

## FAITH ISN'T FLIP FLOPS

Clinton Curtis



I was raised in a Pentecostal church; my grandfather was a pastor, my uncle is a pastor, and my parents have always been involved in ministry. It probably will come as no surprise when I tell you that I *love* going to church. I love the moments when the music is locked-in and the congregation is praising God. I love the times when the preacher is preaching and it seems as though every word is for me. I love going to youth rallies, camps, youth convention, Youth Congress, and Hyphen conferences. I love getting lost in the presence of God. It's in those times that we're changed; it's in those times when we make new commitments to Him.

Yet so often after the moment has passed and the feelings have worn away, we decide that those commitments we made were perhaps a bit *too* crazy. "Maybe I really didn't mean to tell God I was going to invite my best friend to church; I'll just buy him lunch tomorrow instead. I really didn't mean I was going to go on a three-day fast. After all, that's the kind of thing pastors should be doing, and I am not a pastor." Far too frequently, our zeal in the moment loses its momentum by Monday.

As it turns out, true biblical faith isn't primarily what happens during a church service; it's what happens afterward. Faith begins after the sermon is over. Contrary to what culture sometimes proclaims, and certainly contrary to what I want, faith isn't flip-flops. Faith isn't a relaxing vacation with your toes in the sand; real faith looks a lot more like work boots than flip-flops. Biblical faith looks a lot more like overalls than red chinos. Faith is a farmer that works, tills, plants, waters, and waits for the appointed time when the harvest will finally come.

So often, we relegate the idea of faith to a concept of mental ascent. Yet biblical faith always produces action in our lives. As James clearly stated, "Faith without works is dead." Authentic faith is a prayer and a shovel that says to the mountain: "God will move you, or he'll give me the strength to do it." Faith is planning for fifteen to show up at your Bible study and only having one show. Yet, in spite of that, faith decides to do it next week anyway. Faith is reading your Bible, praying, and studying even when you feel spiritually bone dry and apathetic.

Faith doesn't earn us a right to the miraculous, but it puts us in the right mindset and position to receive it. Faith gathers the greatest possible crowd together to see what Jesus will do.

No, faith isn't a vacation; it's not a part-time endeavor. It doesn't happen in one day of effort per week. Without true faith it's impossible to please God (Hebrews 11:6), and could it be that the best way to please Him is also the best way for 21<sup>st</sup> century Hyphens to reach their world?

I don't know about you, but my faith is in desperate need of some work-boot-clad feet.