

CONVERSATIONS WITH
BROTHER LAWRENCE

FAITH OF A CHILD



LARRY SLATER

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[Larry Slater.Com](http://LarrySlater.Com)

Christian Author

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Faith of a Child

Dearest Sister Helen;

I know you have been struggling with your faith lately and I am concerned that you are making a mountain out of a mole hill. You are so worried that you don't have enough faith. But dear sister, I think you just don't fully understand what faith actually is.

When we talk of "faith," we act like we are talking only about "spiritual" things. We say "Catholic Faith" or "Jewish Faith" or "Muslim Faith." Or we use generic terms such as "Religious Faith" or just plain Faith as an all-encompassing, "politically correct" term so as not to "offend" anyone. But this is just plain wrong-headedness. Why? Because faith is so much more.

Jesus taught us that unless we had the same faith as little children, we would never be able to understand God. Think about that for a minute. From the time we are born someone has to take care of us. All we know is when we feel hunger or feel dirty or cold or wet or anything uncomfortable. Then we let the whole world know about it until someone "fixes" it for us. We are totally incapable of taking care of it ourselves so we have to have "faith" that someone will do it for us. We grow in this belief as we grow in age so that we hardly even give it a second thought that there may come a time when no one will take care of our demands for comfort. Someone is almost always there.

As we grow, we learn that those “someones” are our parents and we know that as they have taken care of us in the past, or at least as long as we can remember, they will take care of us in the future. I have to wonder if at a young age we ever really understand how much effort our parents do in our behalf. It may not be until we take on the role of parenting ourselves that we begin to understand what it means to have someone truly believe in us; that we will take care of them first before our own needs are met.

As we grow older, we begin to see our parent’s frailties, their humanness, and we have to learn to love them in a totally different way. Now we learn to love them for themselves and not for what they can do for us. In fact, we may have to start to take care of them ourselves and love comes full circle.

So how can we have the faith of a child? We have to forget how to be an “adult” that knows all too well the trials and tribulations of meeting the needs of others in a very uncertain world. We have to remember what it is to trust that someone who is always there and who we just know will take care of us. And we have to forget our thinking of that person as not meeting our every whim because we now know there are more important things than our own comfort. Not that God becomes frail or limited in our eyes although I’m sure many do as they fail to receive the total care, they expect from Him. But we must learn to understand God in a totally different way, one where we love him for all he has done for us and for who He is; doing whatever we can to show our love for Him.

Are we strong enough to have the faith of a child yet have the love of an adult at the same time? Maybe when we learn how weak we really are and must depend on the care of others, then maybe we will remember what it is to trust the God who takes care of us every day of our lives. Then we just may learn to how to enter into the Kingdom of God.

I hope this has helped you and am always at your service.

Brother Lawrence

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