in our backyard, and within months, it had several branches and even some leaf buds. Since it was such a young tree, it required constant attention with sunlight, water, good soil, and protection from the elements. Well, life happened. We got busy, and the tree did not get enough water during the summer drought, the dog took a liking to chewing on the tree, and the neighborhood mole destroyed the roots. The tree stopped growing, and now, we have a leafless twig standing in our yard, once again.

Just like that tree required attention and nurturing to maintain growth, our faith can shrivel up to be a leafless twig, leaving us to feel lost and alone. What keeps our faith from growing? Well, just like with the tree, life happens. We face terrible hardships, busy schedules, and relationship challenges. One by one, those events weigh us down until we have difficulty even holding our heads up, much more growing our faith.

The Bible tells us about a man named Job who faced challenges in his faith as everything seemed to take a turn for the worse. He lost his family, his wealth, possessions, his health and livelihood in a matter of minutes (Job 1:13-18; 2:7). He was devastated with tragedy after tragedy, but we are

told that he remained faithful even through all of those circumstances. One of these instances would be hard for anyone of us to endure, but Job had to endure them all at once. He was able to endure, because he had grown a strong faith in God (Job 42:8).

This can be hard for us to understand. We may tell ourselves that life is too much for me to handle. The great thing is that God will never give us too much to handle with His help (1 Corinthians 10:12-13). He allowed those things to happen to Job because God was confident in his faith, and in the end, Job was stronger and more blessed as a result of his trials. You can have this conquering faith, too!

Our faith requires attention, just like that little tree. We must first have hearts that are willing to learn as the good soil of Matthew 13:23. To grow, we must fill our lives with the knowledge of His Word, our light (Psalm 119:105). We continually feed that faith with study and prayer (Colossians 4:2). The end result will be that we have a faith to which we can firmly hold without fear or doubt (Hebrews 4:14) no matter what may come our way. If you are interested in developing a faith that can withstand the elements of life, we would love to share more of God's mighty word. ■



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