

The Trying of Abraham's Faith Pt.2

March 5, 2017

The Exercising, Maturing and Purifying of Faith by Tests and Trials

"Wherever God has given faith, it is given, among other reasons, for the very purpose of being tried." -- George Muller

1 Peter 1:6-7 ESV

6 In this you rejoice, though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been grieved by various trials,

7 so that the tested genuineness of your faith--more precious than gold that perishes though it is tested by fire--may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ.

Romans 4:18-22 NASB

18 In hope against hope he believed, so that he might become a father of many nations according to that which had been spoken, "*so shall your descendants be.*"

19 Without becoming weak in faith he contemplated his own body, now as good as dead since he was about a hundred years old, and the deadness of Sarah's womb;

20 yet, with respect to the promise of God, he did not waver in unbelief but grew strong in faith, giving glory to God,

21 and being fully assured that what God had promised, He was able also to perform.

22 Therefore *it was also credited to him as righteousness.*

James 1:2-4 NASB

2 Consider it all joy, my brethren, when you encounter various trials,

3 knowing that the testing of your faith produces endurance.

4 And let endurance have its perfect result, so that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing.

Genesis 22:1-3 NASB

1 Now it came about after these things, that God tested Abraham, and said to him, "Abraham!" And he said, "Here I am."

2 He said, "Take now your son, your only son, whom you love, Isaac, and go to the land of Moriah, and offer him there as a burnt offering on one of the mountains of which I will tell you."

3 So Abraham rose early in the morning and saddled his donkey, and took two of his young men with him and Isaac his son; and he split wood for the burnt offering, and arose and went to the place of which God had told him.

Hebrews 11:17-19 NASB

17 By faith Abraham, when he was tested, offered up Isaac, and he who had received the promises was offering up his only begotten son;

18 it was he to whom it was said, "*in Isaac your descendants shall be called.*"

19 He considered that God is able to raise people even from the dead, from which he also received him back as a type.

Abraham's faith, exercised through various trials throughout life, climaxed in this final demonstration of maturity.

1. Everything Abraham was and had was at God's disposal. Abraham claimed nothing as his own.
2. Abraham believed nothing was impossible with God, even raising Isaac from the dead.

TRUSTING GOD WITH THE UNKNOWN

There will be times when walking with God, that you feel lost, confused and disoriented, wondering where God and life are leading you. The unknown can plague the heart with unbelief, fear and self-reliance.

Hebrews 11:8-10 NASB

8 **By faith Abraham, when he was called, obeyed** by going out to a place which he was to receive for an inheritance; and **he went out, not knowing where he was going.**

9 **By faith he lived as an alien in the land of promise, as in a foreign land, dwelling in tents with Isaac and Jacob, fellow heirs of the same promise;**

10 for **he was looking for the city** which has foundations, **whose architect and builder is God.**

Psalm 139:16-18 NASB

16 Your eyes have seen my unformed substance; **And in Your book were all written the days that were ordained for me, when as yet there was not one of them.**

17 **How precious also are Your thoughts to me, O God! How vast is the sum of them!**

18 **If I should count them, they would outnumber the sand.** When I awake, I am still with You.

Psalm 37:23-25 NASB

23 **The steps of a man are established by the LORD, And He delights** (*chaphets - take pleasure in, pleased to do*) **in his way.**

24 **When he falls, he will not be hurled headlong, because the LORD is the One who holds his hand.**

25 I have been young and now I am old, Yet I have not seen the righteous forsaken Or his descendants begging bread.

TRUSTING GOD WITH THE CIRCUMSTANCES

The fear of circumstances is the fear of being out of control, that the circumstances will be too great and you will fail.

Genesis 12:10-13

10 **Now there was a famine in the land;** so Abram went down to Egypt to sojourn there, for **the famine was severe in the land.**

11 It came about when he came near to Egypt, that he said to Sarai his wife, "**See now, I know that you are a beautiful woman;**

12 **and when the Egyptians see you, they will say, 'This is his wife'; and they will kill me, but they will let you live.**

13 **"Please say that you are my sister so that it may go well with me because of you, and that I may live on account of you."**

Genesis 12:14-20

14 It came about when Abram came into Egypt, the Egyptians saw that the woman was very beautiful.

15 Pharaoh's officials saw her and praised her to Pharaoh; **and the woman was taken into Pharaoh's house.**

16 **Therefore he treated Abram well for her sake; and gave him sheep and oxen and donkeys and male and female servants and female donkeys and camels.**

17 **But the LORD struck Pharaoh and his house with great plagues because of Sarai, Abram's wife.**

18 Then Pharaoh called Abram and said, "What is this you have done to me? Why did you not tell me that she was your wife?"

19 "Why did you say, 'She is my sister,' so that I took her for my wife? Now then, here is your wife, take her and go."

20 Pharaoh commanded his men concerning him; and they escorted him away, with his wife and all that belonged to him.

James 4:13-16 NASB

13 Come now, you who say, "Today or tomorrow we will go to such and such a city, and spend a year there and engage in business and make a profit."

14 Yet you do not know what your life will be like tomorrow. You are just a vapor that appears for a little while and then vanishes away.

