

# FAITH IS ACTION

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## Look At The Promisor

How do you maintain faith when the promises you are holding on to seem to be impossible? In your heart you have settled the matter that “*With God nothing shall be impossible.*” (Luke 11:37). Jesus Himself said in Matthew 19:26: “*With men some things are impossible, but with God all things are possible.*” But you’re struggling to believe.

Once when God was dealing with a couple who were struggling with their faith, He asked them a rhetorical question, but He wanted them to think about what He was saying: “*Is there anything too hard for the Lord?*” (Gen. 18:14). The prophet Jeremiah, answered a few thousand years later: “*Ah Lord, Thou hast made the heaven and the earth by thy great power and stretched out arm, and there is nothing too hard for thee*” (Jer. 32:17).

Sometimes the promise we’re holding on to in God’s Word is so great, that in our estimation, it borders on the impossible, in light of

our circumstances and what we’ve got to work with. What do we do to keep from doubting when the promise seems so impossible? Hebrew 6:1 says: “*Be followers of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises.*” So we need to find some examples of those whose faith and patience went the distance, and they got the promises that seemed to be impossible.

## The Father of Faith

The first and best place to start would be to look at the one the Bible calls “*the father of faith*”, because if you’re the father, you are the trailblazer of obtaining faith. A trailblazer goes out in brand new territory, where there is not a distinct path to follow, cuts a path, and leaves his footsteps, so that the person behind him has a path to follow. The Bible tells us this was Abraham.

The story of Abraham is in Genesis 12 through 21, but in Romans 4 in the N.T., we have the commentary. We get what Paul, by revelation, looked back and saw—the

footsteps of faith that we need to walk in to receive our promises: “*What shall we say then that Abraham our father, as pertaining to the flesh, hath found?*” (Rom. 4:1). Speaking as a Jew, Paul said: “*Abraham is our father.*” But he is also the father of all who believe:

“*And he received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith which he had yet being uncircumcised: that he might be **the father of all them that believe**, though they be not circumcised; that righteousness might be imputed unto them also:*” (vs. 11). Just as Abraham was justified by faith—not circumcision—so are we.

“*And the father of circumcision to them who are not of the circumcision only...*” (To make this simple, for *circumcision* we’ll insert *Jews*). “*And the father of the Jews to them who are not Jews only, **but who also walk in the steps of that faith of our father Abraham**, which he had being yet uncircumcised*” (vs. 12). Whether one is a Jew by birth or not, we must all walk in the steps of faith he walked in.

Verse 16: “*Therefore it is of faith, that it might be by grace; to the end the promise might be sure to all the seed; not to that only which is of the law, but to that also which is of the faith of Abraham; **who is the father of us all,***”

These four verses establish our starting point: Abraham is not only the father of the Jewish nation, his

natural seed, but he is the father of anyone who believes God’s Word. Because when God said that Abraham was found righteous in His sight, at that point, *he was not a Jew*. He was from the land of Ur of the Chaldees in Syria, and he was called a *Hebrew* first, which referred to his *crossing over the river*. The term *Jew* came from his great grandson *Judah*. God justified Abraham and called him *the father of faith* hundreds of years before, and the covenant of circumcision was a sign in his flesh of what had already happened in his heart by faith. So we need to study what he did, because Paul said that *we are to walk in the steps of faith that Abraham our father walked in*.

Abraham’s story covers a 25 year journey. That’s a long time to be faithful, to believe, to hang in there, and not give up, and not cast away your confidence. Abraham actually reached the point of faith long before that, *but the promise was not only to Abraham. It was also to his wife Sarah*, but it took her longer. He reached the point of faith long before she did, but because she hadn’t reach that level of faith yet, Abraham had to wait on the promise. Sometimes what you need in your life not only pertains to you, but to someone else: Your husband, your wife, or your children. Sometimes you are ready to receive your promise, but they are not ready, so you must also hang in there and be faithful.

**Let me be specific.** It took Sarah 24 years and 3 months to reach the point of faith she needed to have the promise of a son. We are also heirs to all the promises God gave to Abraham and Sarah. Galatians 3:29: *“If you be Christ’s, then are ye Abraham’s seed, and heirs according to the promise.”* We must walk in the same steps they did if we are going to reach the same faith to inherit our promises.

