

Abraham's Motivation: God's Promise

(Hebrews 6:13-15 NKJV) "For when God made a promise to Abraham, because He could swear by no one greater, He swore by Himself, {14} saying, "Surely blessing I will bless you, and multiplying I will multiply you." {15} And so, after he had patiently endured, he obtained the promise."

(Hebrews 11:9 NKJV) "By faith he dwelt in the land of promise as in a foreign country, dwelling in tents with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise;"

Wherever Abraham went, he made his home by faith. To make one's home means to "dwell" or "abide" or to "rest comfortably and securely." This required two things of Abraham.

1. He had to do what was necessary to make the place suitable for himself.
2. He had to do what was necessary to make himself suitable for the place. This required proper attitudes and actions.

Abraham did both and as a result, his dwelling places were good places for him. He may not have always lived in the home of his dreams. It may not have always been just the way he would have liked it, but wherever he was, it was his home.

Abraham's only way to sustain his Journey: **By Faith**

Abraham understood the value of his home, wherever it happened to be along the way. It was God's gift and He would be grateful for it. In Abraham's heart, his home in the Promised Land was going to be exactly what God promised! It was his promise. He accepted it by faith, and by faith, saw it come to pass. Even before his natural eyes could see his promise, he claimed it. God's promises required the following from Abraham (and will require the same of us).

1. It was required that he believe in the Divine Promiser.

He did so without wavering. Hebrews 6:14 says, God swore by Himself to validate His promise to Abraham. Abraham believed in the integrity of God and His word, which became the collateral for the reliability of his promises.

2. It was required that he have patience for the promise.

Abraham patiently endured whatever he encountered, much of which could easily have destroyed his faith in God's promises. He persevered. His patience was rewarded.

3. It was required that he have an expectant faith.

Abraham had an expectation, anticipation, and an eagerness to see his promises come to pass. He knew they would be his! He lived in anticipation of the supernatural intervention and divine stewardship of God over Abraham and his promise.

No Visible Support Required – No Time Limit Necessary

God is completely reliable. He will work out your promise in His own way and at His own speed. Abraham had to be patient and await the completion of God's timetable for things to happen.

How to dwell in anticipation of the Promised Land when you do not yet see it

(Hebrews 10:17-24 NKJV) "then He adds, "Their sins and their lawless deeds I will remember no more." {18} Now where there is remission of these, there is no longer an offering for sin. Therefore, brethren, having boldness to enter the Holiest by the blood of Jesus, {20} by a new and living way which He consecrated for us, through the veil, that is, His flesh, {21} and having a High Priest over the house of God, {22} let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water. {23} Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful. {24} And let us consider one another in order to stir up love and good works,"

Three Key Guides to a Successful Journey to your Promise

What can we do to insure a successful, strong and satisfying journey to our personal lands of promise? There are three keys to begin with. (We will discuss nine additional steps we can take, following these three keys.)

1. "Let us draw near."

The first key calls for action. We are instructed to move toward God with a sense of eagerness and holiness about us. This implies both positive and negative actions...

- Positively – we put into motion the things that bring us closer to God, and help us become more like Him.
- Negatively – we reject and discontinue the things that pull us away from God, and cause us to be less like Him.

Paraphrase:

God has forgiven and forgotten our sins. **Therefore...**

or, **because of** God's gracious forgiveness of our vile behavior... and **with the backing or assurance of** God's reliability and sovereign power and authority, let do three things:

1. **Draw near!**
2. **Hold fast!**
3. **Consider one another!**

Every one of us could make a list to describe both the positive and negative aspects of this question as it pertains to us in our present journeys toward the promise. We are not just to draw near, but the Scripture qualifies our actions. We are to draw near with *“a sincere heart.”* It is a heart issue! Matthew 5:8 says, *“Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.”* We are to be transparent and tuned to God’s Word. We are to fill the treasure chests of our hearts with only those motives that please God. If we will do these things, we will see God in action along the way to our promises.

