

LEARNING FROM THE LEADERS

Old Testament Portraits of Life

ABRAHAM

THE TESTS OF FAITH

Text: Genesis 17:27—22:19

A good, simple definition of biblical faith would be “*Faith is accepting what God has said and acting upon it with trust and love.*” This definition surfaces in two Scriptures, Hebrews 11:1 and Romans 10:17.

Hebrews 11:1 gives us a description of faith: “Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen.” This verse says that faith is our reason, our basis, for expecting God to save us, answer our prayers, and keep all of His other promises to us. The ground of confidence in the existence and integrity of God is what we call faith.

Romans 10:17 instructs us concerning the origin of faith: “So faith comes from hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ.” This verse affirms that faith is created by the Scriptures. Hearing God’s Word brings belief. Therefore, only by accepting what God has said can we have true faith.

An old illustration used by pioneer preachers helps us to see the difference between faith, opinion, and knowledge. Suppose I stood before a congregation, raised a closed hand before them, and said, “Can you guess what I have in my hand?” One member might say that I had a key in my hand. Another might suggest that I was

holding a coin. Still another might think that I had a button in my hand. These answers would be good guesses—but only guesses. Since they had no evidence concerning what I had in my hand, whatever they suggested would be only *opinions* and nothing more.

Suppose I then told them that the object in my hand was a small pebble. If they heard what I said I was holding, accepted it, and believed it, then their acceptance of what I said would move them from opinion to *faith*. My testimony would provide the evidence to produce their belief.

Suppose I then showed them the little stone that I had in my hand. Once they saw it, they would know that I had told them the truth about it. Seeing the small object would turn their faith into *knowledge*.

When they guessed at what I had in my hand, they were giving their opinions. When they accepted the statement that I made about having a little rock in my hand, they came over to faith. When they saw what I had in my hand, they moved into knowledge. Faith is not opinion, for it rests upon testimony. Faith is not knowledge, for it is the accepting of testimony regarding the unseen.

The Bible does not just define faith, but it also demonstrates it. The man in the Bible whom God chose to be His classic example of genuine faith

is Abraham. Because of his faith, he is called the “friend of God” (Isaiah 41:8; James 2:23). Because of his faithfulness, he is said to be the father of the faithful. That is, all who believe are, in a sense, the children of Abraham (Romans 4:16; Galatians 3:7). God has shown us, through Abraham, what it means to have faith.

Since we are to walk or live by faith (2 Corinthians 5:7), let us look at Abraham’s life and see what it means to be a person of faith. Abraham faced three great tests, and these tests illustrate the component parts of faith.

THE TEST OF LEAVING

The first test for Abraham—or Abram, as he was first known—was the test of leaving. He was asked to depart from his homes in Ur of Chaldees and Haran¹ (Genesis 11:27–31). God promised to guide him to another place. The first call, from Ur, is dated around 2165 B.C.² The second one, perhaps as many as fifteen years later, was from Haran.

The city of Ur, the city from which he was first called, was located in Mesopotamia and was a city of culture, learning, and commercialism. Abram’s decision to leave Ur would have been a difficult one.

Archaeologists, through their excavations at Ur, have established that the city was about four square miles in size and had a population of about 300,000 people. Ur was a significant and sophisticated city. History and archaeology join together to confirm that many of the people who lived in Ur were highly educated. They were proficient in mathematics, astronomy, weaving, and engraving. In addition, they used a form of writing, leaving behind some of their writings on clay tablets, which have been invaluable to archaeologists in reconstructing the social and religious life of this city and culture. Religiously, the city was polytheistic, worshiping

many gods, especially nature gods. In the center of Ur was a large worship center, or temple, called a ziggurat. Here the people worshiped their chief deity, a moon god called Nanna.³

Joshua 24:2 indicates that Terah, Abram’s father, worshiped idols:

And Joshua said to all the people, “Thus says the Lord, the God of Israel, ‘From ancient times your fathers lived beyond the River⁴ namely, Terah, the father of Abraham and the father of Nahor, and they served other gods.’”

We are not told when Abram became acquainted with Jehovah God, but at some time he came to believe in Him strongly and deeply.

