



December 21, 2008

Miracle On 34th Street

(How to find first-hand faith in a cynical world)

(SERIES: Surviving Christmas: 03 of 05)
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“For nothing is impossible with God.” (Luke 1:37 NIV)

Life by what means?

You can live by **facts**.

“**The virgin will be with child** and will give birth to a son, and they will call him Immanuel’ which means, ‘God with us.’” (Matthew 1:23 NIV)

You can live by **fear**.

“What I feared has come upon me; what I dreaded has happened to me.” (Job 3:25 NIV)

You can live by **fables**.

“They won’t listen to what the Bible says but will **blithely follow their own misguided ideas**.” (2 Tim 4:3-4)

You can live by **faith**.

“Jesus replied, ‘What is impossible with men is possible with God.’” (Luke 18:27 NIV)

Second-hand faith

I base my faith on **my family history**.

I base my faith on **what I’ve heard**.

I base my faith on **where I was born**.

I base my faith on **apathy**.

First-hand faith

By faith, I **trust** God to tell the truth.

“But when I am afraid, I will put my confidence in you. Yes, I will trust the promises of God. And since I am trusting him, what can mere man do to me?” (Psa 56:3)

“When God made his promise to Abraham, since there was no one greater for him to swear by, **he swore by himself, saying, ‘I will surely bless you and give you many descendants.’**” (Hebrews 6:11-14 NIV)

By faith, I **test** God in order to claim the promise.

“I tell you the truth, anyone who believes in me will do the same works I have done, and even greater works, because I am going to be with the Father.” (John 14:12 NLT)

““You are under a curse—the whole nation of you—because you are robbing me. Bring the whole tithe into the storehouse, that there may be food in my house. **Test me in this, says the LORD Almighty, ‘and see if I will not throw open the floodgates of heaven and pour out so much blessing that you will not have room enough for it. I will prevent pests from devouring your crops, and the vines in your fields will not cast their fruit,’** says the LORD Almighty.” (Malachi 3:9-11 NIV)

By faith, I **take** God at His Word.

“Or if he asks for a fish, will give him a snake? If you, then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give good gifts to those who ask him! So in everything, do to others what you would have them do to you, for this sums up the Law and the Prophets.” (Matthew 7:10-12 NIV)