2. *“Let us hold fast.”*

To hold fast means to “retain a firm, purposeful grasp.” What are you holding fast to? The Bible tells us that hope is the anchor of our souls (Hebrews 6:19). We need to hold fast to our hope that God is going to fulfill all the promises we have been given. We are reminded by the Scriptures that we are not to waiver. He who promised is faithful!

3. *“Let us consider one another.”*

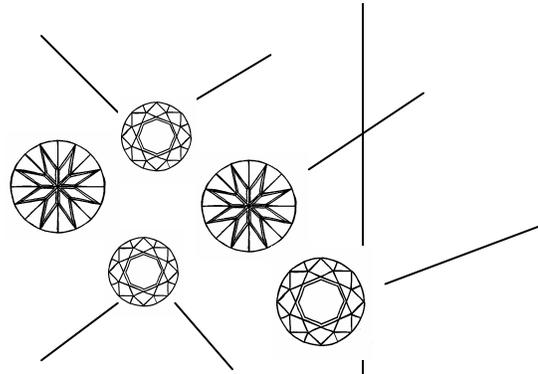
This is to be a mutually supportive, group activity. The issue here is simple: Will we be selfish or selfless? Isn’t this always the issue in God’s kingdom? We are not moving toward, or dwelling in the promise land simply to consume the promise on ourselves. The promise is for others who travel there with us, or we meet when we arrive. It is for generations that will spring from our loins, both natural and spiritual! Ask yourself, *Am I stirring up love and good works in those I have an influence with, and an effect upon?*

(Again - Hebrews 10:24 NKJV) “And let us consider one another in order to stir up love and good works,”

The Greek word for “stir up” (“provoke” in the KJV) is *“paroxuno.”* It means *“to sharpen alongside, to exasperate: to easily provoke, to stir.”*

It is not always pleasant to stir people up! We are to provoke our brothers and sisters in the Lord to love and good works or deeds (often, whether they like it or not). This is to be a group activity, with everybody participating!

God's promises are like precious jewels or treasures. They go hand in hand with the agape (God's kind of) love we display and the good works we do. Since these promises come from God's heart to ours, they are to be understood and treated as treasures. Then, this agape love and its accompanying good deeds will spring forth from our hearts.



A Study: Nine Keys to Securing Your Promise

First Key: Listen for the voice of God.

(John 10:3-5 NKJV) "To him the doorkeeper opens, and the sheep hear his voice; and he calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. {4} And when he brings out his own sheep, he goes before them; and the sheep follow him, for they know his voice. {5} Yet they will by no means follow a stranger, but will flee from him, for they do not know the voice of strangers."

God can only help us through moments of crisis, or opportunity, or growth **if** we learn how to listen to him. Do you know the essentials of both listening and responding to the voice of God?

- Often, we try to package God's voice in ways that we would be comfortable with.
- We often predetermine what we expect God will say. If we have a particular problem, we will be listening only for what we predetermined will address the solution. However, God may choose to speak in ways that seem disconnected to our problem, even appearing to have nothing to do with it. When this happens, we often discount or discard what He has said, because it is unexpected and we choose not to be submissive and teachable in our hearts.

What interferes with the voice of God?

Frequently, we have to listen through the noise of other people – their advice... their arguments... their worries and opinions about how they think we ought to live; how they think we ought to respond to the situations we find ourselves in.

Do you listen and accept opinions without discerning the character and qualifications of the speaker?

If you listen indiscriminately to others, you very well may not recognize the will of God when He presents it to you. Nobody knows the will of God for your life but Almighty God and you... and so He must come through clearly when He speaks to you. He often speaks through others, such as godly friends, family members and those over you in the Lord. However, it is your ultimate responsibility to both hear and fully confirm what you believe God is saying. Nobody else can do that for you.

Do you look to people at those critical times when only God's voice will do?

There are times when you must find that quiet place of patience and wait upon the Lord. Waiting upon God requires that we be prepared to wait as long as it takes.

It takes courage and faith to trust God when you do not know what the conclusion of the matter might be.

