

# Unworthiness Is An Essential Ingredient In Being Worthy

**All of us are unworthy of God's Grace.**

**1 Thessalonians 2:11-12** [NIV] *“For you know that we dealt with each of you as a father deals with his own children, encouraging, comforting and urging you to live lives worthy of God, who calls you into his kingdom and glory.”*

**We should all endeavour to live lives worthy of God's Grace, but none of us can ever attain that goal.**

**Revelation 5:2-4** [NIV] *“And I saw a mighty angel proclaiming in a loud voice, “Who is worthy to break the seals and open the scroll?” But no-one in heaven or on earth or under the earth could open the scroll or even look inside it. I wept and wept because no-one was found who was worthy to open the scroll or look inside.”*

The apostle John *“wept and wept”* because no-one was found in heaven or on earth to break the seals and open the scroll and bring the Kingdom of God to all mankind.

**Revelation 5:5** [NIV] *“Then one of the elders said to me, “Do not weep! See, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has triumphed. He is able to open the scroll and its seven seals.”*

**Only our Saviour and High Priest Jesus the Anointed One of God was and is worthy to rule.**

**1 Corinthians 11:27** [NIV] *“Therefore, whoever eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty of sinning against the body and blood of the Lord.”*

This scripture has bewildered many Christians, and some have avoided accepting Holy Communion because of it, for fear of damnation due to unworthiness.

**The irony is that if we do feel worthy and feel we have made the grade by the type of life we have lived, we are most likely taking the symbolic blood and body of Christ in an unworthy manner.**

**Worthiness** consists of our desperate need to be atoned by the sacrificial blood of Jesus, God's Son and our High Priest.

**Unworthiness is part of the qualification for becoming a Christian, for this leads us to having faith in what God has done for us through Jesus Christ.**

**1 Timothy 1:15-16** [Message Bible] *“Here's a word you can take to heart and depend on: **Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners, I'm proof of that, public sinner number one.** Someone who could never have made it apart from sheer mercy. And now He shows me off, as evidence of His endless patience, to those who are right on the edge of trusting Him for ever.”*

**Matthew 9:12-13** [NIV] *“On hearing this, Jesus said, “It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick. But go and learn what this means: ‘I desire mercy, not sacrifice.’ **For I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners.**”*

Jesus extends His mercy to sinners **not** the self-righteous.

**Romans 4:4-5** [Message Bible] *“If you're a hard worker and do a good job, you deserve your pay, we don't call your wages a gift. But if you see that the job is too big for you, that it's something only God can do, and you trust Him to do it. Knowing that you could never do it by yourself no matter how*

*hard and long you worked. Well, that “trusting-Him-to-do-it” is what gets you set right with God, by God doing it. A sheer gift.”*

**Romans 5:8** [NIV] *“But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.”*

**Christ died as a substitute for our deserved death as a sinner.**

**Romans 3:27-28** [NIV] *“Where, then, is boasting? It is excluded. On what principle? On that of observing the law? No, but on that of faith. For we maintain that a man is justified by faith apart from observing the law.”*

**All our attempts to be worthy of eternal life through keeping the Law of God are bound to fail. Faith in what God did for us through Jesus Christ is our only hope.**

Abraham is regarded as the father of the faithful, but his son Isaac and grandson Jacob did **not** prove to be mighty men of faith.

Yet we find these unworthy men mentioned in the faith chapter of The Bible [**Hebrews 11**].

**Isn't this encouraging? It shows we don't have to be “perfect” to be men and women of achieving faith.**

**Isaac** was a most “*lacklustre*” person and looking for faith in his life story is not easy, yet the writer of Hebrews comes up with one incident.

**Hebrews 11:20** [NIV] *“By faith Isaac blessed Jacob and Esau in regard to their future.”*

**Jacob**, although his life is recorded in detail in The Christian Bible, he was so unworthy that again the writer of Hebrews had to limit his reference to one incident at the end of Jacob's life.

**Hebrews 11:21** [NIV] *“By faith Jacob, when he was dying, blessed each of Joseph's sons, and worshipped as he leaned on the top of his staff.”*

Isn't it wonderful to know that such unworthy people are recorded in God's Word as His people.

**We all realise how unworthy we are to be classified as God's chosen people, yet it is this realisation that qualifies us for that title.**

Jacob's life was full of doubt and self-pity yet his final days were referred to as being faithful.

Both Isaac and Jacob would blush to think that what they did was graced with the title of “*faith*” and that they were listed among the great people of God in the Old Testament.

**What can be more encouraging to us than this historical fact?**

**The faith of Isaac.**

Isaac's whole life was characterised by a continuation of what his father Abraham had initiated.

Isaac's financial success was the continuation of his father's powerful influence and wealth.