### Get A Vision

*“After these things the word of the Lord came unto Abram in a vision, saying, Fear not, Abram: I am thy shield, and thy exceeding great reward. And Abram said, Lord God, what wilt thou give me, seeing I go childless, and the steward of my house is this Eliezer of Damascus? And Abram said, Behold, to me thou hast given no seed: and, lo, one born in my house is mine heir.*

*“And behold, the word of the Lord came unto him, saying, This shall not be thine heir; but he that shall come forth out of thine own bowels shall be thine heir. And he brought him forth abroad, and said, Look now towards heaven, and tell the stars, if thou be able to number them: and he said unto him, So shall thy seed be. And he believed in the Lord; and he counted it to him for righteousness.”* (Gen. 15:1-6).

In chapters 12-14, God had promised to make him the father of a multitude, a great nation that kings

would come from, and through him all the families of the earth would be blessed. Abraham was 75 years old, and he had no children. He was starting at a point of impossibility. Now time has elapsed, and nothing has happened, so Abraham began to think with his natural rationale. He said, **“Seeing that I go childless...”** His first problem was, *he saw himself childless*, because he had his eyes focused on his circumstances. The first thing we must do is *see ourselves healed, see ourselves whole, see ourselves with the victory, see ourselves in the place of the promise.* As long as you see yourself sick and weak, down and defeated, that’s what you will be. Then he spoke it out with his mouth. He said, **“Look at me! I’m childless!”** He confirmed his doubt and unbelief.

The first thing God had to correct was Abraham’s vision. He said, **“Come out here, Abraham! Look up there at the heavens.”** The first thing you have to do, is get your eyes off of your circumstances and get your eyes on God. God said, **“Abraham, Look up to heaven and count the stars, if you can number them.”** If Abraham really did that, he would still be counting them. God said, **“This is how your seed will be.”**

When Abraham got a different picture in his mind, when he got a different vision, then he believed God. Up to this point he was strug-

gling, but when God said “Get a vision: *See yourself as the father of a multitude*. Eliezer is not your heir—he’s is your servant. I realize that he’s a wonderful servant, and you love him like a son, *but you are going to have a son out of your own loins, with your DNA*,” Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness. The Hebrew literally says that *Abraham said, “Amen.”* From then on, Abraham never wavered that the child would come out of his own body.

### Detour of Presumption

The problem was, Sarah was not on board yet. In fact, Sarah did not even believe that the promise included her. It did not occur to her that the child was going to be *out of her own body also*. She, with her own rationale said, “Okay, we have to help God out. We understand it can’t be Eliezer, but that *he must be Abraham’s seed*. Since I am not able to give him a child, I will give him my servant, and let her get pregnant with Abraham’s seed.” So Abraham, *presuming*, “After all, he will be my seed,” went along with the plan.

*Please understand:* For the next 14 years, *they both earnestly believed that Ishmael*, who was born to Hagar, Sarah’s Egyptian slave girl, *was the son of promise!* And they loved that child! They brought him up to be the heir of all their riches, and Abraham was very rich. For 14 years they went along thinking Ish-

mael was the promised seed, until the day when Abraham was 99 years old, and God appeared to him out of the desert: “*And God said unto Abraham, As for Sarai thy wife, thou shalt not call her name Sarai, but Sarah shall her name be. And I will bless her, and give thee a son also of her...*” (Gen. 17:15-16).

Now this was a big news flash! “*...Yea, I will bless her, and she shall be a mother of nations; kings of people shall be of her. Then Abraham fell upon his face, and laughed, and said in his heart, Shall a child be born unto him that is an hundred years old? And shall Sarah, that is ninety years old, bear? And Abraham said unto God, O that Ishmael might live before thee!*”

“*And God said, Sarah thy wife shall bear thee a son indeed; and thou shall call his name Isaac: and I will establish my covenant with him for an everlasting covenant, and with his seed after him. And as for Ishmael, I have heard thee: Behold, I have blessed him, and will make him fruitful, and will multiply him exceedingly; twelve princes shall he beget, and I will make him a great nation. But my covenant will I establish with Isaac, which Sarah shall bear unto thee at this set time in the next year*” (vv. 16-21).

