

# HOW TO GROW YOUR FAITH

Different: Part 7

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## The 5<sup>th</sup> Test of Abraham

*Will I trust God's heart when I can't trace His hand?*

## Two Disciplines that Develop Our Faith

### 1. TO BECOME GODLY, I HAVE TO BE FRIENDLY.

*"The LORD appeared again to Abraham near the oak grove belonging to Mamre. One day Abraham was sitting at the entrance to his tent during the hottest part of the day. He looked up and noticed three men standing nearby. When he saw them, he ran to meet them and welcomed them, bowing low to the ground. "My lord," he said, "if it pleases you, stop here for a while. Rest in the shade of this tree while water is brought to wash your feet. And since you've honored your servant with this visit, let me prepare some food to refresh you before you continue on your journey." "All right," they said. "Do as you have said." (Genesis 18:1–5, NLT)*

HOSPITALITY is the greatest expression of my spirituality.

*"Don't forget to show hospitality to strangers, for some who have done this have entertained angels without realizing it!" (Hebrews 13:2, NLT)*

*"Sodom and Gomorrah and the surrounding towns gave themselves up to sexual immorality and perversion. They serve as an example of those who suffer the punishment of eternal fire." (Jude 7, NIV84)*

*"Sodom's sins were pride, gluttony, and laziness, while the poor and needy suffered outside her door. She was proud and committed detestable sins, so I wiped her out, as you have seen." (Ezekiel 16:49–50, NLT)*

### *The Requirements of Hospitality*

#### 1) FLEXIBILITY.

*"He looked up and noticed three men standing nearby..." (Genesis 18:2, NLT)*

*"Always be eager to practice hospitality." (Romans 12:13b, NLT)*

#### 2) HUMILITY.

*"...[he] welcomed them, bowing low to the ground My lord," he said, "if it pleases you, stop here for a while. Rest in the shade of this tree while water is brought to wash your feet. And since you've honored your servant with this visit, let me*

prepare some food to refresh you before you continue on your journey.” “All right,” they said. “Do as you have said.”” (Genesis 18:2–5, NLT)

“Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility **consider others better than yourselves.**” (Philippians 2:3, NIV84)

### 3) **GENEROSITY.**

“So Abraham ran back to the tent and said to Sarah, “Hurry! **Get three large measures of your best flour,** knead it into dough, and bake some bread.” Then Abraham ran out to the herd and **chose a tender calf...**” (Genesis 18:6–7, NLT)

“The [believers] worshiped together at the Temple each day, met in homes for the Lord’s Supper, and **shared their meals** with great joy and generosity—” (Acts 2:46, NLT)

“Then these righteous ones will reply, ‘Lord, when did we ever...show you hospitality?... And the King will say, ‘I tell you the truth, when you did it to one of the least of these my brothers and sisters, you were doing it to me!’” (Matthew 25:37–40, NLT)

### 4) **MINISTRY.**

“So Abraham ran back to the tent...Then Abraham ran out to the herd...When the food was ready, **Abraham...served it to the men...**” (Genesis 18:6–8, NLT)

“For even the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve others and to give his life as a ransom for many.” (Matthew 20:28, NLT)

## 2. TO DEVELOP A HEART OF CARE, I HAVE TO SPEND MORE TIME **IN PRAYER.**

“Then the men got up from their meal and looked out toward Sodom. As they left, Abraham went with them to send them on their way. “**Should I hide my plan from Abraham?**” the LORD asked. “For Abraham will certainly become a great and mighty nation, and all the nations of the earth will be blessed through him. **I have singled him out** so that he will direct his sons and their families to keep the way of the LORD by doing what is right and just. Then I will do for Abraham all that I have promised.” (Genesis 18:16–19, NLT)

“So the LORD told Abraham, “I have heard a great outcry from Sodom and Gomorrah, because their sin is so flagrant. I am going down to see if their actions are as wicked as I have heard. If not, I want to know.”” (Genesis 18:20–21, NLT)

“God also rescued Lot out of Sodom because he was a righteous man who was sick of the shameful immorality of the wicked people around him. Yes, Lot was a righteous man who was tormented in his soul by the wickedness he saw and heard day after day.” (2 Peter 2:7–8, NLT)

**Prayer is the discipline that deepens me.**

1) Prayer is where I **DRAW NEAR** to the presence of God.

*“Then **Abraham drew near** [to the Lord]...” (Genesis 18:23, ESV)*

*“Draw near to God, and he will draw near to you.” (James 4:8a, ESV)*

2) Prayer is where I **DISCERN** the heart of God.

*“Abraham came closer and asked, “**Are you really going to sweep away the innocent** with the guilty?” (Genesis 18:23, GW)*

*“Don’t worry about anything; instead, pray about everything. Tell God what you need, and thank him for all he has done.” (Philippians 4:6, NLT)*

*“I am the LORD, the Creator, the holy God of Israel. Do you dare question me about my own nation or about what I have done?” (Isaiah 45:11, CEV)*

3) Prayer is where I **DISCOVER** the mind of God.

- What God cannot do.

*“...Surely everyone knows that God doesn’t sin!” (Job 34:10, The Living Bible)*

- What God can do.

*“Is anything too hard for the LORD?” (Genesis 18:14a, NLT)*

- What God **WILL ALWAYS** do.

*“... You wouldn’t treat godly and evil people alike. You would never do anything like that! Won’t the Judge of the whole earth do what is right?” (Genesis 18:25, NIV)*

*“The LORD is a mighty rock, and he never does wrong. God can always be trusted to bring justice.” (Deuteronomy 32:4, CEV)*

***You cannot exhaust God’s love,  
but you can reach His limit.***

*“Don’t you see how wonderfully kind, tolerant, and patient God is with you? Does this mean nothing to you? Can’t you see that his kindness is intended to turn you from your sin? But because you are stubborn and refuse to turn from your sin, you are storing up terrible punishment for yourself. For a day of anger is coming, when God’s righteous judgment will be revealed.” (Romans 2:4–5, NLT)*

4) Prayer is where I **JOIN** the work of God.

***I have chosen [Abraham]** so that he will direct his children and his family after him to keep the way of the LORD...” (Genesis 18:19, GW)*

*“Indeed, the Sovereign LORD never does anything until he reveals his plans to his servants the prophets.” (Amos 3:7, NLT)*

*“For we are God’s coworkers.” (1 Corinthians 3:9a, HCSB)*

*“Then the disciples went out and preached everywhere, and **the Lord worked with them** and confirmed his word by the signs that accompanied it.” (Mark 16:20, NIV)*

5) Prayer is where I **SURRENDER** to the will of God.

*“When the LORD had finished his conversation with Abraham, he went on his way, and **Abraham returned to his tent.**” (Genesis 18:33, NLT)*

*“We can make our plans, but the final outcome is in God’s hands.” (Proverbs 16:1, The Living Bible)*

**The more God has OF YOU,  
the more God can reveal to you.**

*“And so, dear brothers and sisters, I plead with you to give your bodies to God because of all he has done for you. Let them be a living and holy sacrifice—the kind he will find acceptable. This is truly the way to worship him. Don’t copy the behavior and customs of this world, but let God transform you into a new person by changing the way you think. Then you will learn to know God’s will for you, which is good and pleasing and perfect.” (Romans 12:1–2, NLT)*

**ACTION STEPS**

**Run the Bases!**

**Get BAPTIZED next week!**