15 Instead, you ought to say, "If the Lord wills, we will live and also do this or that."

16 But as it is, you boast in your arrogance; all such boasting is evil.

Psalm 62:5-8 NASB

5 My soul, wait in silence for God ONLY, For my hope is from Him.

6 He ONLY is my rock and my salvation, My stronghold; I shall not be shaken.

7 On God my salvation and my glory rest; The rock of my strength, my refuge is in God.

8 Trust in Him at all times, O people; Pour out your heart before Him; God is a refuge for us. Selah.

Philippians 4:6-7 NASB

6 Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God.

7 And the peace of God, which surpasses all comprehension, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

TRUSTING GOD WITH OTHER'S DECISIONS

The inability to trust God with the decisions of other people has produced the most skillful politicians and manipulators.

Genesis 13:5-13

5 Now Lot, who went with Abram, also had flocks and herds and tents.

6 And the land could not sustain them while dwelling together, for their possessions were so great that they were not able to remain together.

7 And there was strife between the herdsmen of Abram's livestock and the herdsmen of Lot's livestock. Now the Canaanite and the Perizzite were dwelling then in the land.

8 So Abram said to Lot, "Please let there be no strife between you and me, nor between my herdsmen and your herdsmen, for we are brothers.

9 "Is not the whole land before you? Please separate from me; if to the left, then I will go to the right; or if to the right, then I will go to the left."

10 Lot lifted up his eyes and saw all the valley of the Jordan, that it was well watered everywhere--this was before the LORD destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah--like the garden of the LORD, like the land of Egypt as you go to Zoar.

11 So Lot chose for himself all the valley of the Jordan, and Lot journeyed eastward. Thus they separated from each other.

12 Abram settled in the land of Canaan, while Lot settled in the cities of the valley, and moved his tents as far as Sodom.

13 Now the men of Sodom were wicked exceedingly and sinners against the LORD.

14 The LORD said to Abram, after Lot had separated from him, "Now lift up your eyes and look from the place where you are, northward and southward and eastward and westward;

15 for all the land which you see, I will give it to you and to your descendants forever.

16 "I will make your descendants as the dust of the earth, so that if anyone can number the dust of the earth, then your descendants can also be numbered.

17 Arise, walk about the land through its length and breadth; for I will give it to you."

18 Then Abram moved his tent and came and dwelt by the oaks of Mamre, which are in Hebron, and there he built an altar to the LORD.

Psalm 56:4 NASB

4 In God I have put my trust; I shall not be afraid. What can mere man do to me?

Psalm 31:19-20 NASB

19 How great is Your goodness, Which You have stored up for those who fear You, Which You have wrought for those who take refuge in You, Before the sons of men!

20 You hide them in the secret place of Your presence from the conspiracies of man; You keep them secretly in a shelter from the strife of tongues.

TRUSTING GOD AS YOUR SOURCE OF PROVISION

Nothing will test your faith in God as your Provider like your tithes and offerings.

Genesis 14:14-24

14 When Abram heard that his relative had been taken captive, he led out his trained men, born in his house, three hundred and eighteen, and went in pursuit as far as Dan.

15 He divided his forces against them by night, he and his servants, and defeated them, and pursued them as far as Hobah, which is north of Damascus.

16 He brought back all the goods, and also brought back his relative Lot with his possessions, and also the women, and the people.

17 Then after his return from the defeat of Chedorlaomer and the kings who were with him, the king of Sodom went out to meet him at the valley of Shaveh (that is, the King's Valley).

18 And Melchizedek king of Salem brought out bread and wine; now he was a priest of God Most High.

19 He blessed him and said, "Blessed be Abram of God Most High, Possessor of heaven and earth;

20 And blessed be God Most High, Who has delivered your enemies into your hand." He gave him a tenth of all.

21 The king of Sodom said to Abram, "Give the people to me and take the goods for yourself."

22 Abram said to the king of Sodom, "I have sworn to the LORD God Most High, possessor of heaven and earth, 23 that I will not take a thread or a sandal thong or anything that is yours, for fear you would say, 'I have made Abram rich.'

24 "I will take nothing except what the young men have eaten, and the share of the men who went with me, Aner, Eshcol, and Mamre; let them take their share."

Malachi 3:10-11 NASB

10 "Bring the whole tithe into the storehouse, so that there may be food in My house, and test Me now in this," says the LORD of hosts, "if I will not open for you the windows of heaven and pour out for you a blessing until it overflows.

11 "Then I will rebuke the devourer for you, so that it will not destroy the fruits of the ground; nor will your vine in the field cast its grapes," says the LORD of hosts.

TRUSTING GOD WHILE WAITING

- *Waiting on God to move is clearly one of the hardest and most agonizing tests of our faith.*

- *It is never "too late" for God.*
- *God is waiting, not for you to fail, but for the precise moment when His power can manifest in the greatest way for His glory.*

Genesis 15:1-6 NASB

1 After these things the word of the LORD came to Abram in a vision, saying, "**Do not fear**, Abram, I am a shield to you; **Your reward shall be very great.**"

2 Abram said, "O Lord GOD, **what will You give me, since I am childless**, and the heir of my house is Eliezer of Damascus?"