- What is wrong with trying to picture the consequences and then base our actions on what we have pictured?
- God wants us to walk in obedience to His voice and base all our actions on what we know He is saying. Here are some principles worth learning.
 1. Do not react to pressure.
 2. Be patient and wait upon the Lord.
 3. Continue in what you know is God's will until He says otherwise.
 4. Do not "make anything happen." When you do not hear God's voice, do not try to make a choice! Simply wait.

Can you find Scripture in Isaiah that validates these principles?

Second Key: Learn to trust the Lord for everything.

(Proverbs 3:1-8 NKJV) "My son, do not forget my law, But let your heart keep my commands; {2} For length of days and long life And peace they will add to you. {3} Let not mercy and truth forsake you; Bind them around your neck, Write them on the tablet of your heart, {4} And so find favor and high esteem In the sight of God and man. {5} Trust in the LORD with all your heart, And lean not on your own understanding; {6} In all your ways acknowledge Him, And He shall direct your paths. {7} Do not be wise in your own eyes; Fear the LORD and depart from evil. {8} It will be health to your flesh, And strength to your bones.

Trust is not an easily learned lesson. Often, it takes troubles, personal difficulty and personal failure. Trust also results from our experiences with His faithfulness, which teach us to trust Him. God knows exactly what to allow, or send into your life so that you can learn to trust Him.

Often we say, "Lord, here is what you said." Sometimes, He says, "No, that is not what I said. Listen again!" Rest in this. He is absolutely trustworthy, faithful and true to His promises. Be quick to remind yourself that Almighty God has said, "I am trustworthy."

A Wall of Uncertainty?

In those difficult times and situations when we face a wall of indecision or uncertainty... when every bad thing would break loose on us... when vicious attacks come, the Lord inevitably asks us, *"Are you going to believe what you see and what you hear, or are you going to believe what I say?"*

(Jeremiah 1:12 NKJV) "Then the LORD said to me, "You have seen well, for I am ready to perform My word."

(Psalms 112:7 NKJV) "He will not be afraid of evil tidings; His heart is steadfast, trusting in the LORD."

How would we ever learn to trust God if we did not face situations and circumstances where we have no other choice but to trust Him? Determine to trust God in anything and everything! He will protect, provide for and guide for you. It is your heritage as a child of the Most High.

(Isaiah 54:17 NKJV) "No weapon formed against you shall prosper, And every tongue which rises against you in judgment You shall condemn. This is the heritage of the servants of the LORD, And their righteousness is from Me," Says the LORD."

We could paraphrase Isaiah 54:17 to say the following.

"Nothing that threatens your well being will have any strength to succeed, nor will it flourish, thrive or have any lasting effect," says the Lord"

God is a covenant keeping God. He has made Himself responsible for His children. This is His promise...

(Psalms 91:14 NKJV) "Because he has set his love upon Me, therefore I will deliver him; I will set him on high, because he has known My name."

It is essential that we learn to trust Him. Too often, the question seems to be, "If we trust Him, what may happen?"

- We always want God to give us specific and graphic details about the consequences of our obedience before we obey, but He is not always willing to do that. (We easily forget who is the Potter and who is the clay!)
- God has made Himself responsible for the events that follow our obedience. They are His responsibility!
- Our responsibility is to listen, obey and trust. Everything else is in His completely capable and faithful hands.

Third Key: Wait on God for His direction and timing.

(Psalm 27:14) "Wait for the Lord ... Be of good courage..."

It takes courage to wait. It often appears risky to wait, especially when others want you to move. When God tells you to wait, do not move under any circumstances. He is omniscient. In His infinite wisdom, He knows every single detail of your situation.

God says wait for One of Three Reasons!

First Reason – Timing

You may not be ready for what He has for you. What you believe is the will of God may be His will ... but your timing may not be His timing. (This is a difficult lesson but so important!)

(Isaiah 64:4) "He acts in behalf of the one who waits for Him."

Second Reason – Circumstances

The circumstances He is preparing for you may not be ready. The situation may not yet have matured to align with His plan. God puts things together in His perfect timing and perfect way.

