

Unlocking The Mystery & Treasure Of My Inheritance

Lesson #8 -The School Of Faith

Schopenhauer: "The first 40 years of life give us the text and the next 40 give us the commentary. For the Christian, the text is Hab. 2:4: The just shall live by faith.

The commentary is being written as we listen to God and obey His directions a day at a time. Sad to say, some understand neither the text nor the commentary and their lives are ended before they have started to live."

Faith, A Gift From God, Is A Journey.

A. W. Tozer: "Faith is not merely a journey for the feet. It is a journey for the heart."

We are to grow in godliness and faith as we wait for the fulfillment of God's promises. When God wants to build our patience, He gives us promises, sends us trials and tells us to trust Him.

[James 1:1-8] Don't worry that you are not strong enough for the journey.

God makes you strong in the journey.

Isa. 58:11 The LORD will guide you continually, and satisfy your soul in drought, and strengthen your bones; You shall be like a watered garden, like a spring of water, whose waters do not fail.

In the Bible's hall of faith in Hebrews 11, candid pictures are given of great men whose faith stands out in Old Testament history like bright stars on a dark night. All except Abel, Enoch and Noah are descendants of Abraham, the man and father of our faith.

In this chronicle Abraham is given almost half the space. He has more than twice the space allocated to the law-giver, Moses. Likewise in Genesis, the story of Abraham and his family is spread over the book from chapter 11 through chapter 50, while only two chapters are given to the entire story of creation.

What distinguished Abraham as a man of faith? [20th generation from Adam]

Learning To Face & Handle The Tests of Life To The GLORY OF GOD

I. Expect Tests From God

I Pet. 4:12-13 Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you: but rejoice to the extent that you partake of Christ's sufferings, that when His glory is revealed, you may also be glad with exceeding joy.

Gen. 22:1 Now it came to pass After These Things that God tested Abraham, and said to him, "Abraham!" And he said, "Here I am." [~130 years old]

After These Things: The spiritual history of Abraham was marked by four great crises, each of which involved the surrender of something which was naturally dear to him.

1. He was called separate himself from his native land and kindred; 70 yrs Genesis 12:1
2. He was called on to give up Lot - ~80 yrs. Genesis 13:1-18
3. He had to abandon his cherished plan about Ishmael - ~103 Genesis 17:17-18
4. God told him to offer up Isaac as a burnt offering. - ~130 yrs. Gen. 22

Abraham enrolled in "The School of Faith" at age 70. [left Haran @ 75] We look in on him at age 100 and find he is still going through soul-stretching experiences. If we stop learning, we stop growing. We will face new challenges, fight new battles and learn new truths.

Rom. 4:19-22 And being not weak in faith, he considered not his own body now dead, when he was about an hundred years old, neither yet the deadness of Sara's womb: ²⁰ he staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief; but was strong in faith, giving glory to God; ²¹ and being fully persuaded that, what he had promised, he was able also to perform. ²² And therefore it was imputed to him for righteousness.

1. Weak astheneo = without strength, powerless, sick; to doubt, hesitate, vacillate; double-minded
2. Considered Not = Paid No Attention To The Physical Obstacles
3. Staggered Not = diakrino ou = To be in strife with oneself; to doubt, hesitate, waver

Wuest's Word Studies: "to judge between two," "to vacillate between two opinions or decision."
Abraham did not vacillate between belief and unbelief with respect to his difficulty and the ability of God to meet it. He did not waver.

Key Points: 1. Abraham firmly believed in what God promised because he firmly believed in God's power.
2. His belief in God allowed him to overlook the visible problems to see the POWER of Him who was invisible.
3. His ability to see and trust the invisible kept him from staggering over the obstacles of doubt that surrounded him.
4. By believing, Abraham climbed to the very heights and gave glory to the Power Of God!
5. God declared Abraham righteous because He BELIEVED Him.

Interesting Side Note: 1. The word TRUTH is a form of the Hebrew word AMEN.
It refers to God's faithfulness and reliability.

2. It is the same word used in Ex. 17:12 to describe Moses' hands "STAYING STEADY."
3. It is the same word translated "BELIEVED in Gen. 15:6: [He believed in the LORD, and He accounted it to him for righteousness.] Literally: relied on; said AMEN to the LORD.