3 And Abram said, "Since **You have given no offspring to me**, one born in my house is my heir."

4 Then behold, the word of the LORD came to him, saying, "**This man will not be your heir; but one who will come forth from your own body, he shall be your heir.**"

5 And He took him outside and said, "Now look toward the heavens, and **count the stars, if you are able** to count them." And He said to him, "**So shall your descendants be.**"

6 Then **he believed in the LORD; and He reckoned it to him as righteousness.**

John 11:21-27 NASB

21 Martha then said to Jesus, "Lord, **if You had been here, my brother would not have died.**"

22 "**Even now I know that whatever You ask of God, God will give You.**"

23 Jesus said to her, "**Your brother will rise again.**"

24 Martha said to Him, "I know that he will rise again in the resurrection on the last day."

25 Jesus said to her, "**I am the resurrection and the life; he who believes in Me will live even if he dies,**

26 **and everyone who lives and believes in Me will never die. Do you believe this?**"

27 She said to Him, "Yes, Lord; I have believed that You are the Christ, the Son of God, even He who comes into the world."

Psalms 37:5-8 NASB

5 **Commit your way to the LORD, Trust also in Him, and He will do it.**

6 **He will bring forth your righteousness as the light And your judgment as the noonday.**

7 **Rest in the LORD and wait patiently for Him; Do not fret** because of him who prospers in his way, Because of the man who carries out wicked schemes.

8 Cease from anger and forsake wrath; **Do not fret; it leads only to evildoing.**

TRUSTING GOD IN YOUR FAILURE

- *Refuse self-pity and condemnation entrance into your heart. They will only make your faith impotent and will spoil your fellowship with God.*
- *Never let past failures delay or hinder your present obedience. Even if lasting consequences come, you must move on in your walk with the Lord.*
- *Though you may be horrified by your failures, never be surprised nor overwhelmed by your failures. (What did you expect your flesh to do?)*
- *Find the healthy balance before God between the fear of God and the reassurance of His forgiveness and mercy.*
- *Find the healthy balance before God between godly sorrow and the joy of your salvation and forgiveness.*

Genesis 17:1-27 NASB

1 Now **when Abram was ninety-nine years old**, the LORD appeared to Abram and said to him, "I am God Almighty; Walk before Me, and be blameless.

2 "I will establish My covenant between Me and you, And I will multiply you exceedingly."

10 **"This is My covenant, which you shall keep, between Me and you and your descendants after you: every male among you shall be circumcised.**

15 Then God said to Abraham, "As for Sarai your wife, you shall not call her name Sarai, but Sarah shall be her name.

16 "I will bless her, and indeed I will give you a son by her. Then I will bless her, and she shall be a mother of nations; kings of peoples will come from her."

17 Then **Abraham fell on his face and laughed**, and said in his heart, "Will a child be born to a man one hundred years old? And will Sarah, who is ninety years old, bear a child?"

18 And Abraham said to God, "**Oh that Ishmael might live before You!**"

19 But God said, "**No, but Sarah your wife will bear you a son**, and you shall call his name Isaac; and I will establish My covenant with him for an everlasting covenant for his descendants after him."

23 Then Abraham took Ishmael his son, and all the servants who were born in his house and all who were bought with his money, **every male among the men of Abraham's household, and circumcised the flesh of their foreskin in the very same day**, as God had said to him.

24 Now **Abraham was ninety-nine years old when he was circumcised** in the flesh of his foreskin.

"You must ask for God's help. Even when you have done so, it may seem to you for a long time that no help, or less help than you need, is being given. Never mind. After each failure, ask forgiveness, pick yourself up, and try again. Very often what God first helps us towards is not the virtue itself but just this power of always trying again." — C.S. Lewis, Mere Christianity

2 Samuel 12:15-23 NASB

15 So Nathan went to his house. Then the LORD struck the child that Uriah's widow bore to David, so that he was very sick.

16 David therefore inquired of God for the child; and David fasted and went and lay all night on the ground.

17 The elders of his household stood beside him **in order to raise him up from the ground, but he was unwilling and would not eat food with them.**

18 Then it happened on the seventh day that the child died. And **the servants of David were afraid to tell him that the child was dead**, for they said, "Behold, while the child was still alive, we spoke to him and he did not listen to our voice. **How then can we tell him that the child is dead, since he might do himself harm!**"

19 But when David saw that his servants were whispering together, David perceived that the child was dead; so David said to his servants, "Is the child dead?" And they said, "He is dead."

20 So David **arose from the ground, washed, anointed himself, and changed his clothes; and he came into the house of the LORD and worshiped.** Then he came to his own house, and when he requested, they set food before him and he ate.

21 Then his servants said to him, "What is this thing that you have done? While the child was alive, you fasted and wept; but when the child died, you arose and ate food."

22 He said, "While the child was still alive, I fasted and wept; for I said, 'Who knows, the LORD may be gracious to me, that the child may live.'

23 "But now he has died; **why should I fast? Can I bring him back again?** I will go to him, but he will not return to me."

1 John 1:9 NASB

9 If we confess our sins, **He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.**