When Abram was called of God, Terah and Abram left Ur. They traveled six hundred miles north and settled at Haran. Genesis 11:31 says that Terah took Abram to Haran. It must be that after Abram received his first call at Ur, he convinced Terah to leave Ur; then Terah, being the patriarch of the clan, led them to Haran. Abram may have agreed to stop at Haran because of his father’s age and health. He lived in Haran (Genesis 11:32–12:3) until the death of Terah, who died at the age of 205.

Perhaps fifteen years after the first call, God called Abram again at Haran (Genesis 12:1–3). With this call, God made Abram a promise which has been considered the heart of the Old Testament.⁵

³Gene A. Getz, *Abraham* (Ventura, Calif.: Regal Books, 1976), 11.

⁴That is, the Euphrates. See also in verses 3, 14, and 15.

⁵On five different occasions, Abraham received promises from God, which, taken together, constitute what is called the covenant God made with Abraham. The first instance was before Abraham arrived in the Promised Land (Genesis 12:1–3); the second was after Lot’s separation from him (Genesis 13:14–17); the third was after Abraham’s deliverance of Lot from the four kings (Genesis 15:1–21); the fourth was when Abraham was ninety-nine, just prior to the destruction of Sodom (Genesis 17:1–22); and the fifth was several years later, following God’s command to sacrifice Isaac (Genesis 22:15–18). Analyzing what God said at these five times, three principal areas of promise can be seen. First, Abraham’s posterity would grow to the size of a nation and be His special people (Genesis 12; 13:16; 15:2–5; 17:4–6; 22:17). Second, the country to which God had brought Abraham would be this nation’s homeland (Genesis 13:14–17; 15:18; 17:8). Third, his descendants would be a blessing to the world, to the extent that all nations would be blessed (Genesis 12:2, 3; 18:18; 22:18). This last promise was fulfilled through the coming of the Messiah into the world through the tribe of Judah (Galatians 3:16).

¹The Old Testament mentions specifically that Abraham was divinely called from Haran (Genesis 12:1); the New Testament in Stephen’s address (Acts 7:2, 3) refers to Abraham’s being divinely called from Ur. From what place did God first call Abraham? Was it from Ur or Haran? That Abraham received his first call from Ur is implied in the Old Testament in Genesis 15:7 and in Nehemiah 9:7, and expressly stated in the New Testament in Acts 7:2, 3. Thus he received two calls, the first one from Ur and then later another one from Haran.

²John J. Davis, *Paradise to Prison: Studies in Genesis* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Book House, 1975), 160.

Now the Lord said to Abram, "Go forth from your country, and from your relatives and from your father's house, to the land which I will show you; and I will make you a great nation, and I will bless you, and make your name great; and so you shall be a blessing; and I will bless those who bless you, and the one who curses you I will curse. And in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed" (Genesis 12:1-3).

God instructed Abram to go forth from his country, his kindred, and his father's house. Notice the order; each reflects an increasingly great sacrifice.

Did Abram pass the test? The text says, "So Abram went forth. . . ." (Genesis 12:4). He had to abandon everything that was significant to him—country, relatives, and immediate kin. Abram was seventy-five years old when he obeyed God's command (Genesis 12:4). We read in Hebrews 11:8,

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.

Abram is a good example for us in the way he packed up his belongings, pulled up his roots, departed from his homeland, and went wherever the Lord showed him. When God asked him to leave, he left. That is faith. Such a response would be difficult for anyone to make. God saw Abram's obedience to His call as an expression of faith.

Here, then, is the first part of walking by faith: "leaving." God has not asked us to depart from our homelands and go to other places, as He did Abram. However, He has asked everyone who follows Him to leave the land of sin and follow Him in faith to the promised land of righteousness.

Notice how this "leaving" is brought out in Paul's letter to the Christians at Colossae:

Therefore consider the members of your earthly body as dead to immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, and greed, which amounts to idolatry. For it is on account of these things that the wrath of God will come, and in them you also once walked, when you were living in them. But now you also, put them all aside: anger, wrath, malice, slander, and abusive speech from your mouth. Do not lie to one another, since you laid aside the old self with its evil practices, and have put on the new self who is being renewed to a true knowledge

according to the image of the One who created him (Colossians 3:5-10).

