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A LITTLE FAITH GOES A LONG WAY

Famed Surfboard Designer Reflects on Biblical Moments of Faith While His Young Daughter Fights Cancer



(Los Angeles, Calif): Though many say they trust God, often times it is through unexpected difficulties, including the loss of a loved one, financial devastation, personal suffering or failed dreams, that we discover if our faith and trust in God is authentic.

While writing the book ***Big God: What Happens When We Trust Him***, pastor and surfer **Britt Merrick** never imagined he would need to apply these principles in his own life. In 2009, Merrick and his wife were given the devastating news that Daisy, their five-year old daughter, was diagnosed with a large tumor in her abdomen. Today, Merrick continues to fully trust God with his daughter's health as she continues treatment for stage three cancer.

Although Merrick and his wife had already endured the loss of a child through a previous miscarriage, Merrick recalls the night he committed to hold on to his faith. "I said to God, 'If you let my daughter die, nothing changes between me and You. I love my little baby, God. But I love You more and I trust You,' " pleaded Merrick. "My God is a big God — this trial with my daughter's health has already shown me how God grasps and sustains me in ways I never thought possible."

In *Big God*, Merrick studies the book of Hebrews 11 and examines the role of faith and trust in the lives of men and women in the Bible who, despite their character flaws, held on to faith and trusted God when it mattered most.

"These are stories of weak people with great failures who God used in a great way. They should encourage us to become more dependent on God, more in awe of God and allow Him to use us in spite of our flaws," says Merrick. "Through these stories we realize that it is God who can change the course of history through people with problems, failures and faith."

"I thank God for men who not only teach the Word accurately but also live it out. This book describes the faith God wants us to have, and Britt's life exemplifies it." Francis Chan, author of *Crazy Love*, Pastor of Cornerstone Church, Simi Valley, California.

Big God shares the critical moments of Biblical characters who exercised great faith and made the right decisions including Gideon, Barak, Samson and David. Other men and women include:

- **Abel: Faith Worshiping.** Abel brought a sacrifice of the first of his flock which reflected his heart of giving God his best. Abel's action demonstrated faith by giving God priority and going against our human nature of putting ourselves first.
- **Enoch: Faith Walking.** Through voluntary surrender, Enoch walked with God and lived for God's glory, God's purposes, and God's mission. A Christian needs to be consistent with the character of God through a life filled with mercy, grace, humility and love.
- **Noah: Faith Working.** Noah's work required faith because of the culture he lived in, because of the call he received and because of the task he took on. Noah confronted his culture with obedience in building the ark as Christians should confront culture with Christ.

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- Abraham and Isaac: *Faith Willing*. Abraham trusted God and confronted idols, false religions and the lies of the Canaanites. Abraham's endured his most difficult trial in obedience to God by offering up his own son, Isaac. As a result, Abraham developed a greater faith, greater character and greater hope in him.
- Sarah: *Faith Waiting*. Sarah waited for God to fulfill His promise of a child, although she and Abraham made one major mistake along the way. The lesson is Christians need to wait on God without being passive, without causing problems and without missing God's promises.
- Moses: *Faith Winning*. Moses chose to leave the house of Pharaoh and a world of riches to walk with God's people through difficulties and suffering in obedience to God's calling.
- Rahab: *Faith Welcoming*. Although she was a prostitute and a Canaanite, God used Rahab because she demonstrated faith when she recognized Him as the one true God and protected His servants. Jesus came into the world through the lineage of Rahab.

“David had an affair and was a murderer, Elijah was suicidal, Job went bankrupt, Peter denied Jesus, Mary Magdalene was demon possessed and Lazarus was dead but their faith connected them to God and He used them to accomplish His will as He is able to do with us today,” reminds Merrick.

Merrick openly shares the personal change from a life once filled with drug use and sexual immorality, “I sensed God calling me into something better for my life,” Merrick says. “When I finally decide to trust God and obey His call, I discovered that God provided all the strength I needed to get free from habits, addictions, and unhealthy relationships.”

Faith will require Christians to endure a time of waiting and spiritual testing, but Merrick believes Christians need to rejoice in the present moment and to future results. “Sometimes faith requires us to endure hardship than to escape hardship. We need to trust and obey God, even if He doesn't deliver us from our present circumstances and remember even in our suffering, Jesus Christ is glorified,” says Merrick.

