

An Unremarkable Faith

Scripture: 1 Timothy 2:2

Code: B110104

Meet Larry, a thirty-six year old Science teacher. Larry married Cathy 12 years ago. They love each other and enjoy raising their two sons. Larry's life wouldn't hold out much interest to the average citizen. His Facebook account doesn't draw many friends and nobody ever leaves a comment on his blog. In fact, most people would summarize Larry's life with one word—boring. But not Larry. Teaching osmosis to junior high students, playing Uno with his kids, and working in the yard with Cathy is paradise to him. But the real love of his life is Jesus. Larry's a Christian. He's been walking with the Lord for more than 20 years.

Larry's Christian friends all employ the same word to describe their companion—faithful. He's faithful to his local church where he's been teaching Sunday School for nearly a decade. He's never ignored a legitimate financial need within the body of Christ. He gives sacrificially, but secretly. Larry devotes himself to his wife and family, lovingly shepherding them through every season of life with the Scriptures. He's faithful to his job and fellow colleagues. He's managed to share Christ with nearly every junior-high teacher at Oakwood Academy. And although they mock Larry behind his back, all the teachers respect him. It won't shock you to know Larry pays his taxes and never misses an opportunity to serve his community. Larry's life commends the gospel. He's faithful, but he's unremarkable. Or, *is* he?

If you're bored with Larry's Christianity, it's probably because you've been influenced by a very *different* idea of the Christian life. Larry's not radical, or wild at heart—not in the sense of taking careless risks, jeopardizing the stability of his family, or pursuing a life of adventure. You could say Larry is quite content with his station in life, a station given him by God. He aspires to live a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and dignity. Sound familiar?

There's a stubborn and influential voice within evangelicalism that seems to despise simple yet unremarkable faithfulness. Pastor Tom Lyon acknowledges that when he writes, "*The value of a humble and unassuming life seems to have been eclipsed by this upwardly mobile 'dare to be a Daniel' brand of Christianity which elevates ambition above maturity and has seated the stable but unremarkable believer in coach class. Something is wrong here.*"[1]

Lyon went on to describe what he called the unremarkable Christian: "*His aspirations, his thirst for notoriety, his estimate of greatness have all been changed. His horizon has come closer to home. He finds in the Bible no call to be outstanding. He is not without ambition, but his dreams have nothing to do with rising above his fellows. Unless pressed, he prefers anonymity to attention. He is steady. Steadied by grace. And one of the most amazing things about grace is how it works this even disposition.*"

That's not an endorsement for ministerial mediocrity or a call to settle for small, lifeless pursuits. On the contrary, it's a plea for excellence—but excellence according to *Scripture*. A humble, Spirit-filled pursuit of greatness should characterize every Christian's efforts in ministry, but remember that

greatness in God's kingdom is unappealing to the world, unremarkable. How does the world view your life? John MacArthur writes:

"Christians are to be known for their quiet demeanor, not for making disturbances. Unbelievers should see us as quiet, loyal, diligent, virtuous people... To promote a tranquil and quiet life, believers must pursue godliness and dignity... Godliness can refer to a proper attitude; dignity to proper behavior. Thus believers are to be marked by a commitment to morality; holy motives must result in holy behavior. Both contribute to the tranquility and quietness of our lives."[2]

Here's a thought to ponder as you go your way. Had you befriended Larry, how might you react to his faithful, yet unremarkable life? Would you advise him to venture out further, take a radical risk for the kingdom and leave behind the quiet, mundane confinements of his Norman Rockwell life? Or would you commend Larry for how he's living, giving God glory for such a faithful yet unremarkable Christian? Remember, the handful of so-called radical, risk-taking Christians stand on the backs of men like Larry. They are only able to take their risks because the Larry's of this world won't, and Larry wouldn't have it any other way.

Tommy Clayton
Content Developer and Broadcast Editor

[1] Tom Lyon, *Aspiring to Live a Quiet and Peaceable Life*, Banner of Truth publication, pgs, 1-4.

[2] John MacArthur, [1 Timothy](#) (Chicago: Moody Press, 1995).

Available online at: <http://www.gty.org>

COPYRIGHT (C) 2024 Grace to You

You may reproduce this Grace to You content for non-commercial purposes in accordance with Grace to You's Copyright Policy (<https://www.gty.org/about#copyright>).