Curtis Booth, the brother who helped to convert serial killer Jeffrey Dahmer, told me recently that he had studied with Timothy McVeigh, the man who has been convicted of blowing up the Federal Building in Oklahoma City. He said that Timothy made his way through fifteen lessons before he was moved to Denver for his trial. At the time I spoke to brother Booth, he did not know if Timothy would be allowed to continue his studies in Denver because of the need for tight security. He said he was praying that his lawyer would continue to take the Bible correspondence courses to him and that Timothy would be permitted to complete the lessons and return them to him. I have not heard the outcome of brother Booth's request.

The gospel is for all—those we would consider the worst, the in-between, and the best. Both Jew and Gentile are saved by faith. God makes no distinction between the two (Acts 15:9). For all, saving faith includes repentance, "leaving" the life of sin, and following God into righteousness (Acts 17:30, 31). God will receive any of us, but we have to come to Him in faith, a faith that will cause us to leave sin and put our hope in Him.

THE TEST OF TRUSTING

When Abram arrived in Canaan, he faced his second test, the test of trusting. God promised to bless Abram. Confused about his future, Abram asked God, "O Lord God, what wilt Thou give me, since I am childless, . . . ?" (Genesis 15:2). God said that descendants were part of His plans for Abram; He would give Abram and Sarai a son.

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." Abram believed in the Lord; and He reckoned it to him as righteousness (Genesis 15:5, 6).

God also told Abram that he would give him Palestine to possess (Genesis 15:7). Abram, wanting assurance, asked Him, ". . . how may I know that I shall possess it?" In response to his question, God engaged in a kind of covenant-making exercise with Abram.

The Old Testament is really the story of God's

covenants with man. God used an agreement ritual to express His covenant to Abram. He told him to take a three-year-old heifer, a three-year-old female goat, a three-year-old ram, a turtledove, and a young pigeon. He was to cut the heifer, goat, and ram into halves. Abram did as he was told. He cut in half the heifer, the goat, and the ram, laying each half opposite the other to leave a path between the halves. That night a mysterious, flaming pot went down the pathway which was between the pieces (Genesis 15:7–17).

This method of making a covenant probably gave rise to the expression “cutting a covenant.” The underlying idea seems to be “If you do not keep this agreement, may you be cut asunder as these animals have been.” Typically, both parties would walk between the halves of the carcasses, but in this case God was the One making the covenant. This was a one-party covenant, so He alone walked down the path.

God went through this routine for Abram’s benefit. God is the eternal God. All of His attributes are perfect. His Word is truth and never has one particle of error in it. He does not need to affirm anything to anyone. Any promise from Him is as sure as the foundations of the earth, but God went through this ritual so that Abram would have testimony from God for his faith.

Abram’s task for the next few years was to trust in God’s promise. Evidently, Abram and Sarai thought that God should give them their son immediately. He did not. After waiting ten years (Genesis 16:3), a period that must have seemed like an eternity to both of them, they decided to do something about it. They chose to take matters into their own hands. Here was a breakdown in Abram’s faith.

Sarai suggested that Abram take Hagar as a second wife to secure a child for them (Genesis 16:1–4). Abram accepted Sarai’s suggestion. Since no child had been born to Sarai, Abram was likely reasoning that providing an heir through Hagar would be a way of accomplishing what God had promised. Abram was wrong in what he did, for the promised child was to come through Sarai in God’s own time. Abram and Sarai had become too impatient.

Abram’s actions, even though they were wrong and expressed a lack of faith, must be understood against the backdrop of the customs

of that day. Though strange to the modern reader, the approach Abram and Sarai took to their problem was probably the accepted way of dealing with childlessness in their day and in their culture. The code of Hammurabi⁶ and the Nuzi documents⁷ indicate that a barren wife could give a slave to her husband and retain legal rights to the child born to that union. After the birth of the child, the slave was to remain in her rightful place of submission as a slave.

A son, Ishmael, was born to Hagar, the handmaiden of Sarai, but God made it clear that he was not the one through whom the promised posterity would come (Genesis 16:7–16; 17:20, 21). After the birth of Ishmael, Sarai became bitter and wanted Abram to drive Hagar and her son from their household. Sarai’s jealousy caused severe distress for Abram, who did not want to compound the difficulty that already existed.

God gave Abram and Sarai reassurance that He would fulfill His promise to give them a son. He encouraged them by changing their names. “Abram” was changed to “Abraham” (Genesis 17:5), and “Sarai” became “Sarah” (Genesis 17:15). The significance was that Abraham was to become in truth a “father of many nations,” and Sarah, as the mother of these nations, would be a “princess” before God.