By drawing on some of the greatest lives of faith in the Bible, readers of *Big God* will come to see that God was worthy of these men and women's trust and faith during biblical times in the same way that He is worthy of ours today.

Britt Merrick is the son of the famed surfboard designer/shaper and Surfer Hall of Famer Al Merrick and the world -famous company, Channel Islands Surfboards. Some of their clients include world champions Tom Curren and Kelly Slater. Merrick was in line to take over his the families business, something Merrick dreamed of his entire life, until God directed Merrick into ministry, leaving his dream behind to serve God full time and start the Reality church in Southern California. His official web site and blog are found at www.brittmerrick.com and www.biggodthebook.com

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Suggested Interview Questions for Britt Merrick, author of *Big God*.

1. Why did you decide to write a book about faith in God? In what ways does this book stand apart from other books on faith and God?
2. What directed you to center your book on Hebrews 11 in the Bible?
3. You were not the typical Christian. Share with us a little bit about your life and what type of lifestyle you experienced before leaving it behind for God.
4. At what point did you realize you were not going to fulfill your life-long dream of running your families surf board business? How difficult of a decision was this, and how did your family react?
5. During the writing of *Big God* you experienced the greatest test of faith when you discovered your five-year old daughter had a Wilm's Tumor (only 500 cases diagnosed per year). How did you apply what you were writing to your own life?
6. You and your wife had to deal with a miscarriage prior to this devastating news of your daughter Daisy. Did you question God with this second test of faith concerning your family?
7. You include examples of Biblical characters that lived by faith. Some of them might be considered far from perfect. Why did you include them?
8. What are some of the other characters you include and what do they teach us about faith?
9. You write that the difference between Cain and Abel's sacrifice was not the type of sacrifice but the condition of their hearts that matter most. Please explain.
10. What do Christians need to agree upon when they decide to walk with God?
11. You include Abraham as a life of faith that is willing and his wife Sarah as a life of waiting. How did they demonstrate their faith in God?
12. What is the right way to wait on God? Why do so many people passively wait on God?
13. Why did you include the prostitute Rahab as someone who demonstrated faith? Should we overlook the fact she was a liar and prostitute?
14. You write that "sometimes more faith is required to endure hardship than to escape hardship." How do we keep the faith even through difficulties?
15. You are the pastor of the Reality in Carpinteria, California. What should people know about your church?

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Bio for Britt Merrick, author of *Big God*.

Britt Merrick was born and raised near Santa Barbara, California, in a little town on the beach named Carpinteria. He grew up entrenched in the surf industry and was the heir to the most famous surfboard company in the world, Channel Islands Surfboards. As a young adult, he oversaw the company's marketing and advertising and managed its amateur surf team. Working alongside his father, Surfing Hall of Famer Al Merrick, he also made (shaped) surfboards for some of the best surfers on Earth.

Britt received Jesus as Savior when he was a young child, but he had never known what it was like to walk with God every day. He had both feet in the world, using drugs, drinking alcohol, and getting into trouble. In his early twenties, Britt was introduced to the transforming power of the Word of God and He began a new life. Shortly after re-committing himself to the Lord, with a fresh fire for the truth, he started to teach Bible studies for local surfer kids at his parents' home. Britt was invited to expand the studies and launched a Friday night college ministry at a church in Santa Barbara. In 2003, sensing a further call to ministry, he laid aside his work at Channel Islands and the Friday night college ministry. Britt, his wife and some close friends started a church called Reality in his hometown of Carpinteria.

Reality Carpinteria has grown to a multi-campus church of about 3,000 adults. The Reality family has expanded to include churches in Los Angeles, San Francisco, Ventura, Stockton and London (England). The church movement is focused on biblical faithfulness, community transformation, church birthing, and equipping the next generation of leaders. Britt continues to serve as pastor full time and recently authored the book *Big God: What Happens When We Trust Him*, which was endorsed by Francis Chan, Wayne Grudem, Josh McDowell and others. He lives with his wife Kate, and their two children in Carpinteria.

www.brittmerrick.com, www.biggodbook.com