

A Child's Unwavering Faith

by
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I have rediscovered there is nothing more precious during the Christmas season than the pure, innocent belief of a child. This epiphany came in a most unexpected way.

Our 5 year old daughter Gracie belongs to something called the Daisies. Whatever 5 year old girls do at Daisy meetings, she loves it. I do my best not to roll my eyes when she talks endlessly about it.

I hid my high anxiety when she jumped up and down to tell me that the father-daughter roller roller-skating party was just a couple weeks away. Not only hadn't I been on skates in years but it was scheduled on a Steeler Sunday.

And so I dragged myself to go, concealing as best I could how much I didn't want to go. My greatest hope was that I would somehow endure this event without embarrassing myself or my daughter. And with a little luck maybe I could catch some of the Steeler game afterwards.

As we approached the roller-rink, I noticed that some dads were carrying their own skates. "Holy cow" I thought to myself, "these guys can't be serious." But serious they were. Some dads were able to perform flawless figure 8's backwards on rollerblades. My only goal was not to fall forward straight ahead on "quads".

I was in full-blown survival mode doing the turtle as I took my daughter around and around and around the rink. She plopped down so many times, I wasn't sure she was having fun. But she kept getting up without seeming to get discouraged.

After a break or two, I asked her if she was ready to head home but she wanted to keep going. And so we did.... around, around and around. Finally it was all over. "Thank goodness!" I said to myself. I had survived without hurting myself too badly. The only injury was my pride. I wasn't able to do all the cool things some of the other dads could do and I just hoped Gracie had fun despite her dad being a turtle.

When we got home my daughter raced through the house telling her Mom, brother and sister what a good time she had. "Mission accomplished," I thought to myself as I cracked open a cold one. Now it was time to catch the rest of that Steeler game. But then I overheard her say something that buckled my knees, took my breath away and made that Steeler game pretty irrelevant. "You should see what a great skater daddy is. He's awesome. It was the greatest day of my life."

It was one of those overwhelming moments that I will never forget. Only through the loving eyes of a believing child could someone have experienced reality that way.

A couple weeks later, Gracie was filled with excitement. “I told Santa I want roller skates daddy. It’s the only thing I really want. How does he know I’ve been really good.” she asked with those believing eyes. We’ve done our best not to play up Santa Claus in our household as we want our kids to understand the real meaning of Christmas. However it is so deeply engrained in our culture, it has become unavoidable. “I’m not sure honey, but I do know that God knows everything and I know he loves you very much” was my reply.

As I searched the ends of the earth for those skates, Gracie’s simple childlike faith kept filling my mind. She not only believes her dad skates like Apollo Ohno, she believes with her whole heart that God gave us a baby son to save the world as much as she believes her own name. She believes if she dies tomorrow, she’ll go to Heaven. Doubt about a God so much bigger than ourselves and the universe doesn’t exist in her pure mind. Her faith in is so beautiful, its ineffable. It is no wonder that in the book of Matthew, Jesus used the belief of small children as the model of faith to enter the kingdom of God.

All I want for Christmas is the gift my daughter has inside.



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