Third Reason – The Goodness of God to do the Unexpected

Perhaps God has something better... something you never dreamed of and never thought about. He is a good God. Listen to Him. Being a step ahead of God is a mistake. The result of waiting will always be great gratitude and thanksgiving to God. Expect the unexpected! He is a God of the unexpected!

Fourth Key: Give generously to the Lord's work.

(2 Corinthians 9:5-6 NKJV) "Therefore I thought it necessary to exhort the brethren to go to you ahead of time, and prepare your generous gift beforehand, which you had previously promised, that it may be ready as a matter of generosity and not as a grudging obligation. God is able to make all grace abound to you..."

God will make it possible for you to have enough to give to the His work. **You cannot out-give God!** If you tithe and give, you cannot and will not out-give God. There is no way for you to do this. Simply be faithful, God is going to bless you.

(2 Corinthians 9:7-8 NKJV) "So let each one give as he purposes in his heart, not grudgingly or of necessity; for God loves a cheerful giver. {8} And God is able to make all grace abound toward you, that you, always having all sufficiency in all things, may have an abundance for every good work."

Our life's goal should not be to make money. It should be to walk obediently before Almighty God - as a steward of what He has given us. You can be sure God will stretch you in the area of giving and stewardship. He will challenge you. He will test you. He will get you right to the edge with your giving. It is when a church and its people respond to challenging, faith-stretching times that the blessings begin to pour in.

When we become too attached to something material our lives, God cannot put anything in our hands. They will be so tightly clenched around what we that we cannot open them to receive what He offers us. When we open our hands and say, "God, you can have whatever you want, then we are free to receive. Our refusal to be attached to "stuff" makes the way for His blessings to be multiplied to us and through us.

Fifth Key: Let the Life of Christ thrive in you.

Living the abundant Christian life opens us up to Christ living it through us. This is one of the great truths in Christianity. Jesus spoke of an abundant life. He offers it if you will embrace it, by embracing Him. Jesus came to live on the inside of you, so you could have it.

- Are you a Romans, Chapter 7 Christian... failing and failing? Why don't you come to the end of yourself?

- Read the fifteenth chapter of the Gospel of John (“Abiding in Christ.”). You cannot succeed without the abiding presence of Christ. With it, you cannot fail! Try it. You will love it!

(Galatians 2:20 NKJV) “I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me.”

Reject the temptation to perform for God. Demolish all efforts to try to live up to what you think are God’s expectations for you.

- Let Christ in you be your strength.
- Let Christ in you be your success.
- Let Christ in you lead you to your only expectations. He will perform His will over you. He will give you strength and success. You will discover expectations you never expected! Then, watch them come to pass in the midst of your abundant living and uncompromising trust.

(John 17:23 NKJV) “I in them, and You in Me; that they may be made perfect in one, and that the world may know that You have sent Me, and have loved them as You have loved Me.”

Sixth Key: Stop trying to measure up to requirements and conditions that never existed! God loves you unconditionally.

The Lord’s will for your life is to release His grace into your life. Grace is not living up to, performing, or trying to measure up to anything. It is the gift of Christ, who freely liberates and enables us. It is at work purely because of His heart, not our hard work.

How does the Father love us?

God the Father loves us with the same perfect, unconditional love He loves Jesus. What a reassuring thought! We do not have to perform to get God to do something He has already done - love us unconditionally. He loves us when we behave. He loves us when we misbehave. He loves us when things are good, when things are bad; when we are encouraged, when we are discouraged... whether we make a mess of things, or when we do well. His love toward us is unconditional.

Discover and accept His unconditional love. Deliver the same message to others! Your motivation to walk in holiness and obedience will spring forth from within because of His unconditional love toward you. Unconditional love is the expression of His character. It never depends upon our response. He loves us because He is God. Love is His nature. It is very easy to respond to love when we know it is given unconditionally and completely.

(1 John 4:8 NKJV) "He who does not love does not know God, for God is love."

(1 John 4:16 NKJV) "And we have known and believed the love that God has for us. God is love, and he who abides in love abides in God, and God in him."

Seventh Key: Understand that God has dominion over every circumstance in your life.

