

## GROWING YOUR FAITH

Genesis 15:1-6

INTRODUCTION: Our faith ought to be growing throughout the rest of the days of our lives: 1 Corinthians 3:11-15; 2 Peter 3:18. Our faith, along with all the other graces we are offered in Jesus Christ is to be growing in both knowledge and application for our Lord's glory. We have a prime example of this in the life of Abraham, the father of our faith. Genesis 15:1-6. People in the Old Testament were saved in exactly the same way people are saved today: by faith: Hebrews 4:1-2. God has given us seven principles in His Word for achieving and maintaining a growing faith.

### I. FAITH IS STRETCHING OUR IMAGINATION!

Think of how the Lord stretch Abraham's imagination as he told him he would be the father of many nations. Abraham had no children of his own, yet God promised him offspring as numerous as the stars. Can our God do the impossible for us as well? Ephesians 3:14-20. Our God longs to stretch our imagination as well: Jeremiah 32:27.

### II. FAITH IS TAKING ACTION!

There is a great difference between believing God can do something He has promised and believing God will do something He has promised. When we really believe God is going to do something He has promised we move out in faith: Mark 5:24-34. This woman believed and acted and because of that she saw the power of God in her life. Hebrews 10:35-39.

### III. FAITH IS RISKING FAILURE!

You might say "What if I try to trust God and it does not work?" 2 Corinthians 5:7. Faith always involves risks. The old saying used to be "Seeing is believing." But we live in a different world today. We see things that are not true. We live by faith and we trust the Word of God. We as believers in Jesus Christ have decided to walk by faith and not by sight! It may be time for us to get out of the boat and see God do the impossible in each of our lives. We must decide to act on what we say we believe! Faith means risking failure. Only by taking a step of faith will we ever see the reality of our faith.

### IV. FAITH IS EXPECTING GOD'S BEST!

Matthew 9:27-29: God has given every person the capacity for faith. Our society teaches us to expect the worst of life and we won't be disappointed. Our God tells us to expect the best in life and we won't be disappointed. Do you know that our God meets us at the point of our faith? The world tells us to just expect the normal outcomes; faith tells us to expect great things from our God. Just imagine that everything works according to your faith: how are things looking for you?

### V. FAITH IS WAITING ON GOD'S ANSWER!

We started out talking about the faith of Abraham and how he had to stretch his faith in order to get his answer. But Abraham also had to learn to wait on His God. Abraham waited and waited on God for the son he had promised him. Part of true faith is waiting for God to bring the desired outcome. There is a time factor in faith as well as a trust factor. Psalm 40:1-4. Our waiting is evidence of living faith within us. A lack of faith in God's timing is a sign of immaturity on our part. Little children have a hard time waiting; mature adults do not usually have to have the answer this minute. Remember, Moses was forty years old when God called him to deliver the Israelites from slavery in Egypt. Moses was eighty years old when God finally used him to deliver His children from slavery.

## VI. FAITH IS FOLLOWING GOD'S DIRECTIONS!

Our God works in mysterious ways His wonders to perform. God tested Abraham with the little things in his life before He blessed him with the big things he desired. So many of God's children want the blessings of God but they will not live by faith and obedience to God's instructions of life. So often we expect God to bless us even when we do not do what we know He desires of us. Proverbs 3:5-8. So much of God's work in our land has been stymied by those who walk in their own wisdom and ignore the clear leading of their God. Let me ask, "Does life always have to make sense to you before you will do what your God has called you to do?" Hebrews 11:8. The whole point is that Abraham obeyed God's instruction even though he did not know where he was going. We look for logic; our God looks for faith! Isaiah 55:8-11.

## VII. FAITH IS PERSEVERING!

Our God calls us to persevere: Galatians 6:7-9. This call speaks of several things. It talks about the reality of sowing and reaping. Hosea 10:12. It speaks of the principle of intensification. Not only do you reap what you sow but you almost always reap more than you sow! So, the question is how are you sowing? 2 Corinthians 9:6-9: You cannot out give God for God has set up the principle of sowing and reaping. So, whatever we give in the Spirit of God will come back to us many times over! Luke 6:38; Proverbs 19:17. At times in our faith walk we just get weary of waiting and continuing to be faithful but it is just a test. We need to persevere in order to get what our Lord has promised. Hebrews 10:35-39; Isaiah 43:18-19. Our God always keeps His Word. When our faith falters from time to time we just need to turn to our God; He will make our way straight and renew us for his glory.