

Encounter Church
Sunday September 27, 2026

Pursue
The Faith Journey

Romans 4:18–21 (NLT)- “Even when there was no reason for hope, Abraham kept hoping—believing that he would become the father of many nations. For God had said to him, “That’s how many descendants you will have!” And Abraham’s faith did not weaken, even though, at about 100 years of age, he figured his body was as good as dead—and so was Sarah’s womb. Abraham never wavered in believing God’s promise. In fact, his faith grew stronger, and in this he brought glory to God. He was fully convinced that God is able to do whatever he promises.”

Key Truth: ***God develops our faith through a process. What begins as a dream often passes through delay, difficulty, and even a dead end before God brings deliverance.***

FAITH IS A JOURNEY

Hebrews 11:1 (NKJV) “Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.”

Faith is not merely believing that God exists. Faith is trusting God enough to follow Him when we cannot see how the story will end.

Most of us want God to give us a dream and immediately bring it to pass. We want to move straight from promise to fulfillment. But God usually develops our faith through a process.

God gave Abraham a promise, but Abraham did not receive its fulfillment overnight. He had to trust the process and experience “The Faith Journey!”

In “The Faith Journey” God wants to develop your faith and prepare you for the promise!

1. Dream — God Gives You a Vision

Genesis 12:1–3 (NLT)- “The Lord had said to Abram, “Leave your native country, your relatives, and your father’s family, and go to the land that I will show you. I will make you into a great nation. I will bless you and make you famous, and you will be a blessing to others. I will bless those who bless you and curse those who treat you with contempt. All the families on earth will be blessed through you.”

Every journey of faith begins when God places something within your heart.

God gave Abraham a dream. Abraham would become the father of a great nation. His descendants would be blessed, and through him all the families of the earth would be blessed.

The dream originated with God.

Abraham did not invent it. He did not manipulate it. God spoke it into his life.

A God-given dream is not merely something you want to do for yourself. It is something God wants to accomplish through you for His glory and the benefit of others.

The dream will be larger than your resources, experience, or natural ability. In fact, if the dream can be accomplished without God, it may not be a God-sized dream.

When God gives the dream, He rarely gives all the details. He gives enough light for the next step, but He does not always reveal the entire journey.

God told Abraham to go “unto a land that I will show you” Abraham had a promise, but he did not have a map.

Faith does not require knowing every detail. Faith requires knowing the One who called you.

God’s dream will often exceed your ability so that its fulfillment will display His glory.

2. Decision — You Must Respond to God

Genesis 12:4 (NLT)- “So Abram departed as the Lord had instructed, and Lot went with him. Abram was seventy-five years old when he left Haran”

Haran represents a place of transition, a crossroads, or a holding pattern where a person pauses on their spiritual journey instead of reaching their ultimate calling.

Abraham's father, Terah, stopped in Haran and died there instead of finishing the journey to Canaan. Spiritually, this warns against letting comfort or familiarity keep you from your true purpose.

A dream remains only a dream until we make a decision.

Abraham had to decide whether he would remain where he was comfortable or step into the unknown with God. He chose to obey.

Hebrews 11:8 (NLT)- “It was by faith that Abraham obeyed when God called him to leave home and go to another land that God would give him as his inheritance. He went without knowing where he was going.”

Faith is not simply agreeing with God. Faith is acting upon what God has said.

Abraham could have talked about the promise, prayed about the promise, and celebrated the promise—but until he left home, he had not exercised faith.

Some people never experience the next phase of God’s plan because they never make the first decision of obedience.

There comes a moment when you must decide:

Will I trust God? Will I leave what is familiar? Will I obey even when I do not understand? Will I follow God when I cannot see the outcome?

A decision of faith will usually involve risk. If there is no possibility of failure, faith may not be required.

Faith says, “God, I do not understand everything, but I trust You enough to obey You.”

You cannot follow God and remain exactly where you are.

3. Delay — You Must Wait for God's Timing

Genesis 15:2–5 (NLT)- “Then the Lord took Abram outside and said to him, “Look up into the sky and count the stars if you can. That’s how many descendants you will have!”

Abraham obeyed God, but the promised son did not immediately arrive.

The years began to pass. Abraham grew older. Sarah grew older. The promise appeared increasingly unlikely.

God gave Abraham the promise when he was approximately seventy-five years old. Isaac was born when Abraham was one hundred. Abraham waited about twenty-five years for the promise to be fulfilled.

The delay did not mean the promise had been denied.

We often misunderstand God’s delays. When nothing appears to be *happening*, we assume *God is doing nothing*. But *God is always working*, even when we cannot see *Him working*!

Isaiah 40:31 (NKJV)- “But those who wait on the Lord Shall renew their strength; They shall mount up with wings like eagles, They shall run and not be weary, They shall walk and not faint.”

During the delay, God may be:

Developing our character. Deepening our dependence. Purifying our motives. Preparing other people. Arranging circumstances. Teaching us to trust His timing.

The greatest temptation during a delay is to take matters into our own hands.

Abraham and Sarah attempted to help God fulfill His promise through Hagar. Their impatience produced Ishmael and brought pain into their family.