God is sovereign. Nothing happens without God's permission. We all go through trials and tests. Evil is rampant on the earth and nobody escapes it. God has not caused it, but because of the first Adam's sin, He has no choice but to permit it until the Second Adam, the Lord Jesus Christ, comes back in all His glory. In the midst of all the trials we face, we can always learn and grow. We have the assurance that God declares us overcomers. Our response ought to be...

"God I know you are in control. If you have allowed this to happen, I will respond in a godly way. You allowed it to happen and you are interested in my well being and growth. So I will look to you, God for the next step and I will continually trust you. I may be on the receiving end of trouble but I will never be a victim or a loser. I am your warrior, your winner and your champion. You find purpose in my trials and experiences. They will result in something good in my. They will be turned are for my best, no matter what."

(Romans 8:28-29 NKJV) "And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose. {29} For whom He foreknew, He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren."

All things really do work together for good to those who love God and are called according to His marvelous, eternal purposes. What often appears to be against us eventually works to work for us, as it make us more like Jesus.

Our encounters with disappointment and pain become the very things that God uses to impact our lives and help us mature in Him. He also uses our experiences and all that we gain from them for other people's good. Trust Him. He is eternally sovereign. Understand the loving discipline and/or training of the Lord. God is in control. God has a plan. God never fails.

**Eighth Key: Depend on the Holy Spirit.
(Turn your ear to Him before anyone else!)**

God, the Holy Spirit wants to indwell us in a deep, close relationship. He has gifted, equipped and empowered us to overcome, to succeed and to demonstrate His presence in us. Rely upon Him. Trust Him for strength, wisdom, energy, perception and whatever else you need.

When we begin to be successful, if we are tempted to credit our own abilities and brainpower, our pride has deceived us. Pride will destroy people who reject the influence and direction of the Holy Spirit. They forget where the success comes from and walk away from their relationships and obligations to Him. Be ever watchful! You can love God and gradually turn your trust away from Him to many other things. If you do, you will lose the potential to achieve your promises and embrace your destiny. All this can happen, even as you still love God! Pride will allow you to love God, but you will be putting him next in line instead of at the head of the line.

God will not allow Himself to be next! He must be first!

God hates pride because it is destructive to His children. God desires that we turn from depending on ourselves, our strengths, our knowledge, our experiences and the praise of others. He wants us completely dependent upon the Holy Spirit.

God's ways are different (higher) than ours. In the world, as a child grows up he becomes less and less dependent and more independent. In God's kingdom, as we grow up, we become more and more dependent upon Him (and less independent). Dependency upon God is the sign of genuine spiritual maturity. Do not take Him for granted. Never assume your success came independently of the presence of the Holy Spirit.

Ninth Key: Make prayer life the basis of life.

Are you just making an impression, or are you making an impact? It is easy to make a lot of noise. Noise makes no impact. God wants you to impact this world. Begin your impact through prayer. Equip yourself through prayer. Receive your instructions through prayer. Become what you need to become through prayer. The most valuable time you can spend is the time you pray. Have your knees gotten used to the floor? We owe God everything. Let us gladly stick our faces in the floor, thank God for His loving, merciful attention, grace and mercy... and have great expectations for the opportunities He will give.

Prayer can accomplish anything!

Prayer brings God's power!

If we pray first, we will go in the strength, power and might of the Lord. What we ought to be bathed in prayer before we do it. The most important thing we can do is to spend time on our knees with God.

Conclusion

What can we do to insure that our journey and our dwelling place will be strong and satisfying on the way to the land of promise? We have answered in nine ways. The sum of these nine ways adds up to a life of assurance. God will never let you stumble. He will direct your steps and will rejoice at the outcomes of your life. He will one day say, "Well done, good and faithful servant. Come on in and rest. I can hardly wait to spend the rest of eternity with you."

(Jude 1:24-25 NKJV) "Now to Him who is able to keep you from stumbling, And to present you faultless Before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy, {25} To God our Savior, Who alone is wise, Be glory and majesty, Dominion and power, Both now and forever. Amen."