In addition, God confirmed His promise that He would give Abraham and Sarah a son by establishing a “sign of the covenant” God had made with Abraham (Genesis 17:1–14). He directed that every male of Abraham’s household should be circumcised:

This is My covenant, which you shall keep,
between Me and you and your descendants

⁶Hammurabi, a king of Babylon (1728–1686 B.C.), wrote a code of laws for his people which survives to this day. His set of laws drew upon earlier Sumerian legislative materials such as the codes of Eshnunna and Lipit-Ishtar. Several copies of Hammurabi’s code were made in the form of *stelae* and placed in public places so as to bring its contents to the notice of the general public. The social conditions that resulted at the beginning of the second millennium B.C., if not earlier, are clearly indicated by this code.

⁷Excavations of the town of Nuzi to the east of the Tigris has provided archaeologists with an amazing collection of clay documents which have given insight into the customs of the ancient Bible lands. Most of these documents are assigned to the fifteen century B.C. The customs and laws contained in the tablets show striking parallels to those of the Hebrew Patriarchal society.

after you: every male among you shall be circumcised. And you shall be circumcised in the flesh of your foreskin; and it shall be the sign of the covenant between Me and you. And every male among you who is eight days old shall be circumcised throughout your generations, a servant who is born in the house or who is bought with money from any foreigner, who is not of your descendants (Genesis 17:10–12).

God placed certain covenant obligations upon Abraham even before the son was born. He was told to circumcise every male as a sign of the covenant. From that time forward, each male child was to be circumcised when he was eight days old. This physical circumcision would have spiritual significance; every boy born to the Abrahamic clan would have a sign upon him to indicate that he was part of the covenant with God.

One reason that God inaugurated the sign at this time was to prepare Abraham for the birth of Isaac. This son would be a tangible fulfillment of the promises of the covenant. He wanted Abraham to be ready to continue the covenant by putting the sign of the covenant upon the son that would be born to him and Sarah.

Abraham thought he had a long wait before Ishmael was born, but he had fourteen more years to wait before the son of promise arrived. Finally, when Abraham was ninety-nine (Genesis 17:1), God spoke to him specifically concerning the coming of Isaac (Genesis 17:15–19; 18:10–15). By this time, however, so many years had passed that both Abraham (Genesis 17:17) and Sarah (Genesis 18:12–15) laughed in their hearts about the possibility of having a son. Apparently, their faith had waned.

Isaac was indeed born when Abraham was one hundred and Sarah was ninety years old. Twenty-five years had passed since God had first promised Abraham a son.

Why did God wait twenty-five years before giving Abraham a son? Probably, two reasons can be given. First, this delay constituted a major test to Abraham's faith. Could Abraham yet believe God would fulfill His promise after so long a time? His faith did wane to a degree, as we have noticed, but in view of the overall developments, it did not suffer serious decline. Second, this delay forced Abraham to realize that the nation that would come forth from him was to be from God alone. God waited until Sarah was past her natural time of bearing children so that He could

demonstrate that Abraham's promised descendants would truly be of supernatural origin. Isaac was to be uniquely God's child, though born to Abraham and Sarah. Genesis 21:1–4 says,

Then the Lord took note of Sarah as He had said, and the Lord did for Sarah as He had promised. So Sarah conceived and bore a son to Abraham in his old age, at the appointed time of which God had spoken to him. And Abraham called the name of his son who was born to him, whom Sarah bore to him, Isaac. Then Abraham circumcised his son Isaac when he was eight days old, as God had commanded him.

We further read in Hebrews 11:11, 12,

By faith even Sarah herself received ability to conceive, even beyond the proper time of life, since she considered Him faithful who had promised; therefore, also, there was born of one man, and him as good as dead at that, as many descendants as the stars of heaven in number, and innumerable as the sand which is by the seashore.

At long last, a son was born to Abraham and Sarah. The son was given the divinely appointed name Isaac, which means "laughter."

Abraham sagged some in his faith, but he did continue to believe. He attempted to take matters into his own hands and help God keep His promise, but God did not permit it. Abraham's life at least demonstrates that true faith must trust in God's promises.