Unbelief In The Christian Walk: UNBELIEF IS NOT:

1. The Absence Of Faith
2. A Negative State Of Mind
3. A State of Blank Ignorance Of God and His truth
4. A State of ignorance of the Existence and attributes of God
5. Not at intellectual state at all

So what is UNBELIEF in a Christian? The Bible represents unbelief as SIN.
Therefore, it is not a state of mind; it is a Condition Of My Heart!

1. Unbelief is SIN. Heb. 3:12 Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God.

2. Unbelief is a CHOICE. Mark 16:14 Afterward Jesus appeared unto the eleven as they sat at meat, and rebuked them for their unbelief and hardness of heart, because they had not believed those who had seen him after he was risen.

3. Unbelief is a lack of CONFIDENCE. Withholding of confidence in One who is worthy of our confidence. Unbelief of the heart darkens one to committing his heart and soul to the will of God.

Truth: Belief is giving God my confidence, yielding myself to Him, confiding in Him, trusting in Him, casting myself upon Him, voluntarily receiving His truth and committing myself to Him.

Unbelief Is At The Heart Of My Lack Of Commitment To God!

Connection Between Doubt & Unbelief: To hesitate or waver; being uncertain of what to believe or do; allow circumstances, setbacks and feelings to influence decisions & change my mind
Matt. 14:31 And immediately Jesus stretched forth *his* hand, and caught him, and said unto him, O you of little faith, why did you doubt?

This doubt comes through giving up one's conviction of faith based on what one sees or feels.

a. My Doubt Leads To Unbelief: Downward Spiral

b. Focusing on my circumstances or my own resources will allow unbelief to GROW.

c. When unbelief starts to GROW, it destroys confidence, makes me uncertain and builds distrust.

d. Unbelief leads to further unbelief and finally a hardening of my heart.

Two Greek Words for Unbelief

1. Apistia: A form of unbelief that often shows a lack of a confidence in God to do what He has promised to do. It is a CHOICE.

a. Matt. 13:58 And he did not many mighty works there *because of their unbelief*.

b. Heb. 3:19 So we see that they could not enter in because of unbelief. Choice!

c. Rom. 4:20 He staggered not at the promises of God through unbelief. Choice!

2. Apistia can lead to apeitheo [hardness of heart] which is obstinate, rebellious, disobedient; refusal to believe; apathetic. This person will not allow himself to be persuaded or believe. He stubbornly disbelieves and is disobedient.

a. Eph. 5:6 Let no man deceive you with vain words: for because of these things comes the wrath of God upon the children of disobedience.

b. Heb. 3:7-8 Wherefore (as the Holy Ghost says, Today if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts, as in the provocation, in the day of temptation in the wilderness.

c. Heb. 4:6 Seeing therefore it remains that some must enter therein, and they to whom it was first preached entered not in because of unbelief:

d. Heb. 4:11 Let us labor therefore to enter into that rest, lest any man fall after the same example of unbelief.

TRUTH #1: Unbelief is the basis for ALL SIN! All sins come from UNBELIEF in God's Word and Promises: anxiety, misplaced shame, indifference, regret, covetousness, envy, lust, bitterness, impatience, depression, pride - these are all sprouts from the root of unbelief in the promises of God.

Consider I Tim. 6:10: For the love of money is a root of all *kinds of evil*, for which some have strayed from the faith in their greediness, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows.

a. The evils of the world come from a certain kind of heart that loves money.

It is the taproot of every sinful attitude in my heart.

b. Money is the currency for human resources. The heart that loves money is a proud, independent heart that places its hopes, pursues its pleasures, and puts its trust in what human resources can offer. Faith in money that it will meet my needs

c. God's resources cannot be bought with money. Isa. 55:1 Ho everyone who thirsts, come to the waters. He who has NO MONEY, come, buy and eat.

d. Matt. 6:24 You cannot serve God and money. Belief in one is unbelief in the other.

TRUTH #2: Unbelief is Calling God A Liar!

I John 5:10 he who does not believe God has made Him a liar.

Heb. 6:17-18 Thus God, determining to show more abundantly to the heirs of promise the immutability of His counsel, confirmed *it* by an oath, that by two immutable things, in which *it is impossible for God to lie*, we might have strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold of the hope set before *us*.