Whenever we try to force God's promise through human effort, we create unnecessary complications.

God does not need us to manipulate circumstances. He asks us to trust and obey Him.

Psalms 27:14 (NKJV)- “Wait on the Lord; Be of good courage, And He shall strengthen your heart; Wait, I say, on the Lord!”

God's delay is not God's denial. If God gave the promise, He has not forgotten it.

4. Difficulty — Your Faith Will Be Tested

Between the promise and its fulfillment, Abraham encountered many difficulties.

He experienced famine, family conflict, fear, warfare, personal failure, and years of uncertainty. Every difficulty raised the same question:

“Abraham, do you still believe God?”

A faith that has never been tested cannot become strong.

James 1:2–4 (NKJV) “My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into various trials, knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience. But let patience have its perfect work, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing.”

God does not necessarily cause every difficulty, but He can use every difficulty to develop us.

The difficulty may challenge what you believe about:

God's goodness God's faithfulness God's power God's timing God's presence

During the difficult phase, feelings will tell you that God has abandoned you.

Circumstances will tell you that the promise cannot happen. Other people may tell you to give up.

But faith does not deny the reality of the difficulty. Faith declares that God is greater than the difficulty.

Romans 4:19 (NKJV)-“And not being weak in faith, he did not consider his own body, already dead (since he was about a hundred years old), and the deadness of Sarah’s womb.”

Abraham was aware of the facts, but he refused to allow the facts to become greater than God’s promise.

Faith is not pretending the problem does not exist. Faith is believing that the problem does not have the final word.

The testing of your faith is not intended to destroy you; it is intended to develop you.

5. Dead End — You Reach the End of Human Ability

Eventually, Abraham reached what appeared to be a dead end. He and Sarah were beyond the natural age of having children. Humanly speaking, the situation was impossible. There was nothing Abraham could do to produce the promise.

But what looks like a dead end to us may be the perfect setting for a miracle from God.

A dead end is the place where:
Your resources are exhausted. Your plans have failed. Your strength is gone. Human solutions are insufficient. Only God can make a way.

God sometimes allows us to reach the end of ourselves so that we can discover the sufficiency of His power.

Abraham had to learn that the promise would not be fulfilled through human strength. It would be fulfilled through divine power.

Romans 4:20–21 (NKJV)- “He did not waver at the promise of God through unbelief, but was strengthened in faith, giving glory to God, and being fully convinced that what He had promised He was also able to perform.”

The strength of faith is not found in the person believing. The strength of faith is found in the God who made the promise.

You may be looking at a situation today that appears completely dead:

A broken relationship. A financial crisis. A physical diagnosis. A child far from God. A dream that appears impossible.

Never place a period where God has only placed a comma.

The Red Sea looked like a dead end until God divided the waters. Lazarus' tomb looked like a dead end until Jesus called him out. The cross looked like a dead end until Sunday morning.

When you reach the end of your ability, you have not reached the end of God's power.

6. Deliverance — God Fulfills His Promise

Genesis 21:1–2 (NKJV)- “And the Lord visited Sarah as He had said, and the Lord did for Sarah as He had spoken. For Sarah conceived and bore Abraham a son in his old age, at the set time of which God had spoken to him.”

Those words are the heart of the entire story: “As He had said.”

God did exactly what He promised.

Isaac was born, and Abraham and Sarah named him Isaac, meaning “laughter.”

God transformed their sorrow into joy, their waiting into worship, and their impossibility into a testimony.

Deliverance does not always come in the way we expect or according to our preferred timetable, but God will always remain faithful to His character and His Word.

When deliverance comes, we must remember who deserves the glory. God brings us through the process so that we can say:

“The Lord made a way.” “The Lord opened the door.” “The Lord supplied the need.” “The Lord restored my family.” “The Lord sustained me.” “The Lord kept His promise.”

Psalms 126:3 (NKJV)- “The Lord has done great things for us, And we are glad.”

What God promises by His grace, He is able to perform by His power.

Where Are You in the Process?

Perhaps God has placed a dream in your heart.

Maybe you are standing at the moment of decision, knowing that God is calling you to obey.

Perhaps you are struggling through a long delay, wondering when God will move.

Maybe you are facing a painful difficulty that is testing everything you believe.

Perhaps you have reached a dead end, and the situation appears hopeless.

Or maybe you are celebrating God's deliverance and giving Him glory for what He has done.

Wherever you are, do not abandon the process. Do not give up in the delay. Do not turn back in the difficulty. Do not surrender at the dead end.

The same God who gave you the promise will be faithful to walk with you through every phase.

Philippians 1:6 (NKJV)- "being confident of this very thing, that He who has begun a good work in you will complete it until the day of Jesus Christ;"

Conclusion: Keep walking forward on your Faith Journey!

Faith is trusting God when the dream is exciting. Faith is obeying God when the decision is costly. Faith is waiting when the delay is long. Faith is persevering when the difficulty is painful. Faith is believing when you reach a dead end. Faith is worshiping when deliverance comes.

Do not judge God's faithfulness by the stage you are currently experiencing.

If God has spoken, keep believing. If God has called you, keep walking. If God has made a promise, remain faithful.

LET'S PRAY