The second component of faith, then, is trusting in God's Word. Any authentic walk of faith will include trust in the Word of God. Let us take the command of baptism as an illustration. Have you ever heard someone say of baptism, "I don't see how being dipped in water could have anything to do with salvation"? The truth of the matter is that God did not ask us to *see it*—He asked us to *believe it*! (Mark 16:15, 16; Acts 2:38; 22:16). He did not ask Abraham to *see* how He would give him a child—He asked him to *believe it*!

One of the most obvious places where one is standing on the promises of God is in the water of baptism. The immersion does not wash or physically heal the body. It is just a harmless dipping of the body in water. The only thing about baptism that makes it of value is God's promise in connection with it. We do not perceive any tangible response to baptism into Christ—no audible voice from heaven, no

divine spotlight shining around the one coming up out of the water, no supernatural feeling coming over the one who has been baptized. Nothing miraculous happens. The one who is being baptized is simply trusting in God's promise. He or she goes down into the water trusting and comes up out of the water trusting. Baptism is an act of faith for salvation. When a new Christian comes up out of the water, we believe that God in heaven has kept His Word and washed away that person's sins in the blood of Jesus.

When one chooses to walk with God, he must decide to be bound to God through His Word, not through special signs, unusual feelings, or supernatural guidance. This kind of walk obviously requires daily trust in God through a daily trust in God's Word.

THE TEST OF GIVING

Sometime after the birth of Isaac, Abraham faced his third test: the test of giving. God asked Abraham to offer Isaac, his son, as a sacrifice to Him. This test was Abraham's supreme test of faith.

The Bible does not tell us how old Isaac was at the time of this command. Perhaps he was not more than ten years of age. He went with his father obediently, even permitting himself to be bound without apparent protest. His question "But where is the lamb for the burnt offering?" (Genesis 22:7) indicates that he was old enough to reason. It also shows that he was young enough not to have thought of the question prior to the arrival at the mountain or for Abraham to have shared this information with him before their departure for the mountain.

When God commanded Abraham to offer Isaac, it almost appears that He "rubbed in" His command as if rubbing salt in a wound. The words seem to have been chosen to maximize the pain and emphasize the sacrifice involved in the command:

And 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" (Genesis 22:2).

God did not just say, "Take Isaac." He referred to him in three endearing ways. He said, "Take your son, your only son, whom you love, . . ."

We are not told what Abraham thought about this command. Pagan nations around Abraham did engage in child sacrifice. It was rare, but it was done. Did Abraham think, "God wants me to show Him that I am as dedicated to Him as the pagans around me are to their gods"? We do not know what he thought, but we do know that he immediately set out to do what God had commanded him.

Why did God give such a command as this? From reading what happened on Mount Moriah, we know that God did not want a human sacrifice. Maybe God wanted Abraham to demonstrate complete trust in Him by giving Him the dearest and most precious possession he had. God asked for Isaac, not Sarah, for all the promises He had made to Abraham were bound up in Isaac. Further, God was not just asking for Abraham's son. He was asking for Abraham's heart and future—He wanted Abraham to give his all.

What did Abraham do? After receiving the command, he immediately gathered up the wood and the fire, called together the two servants needed for the journey, and began the three-day journey to Mount Moriah, where the sacrifice would be made. When they arrived at the foot of the mountain, Abraham dismissed the servants with the words "I and the lad will go yonder; and we will worship and return to you" (Genesis 22:5). Abraham believed in God so confidently that he was willing to offer his only son on the altar. He trusted in God so completely that he expected Isaac to be raised from the dead to fulfill all that God had promised to do through him. The writer of Hebrews indicates the depth of Abraham's faith in his description of the event:

By faith Abraham, when he was tested, offered up Isaac; and he who had received the promises was offering up his only begotten son; it was he to whom it was said, "In Isaac your descendants shall be called." He considered that God is able to raise men even from the dead; from which he also received him back as a type (Hebrews 11:17–19).

When Abraham and Isaac reached the summit of the mountain, Abraham must have silently built the altar that would be used. Piling stone upon stone, he made it sturdy and strong. We do not know how Abraham went about the

actual offering of Isaac. Perhaps he sat down with Isaac, put his arm around him, and said, "Isaac, I am going to have to do something that God has commanded. I do not understand it, but everything will be all right. God can be trusted. All of your life I have taught you to trust in God. We must trust Him completely now. He will take care of both of us if we believe completely in Him. I am going to tie you up and place you upon the altar, but do not be afraid, for God will take care of you."