TRUTH #3: The Results Of Unbelief

A. Unbelief produces a heartless religion. Only ritual; no satisfying of the soul

Consider: If it is not up to God, then it is up to me. That produces frustration and sorrow.

Question: Are you filled with the PEACE and JOY of the Holy Spirit? Do you awaken with a spontaneous love for God?

B. Unbelief produces a legalistic religion. It clouds your eyes and heart to seeing God's will and His glory. Unbelief leads to an obedience that is selfish.

C. Unbelief produces a disobedient heart. Unbelief will lead you to disavow God's sovereignty and will lead you to do what you believe is best. Root of sin in man-withholding confidence in God

D. Unbelief produces Restlessness in Your Soul Consider: If you have NO confidence in the promises of God, you are carrying your burdens upon your own back. You Will Grow Weary!

Matt. 11:28-30 Come to Me, all *you* who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. ²⁹ Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. ³⁰ For My yoke *is* easy and My burden is light."

Consider: My unbelief keeps me from resting in Jesus.

It keeps me from His yoke and from His faithful promises.

E. Unbelief results in an absence of peace in my life.

Although there may be MUCH to disturb and distress me, there is deep peace and joy in God, even in the midst of the storm, when I believe His Word and Promises.

Consider: When I do not have peace, real joy and satisfaction in God, His truth and promises, it is because of MY UNBELIEF.

F. Unbelief results in bondage to sin.

G. Unbelief produces servants and not sons. BELIEF will lead me to come before the throne with anticipation and expectation. I am His child and depending upon Him.

H. Unbelief produces a worldly person. I am given over to a worldly way of thinking and acting because I don't believe God. I mind earthly things; not laying up treasure for heaven. The Word of God is not my constant companion. The Holy Spirit is not my help and comfort.

Truth: I Will Not Neglect The Bible If I Believe It.

The POWER OF BELIEVING FAITH which GLORIFIES GOD!

A. I glorify God by believing His promises.

Martin Luther: Faith...honors him whom it trusts with the most reverent and highest regard since it considers him truthful and trustworthy. There is no other honor equal to the estimate of truthfulness and righteousness with which we honor him whom we trust. On the other hand, there is no way in which we can show greater contempt for a man than to regard him as false and wicked and to be suspicious of him, as we do when we do not trust him.

Trusting God's Word is the most fundamental way I can glorify God. If my goal is to glorify God in all I do, I must believe His promises. It was when Abraham believed the promise of God that God was glorified.

Heb. 11:11 By faith Sarah herself received power to conceive, even when she was past the age, since she considered him faithful who had promised.

This is the nature of faith: "The judging him faithful that promised and agreeing to the truth of His promises. You See and Believe in the Power of God."

B. This Faith Is Future Oriented

Belief that honors God means banking our hope for happiness on the promises of God.

Heb. 11:17-19 By faith Abraham, when he was tested, offered up Isaac...He considered that God was able even to raise him from the dead.

C. Believing Faith Produces Fruit

Abraham became the Father of a multitude - many nations - father of all born again believers.

Faith is a power. It never leaves the life unchanged. If I bank my hope on the promises of God every day, it will change the way I think, pray and act. Belief in the promises of God is the taproot of all righteousness and love. Belief in God's promises is not a dead and fruitless thing.

D. I Must Battle Unbelief Every Day

a. I Tim. 6:12 Fight the good fight of faith; take hold on eternal life to which you were called.

b. I fight against sin by fighting against unbelief in God's promises.

Remember: Unbelief requires a conscious decision.

Warnings From Those Who Fell Away in In Unbelief

- a. II Thess. 3:2 Some no longer have faith at all
- b. I Tim. 1:19 Some have shipwrecked their faith
- c. I Tim. 4:1 Some have left the faith for the doctrines of devils
- d. I Tim. 5:8 Some have denied the faith by not providing for their family
- e. I Tim. 5:12 Some have cast off their first faith
- f. I Tim. 5:15 Some have turned aside after Satan
- g. I Tim. 6:10, 21 Some have erred from the faith for the love of money
- h. II Tim. 3:8 Some are reprobate concerning the faith

The saddest example of unbelief comes from the generation of Israelites who failed to reach their Promised Land. [Inheritance]

Heb. 3:17-19 Now with whom was He angry forty years? *Was it* not with those who sinned, whose corpses fell in the wilderness? And to whom did He swear that they would not enter His rest, but to those who did not obey? ¹⁹ So we see that they could not enter in because of unbelief.