**Isaac had a strong father, a protective mother and a domineering wife.**

**The act of achieving faith was to fulfil what he had ultimately been called to do, continue Abraham's seed, for it was through him not Ishmael that the promises made to Abraham were to be fulfilled.**

**Genesis 25:23** [NIV] *“The LORD said to her, “Two nations are in your womb, and two peoples from within you will be separated; one people will be stronger than the other, and the older will serve the younger.”*

Esau and Jacob were born in that order.

Esau, the older of the twins, was the clever son who pleased his father.

Jacob was a *“mummy’s boy”*.

**Jacob with the assistance of his mother Rebekah, cheated his elder brother out of his rightful birthright and blessing.**

**Genesis 27:37** [NIV] *“Isaac answered Esau, “I have made him lord over you and have made all his relatives his servants, and I have sustained him with grain and new wine. So what can I possibly do for you, my son?”*

Isaac was horrified that he had been tricked by Jacob.

**Genesis 27:33** [NIV] *“Isaac trembled violently and said, “Who was it, then, that hunted game and brought it to me? I ate it just before you came and I blessed him, and indeed he will be blessed!”*

**Isaac’s faithfulness was that he stood by the blessing he had given Jacob, it was not what he desired, but such faithfulness to his word was his finest hour.**

**What can we learn from Isaac’s faith?**

- 1 **We don’t have to perform some sensational act to have pleasing faith in God’s estimation.**
- 2 **Achieving faith is sometimes just accepting circumstances even when they are not desired or pleasant.**
- 3 **Achieving faith is pleasing God rather than those we love. Isaac loved Esau but faithfully stood by what he had promised.**

**What can we learn from Jacob’s faith?**

**Jacob was the world’s greatest manipulator, the world’s worst parent.**

In spite of being mentioned more than anyone else in The Christian Bible [remember he was also called *“Israel”*] he was in one word – unworthy.

**Malachi 1:1-3** [NIV] *“An oracle: The word of the LORD to Israel through Malachi. “I have loved you,” says the LORD. “But you ask, ‘How have you loved us?’ “Was not Esau Jacob’s brother?” the LORD says. “Yet I have loved Jacob, but Esau I have hated, and I have turned his mountains into a wasteland and left his inheritance to the desert jackals.”*

Yet for all his unworthiness God states that He loved Jacob.

**The relevance of this statement for us is if God could love Jacob, He could love anyone, and that includes you or me.**

**God allowed many trials in Jacob’s life.**

- 1 Being cheated out of the woman he loved, Rachel, and tied in marriage to a woman he did not love, Leah.

- 2 Jacob never loved or appreciated Leah, yet two of the children she gave him meant more to the Kingdom of God than all the others born to Jacob put together.
  - a) Levi – who gave us the priesthood
  - b) Judah – through whom Jesus was born.

- 3 Having worked another seven years for Laban without wages, Jacob married his first love Rachel, only to find her barren.

Eventually Rachel did give Jacob two sons, Joseph and Benjamin.

- 4 Jacob spoiled rotten Joseph, which caused great jealousy in the rest of the family.
- 5 Jacob's daughter Dinah "*went the way of the world*" and brought trouble on the family.
- 6 Jacob lost, presumed dead, his beloved son Joseph, and disowned all the rest of his children except Benjamin.

**Genesis 42:38** [NIV] "*But Jacob said, "My son will not go down there with you; his brother is dead and he is the only one left. If harm comes to him on the journey you are taking, you will bring my grey head down to the grave in sorrow."*

Benjamin considered his only son!

- 7 As the dread of meeting Esau gripped Jacob he cried out to God and experienced a "*face to face*" conflict with his Maker.

Such an experience should have sealed Jacob's faith once and for all time, but no, it did not.

- 8 Jacob's family life was in total disarray; everything seemed to be going wrong.
- 9 Then at the great age of 130 years Jacob's life was totally uprooted, being forced with move to Egypt.

It was at this time that God revealed Himself again to Jacob and gave him a peace of mind, and Jacob, out of gratitude, thanked and worshipped God.

**Jacob's life was one that depicts an "*all's well that ends well*".**

**Genesis 46:2-4** [NIV] "*And God spoke to Israel in a vision at night and said, "Jacob! Jacob!" "Here I am," he replied. "I am God, the God of your father," he said. "Do not be afraid to go down to Egypt, for I will make you into a great nation there. I will go down to Egypt with you, and I will surely bring you back again. And Joseph's own hand will close your eyes."*

**It was this end of life faith in God's Promises that gave Jacob a mention the faith chapter of Hebrews.**

## **Conclusion:**

- a) You don't get much more unworthy than Jacob!
- b) But Jacob was loved by God.
- c) The God of Jacob is also the God we worship.
- d) Doesn't this give us all great hope for the end of our unworthy lives!