After their conversation, Abraham bound Isaac and laid him gently upon the altar. He probably wanted to get it over quickly so that Isaac would feel no pain. He drew back the knife. It flashed in the sunlight as he prepared to bring it down. In that split second between his raising the knife and bringing it down, a voice called to him from heaven and said, "Abraham, Abraham! . . . Do not stretch out your hand against the lad, and do nothing to him; for now I know that you fear God, since you have not withheld your son, your only son, from Me" (Genesis 22:11, 12). Abraham had faithfully and loyally passed the test of giving. He had put on the altar his dearest earthly possession, giving his all to God.

The significance of what Abraham did is immediately recognized by any reader. First, Abraham was giving up in this sacrifice to God his very heart, the love of his soul. Second, he was trusting God to give Isaac back to him after this offering, in order that the promises God had made through him could be fulfilled.

What God did with Abraham in this event is illustrated by a fabled story about a man who was converted to God. Shortly after his conversion, God said to him, "What do you have?" He said, "Well, I have a house." God said, "I want it." God said, "What else do you have?" He said, "I have a car and some money in the bank." God said, "I want both the car and the money in the bank." God said, "What else do you have?" He said, "All I have now are my wife and two children." God said, "I want your wife and your two children." God said, "What else do you have?" He said, "I don't have anything now but myself." God said, "I want you too." He said, "All right, Lord, you now have everything and everyone I have. What now?" God said, "I will give them back to you to use for My glory until I deem it wise to use them in some other way."

This is what God did with Abraham.

Another truth is seen here: When Abraham gave God his son, God gave him back to Abraham *forever*. Later, in the New Testament, Jesus spoke of God as the God of "Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob." God *is*, not *was*, Jesus said. All three of them were with God in eternity at the time Jesus spoke those words (Matthew 22:32).

Remember: Only what we give to God do we get to keep. Life does not subsist in houses, land, money—not even in husbands, wives, or children, as precious as they are. True life is found in walking with God in faith. Such a walk glorifies God and prioritizes all our other relationships.

Here, then, is the third component of faith: giving to God. God's love is a giving love, for He is a selfless God, a loving God, always seeking to bless us by sharing with us and giving to us. Walking with this loving God invariably involves giving on our part as well, even sacrificial giving. No one can truly walk in faith and not be generous, serving, and giving.

A wealthy man during the Great Depression in the U.S. loved to quote Acts 2:38. He would mention it often to show others the importance of baptism. However, when the collection plate was passed on Sunday mornings, he would put in a mere dime. The church was struggling during that time, and he had the means to help; but he consistently gave only ten cents. He could quote Acts 2:38, but he did not understand it. He did not have the kind of faith it teaches. This verse teaches that anyone who truly repents and is baptized begins the walk of faith. That walk includes selfless giving and living.

CONCLUSION

The three tests that Abraham passed help us to see what true faith is and how it operates in a person's heart. *Faith is accepting the words of God and acting upon those words in trust and love.* Such a faith can be broken down into three components: leaving what God has asked us to leave, trusting in God's commands and promises, and giving our lives and possessions to Him and His work as God has instructed.

Have you ever started to walk across a small bridge of some kind but hesitated because you thought it might not hold your weight? Perhaps you inched on it to check out its strength. Finally, you made your way slowly across to the

other side. Once you were confident of its ability to support your weight, you could walk back and forth across it again and again with assurance. That is really what it means to live by faith. You accept the evidence of God's Word, and you place all your weight on that truth from God. You stand upon that truth, live upon that truth, and go into eternity relying upon that truth. Your bridge to God is the truth of His Word. The walk of faith is not based upon feelings, suppositions, or supposed signs. It is a walk right down the middle of the bridge of God's Word.

You may ask, "Are there any rewards to such a walk?" Yes, the faithful person receives two significant rewards. Not only does he or she

receive the blessings of God, but also *God* Himself. God is our reward as well as our Redeemer. The greatest gift from God is God. In Genesis 15:1 God said to Abraham, "Do not fear, Abram, I am a shield to you; your reward shall be very great." As Abraham walked with God, he not only got God's blessings, but he also got God, the Blessor. The same invitation is offered to each of us. God says, "Come walk with Me, and I will give you My presence and My provisions." Will you begin the walk of faith? ■

***Lesson To Be Learned:
Faith is accepting God's
Word and acting upon it.***

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