The Israelites were saved: they were delivered from the bondage of Egypt and spiritually baptized in the Red Sea [I Cor. 10:2]. They were led by a pillar of cloud and fire through the wilderness. But they REFUSED to believe when God promised He would give them the Promised Land; their inheritance. They looked at their own resources and refused to see God's.

Jude 1:5 But I want to remind you, though you once knew this, that the Lord, having saved the people out of the land of Egypt, afterward destroyed those who did not believe.

As a result, that generation did not reach their final destination of their inheritance.

II Pet. 3:17-18 You therefore, beloved, since you know *this* beforehand, beware lest you also fall from your own steadfastness, being led away with the error of the wicked; but grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

Heb. 4:1, 11 Therefore, since a promise remains of entering His rest, let us fear lest any of you seem to have come short of it. Let us therefore be diligent to enter that rest, lest anyone fall according to the same example of disobedience.

Consider: Am I growing in Christian maturity? Do I stagger in my walk?

Is God producing visible fruit through my life? Do I struggle with doubts and fears?

Abraham staggered NOT at the promise of God through unbelief, but was strong in faith and gave glory to God.

1. The Birth of Isaac: Gen. 21:8-10 Abraham made a great feast on the day that Isaac was weaned [~3 yrs.]. But Sarah saw the son [~17 yrs.] of Hagar the Egyptian, whom she had borne to Abraham, laughing.

Note: God used this incident of Ishmael's mocking Isaac to drive out the child Ishmael and Hagar. They would be a threat to the promised seed.

Therefore Sarah came to Abraham saying, "Cast out this bondwoman and her son; for the son of this bondwoman shall not be heir with my son, even with Isaac."

Gal. 4:21-31 Paul makes it clear: Ishmael = the believers 1st birth = the flesh
Isaac = the believers 2nd birth = the spirit

a. Ishmael was born of the flesh. Abraham had not yet "died" and was still able to beget a son. Isaac was born of the spirit. Both parents were DEAD and only God's power could bring conception and birth.

b. Ishmael was born 1st because the natural comes before the spiritual.

c. Just as Ishmael and Isaac were in conflict (Gal 4:29), so the flesh and the Spirit do not harmonize. The flesh struggles against the Spirit often mocking it (Gal 5:16-18).

d. Therefore believers are to "get rid of the slave woman and her son" (Gal 4:30), that is, to remove the threat of the flesh and "live by the Spirit." (Gal 5:16).

e. Ishmael, [flesh] caused even greater conflict after he matured.

The old nature is not able to produce the fruit of the Spirit: No Matter How Hard It Tries!

f. Isaac, like all believers, experienced persecution. When Isaac entered the family, Ishmael [flesh] began to oppose Isaac [spirit].

Interesting Note: Abraham represents faith; Sarah represents grace. [Gal. 4:24-26]

Isaac was born by grace through faith.

Paul makes it clear:

Sarah = Grace

Hagar = Law

In Galatians 4, Paul uses Sarah and Hagar to illustrate the results of two different covenants: the New Covenant, based on grace; and the Old Covenant, based on the Law. In Paul's analogy, believers in Christ are like the child born of Sarah—free, the result of God's promise. Those who try to earn their salvation by their own works are like the child born of Hagar—a slave, the result of human effort.

Gen. 21:11-12 And the matter was very displeasing in Abraham's sight because of his son.

But God said to Abraham, "Do not let it be displeasing in your sight because of the lad or because of your bondwoman. Whatever Sarah has said to you, listen to her voice;

for in Isaac your seed shall be called.

The supreme test of Abraham's faith was yet to come. Fiery tests of faith which occur early in life sometimes climax in much greater tests of faith in a time of spiritual maturity.

Gen. 22:1 Now it came to pass After These Things that God tested Abraham, and said to him, "Abraham!" And he said, "Here I am."