**At this set time:** God not only reiterated the promise, but He qualified it: “You will not only have a son out of *your loins*, but also out of *Sarah’s womb*.” What a great

surprise! Abraham said. What do you mean, *Ishmael is not the son of promise?* For 14 years we've believed that he was the son of promise, and You are telling me he's not?" God said, "*No, I'm going to bless Sarah and she will give you a son, and you will name him Isaac.*"

Abraham said, "**What about Ishmael?** Hello, God! You gave me this son, and not only that, how? I am 99 years old, and Sarah is 90—Have You forgotten she was never able to conceive when she was young—How is this going to happen now?"

We can tell by these words that in the 14 years since Ishmael was born, Abraham had declined sexually. He said, "*Hey God, I'm 99! We're getting ready to flip the odometer here, and Sarah has never been fertile.*" It had then been 24 years since God first gave the promise, and now He said, "*At this set time*" (the specific time, the appointed time), "*this time next year I will visit Sarah, and she will also have a son.*"

### **A Crash Course in Faith**

Think about it: If Sarah was going to have a son *at this set time next year,* **how long did she have to get her faith to the level of Abraham's to believe God? Three months!** It takes 9 months to have a baby, and if she was going to have a baby this time next year, *she had 3 months to get faith to get pregnant.*

**How is she going to get there**

**in 3 months, if she was not able to get there in 24 years?** She was going to have to have a crash course in faith, and who would be able to teach her, and take her through that 3-month course of faith? *Abraham, the father of faith.* He had already believed God. He had already said, "*Amen, that settles it.*" Now he would have to teach her how to bring her faith to the same level.

After this God cut the covenant with them and sealed it by circumcision of all the males of Abraham's people. All covenants require a sign, and circumcision was the sign that they were in covenant with God and were separated from all other nations who were idolatrous. It also symbolized *cutting away the flesh.* When you are on your way to a miracle, you must get rid of everything that pertains to the flesh, that fosters doubt and unbelief, and separate yourself from every naysayer and gainsayer. Whether it is TV, books, talking on the phone, separate yourself from everything that is of unbelief and doubt when you need a supernatural intervention of God in your life, because the supernatural does not work through the carnal. After Abraham and all his house were circumcised, God came and reiterated the promise.

Abraham sat at the door of his tent when three men appeared unto him. "*And they said unto him, Where is Sarah thy wife? And he said, Behold, in the tent. And he*

said, *I will certainly return unto thee according to the time of life; and, lo Sarah thy wife shall have a son. And Sarah heard it in the tent door, which was behind him. And Abraham and Sarah were old and well stricken in age and it ceased to be with Sarah after the manner of women.*” (She had never been fertile, but even if she had been, she was now in menopause).

*“Therefore Sarah laughed within herself, saying, After I am waxed old shall I have pleasure, my lord being old also? And the Lord said unto Abraham, Wherefore did Sarah laugh, saying, Shall I of a surety bear a child, which am old? Is any thing too hard for the Lord? At the time appointed, I will return unto thee, according to the time of life, and Sarah shall have a son. Then Sarah denied, saying, I laughed not; for she was afraid, And he said, Nay; but thou didst laugh,”* (Gen. 18:9-15).

Sarah had laughed the laugh of unbelief, saying, “Will I have pleasure now when I’m old and my husband is old also?” Apparently, there was nothing going on in their tent at night. *How were they going to get pregnant when they weren’t even having pleasure?* But God said, *“Is there any thing too hard for Me? At the appointed time I will return to you.”*

Clearly, Sarah was still no where ready in her faith to believe she could get pregnant, and she had to get it together in only 3 months after almost 25 years of doubt and

unbelief. But she did get pregnant in 3 months, and she did have a son exactly one year later!

We need to know how she got there in that short period of time. God did not give it to her on credit. He did not over-rule her doubt or allow Abraham’s faith to substitute for her doubt. She did not get the promise on Abraham’s faith. Sometimes God will allow this in situations where one person’s faith is dragging the ground, and the other’s is holding on to God’s promise like a bull dog. *He may overrule the one’s unbelief, and let the one who is standing strong in faith believe for both of them.* But God didn’t do that in this case. *Sarah had to have her own faith to get pregnant.*

She not only received faith to get pregnant, she got the kind of faith that entered her into **Faith’s Hall of Fame**. She isn’t just listed as a side note in connection to Abraham, *but she has her own entry in Hebrews 11:11*, along with others in the Hall of Faith whose faith persevered. If Sarah could get her lagging faith together in 3 months, when she didn’t have the written Word of God, the words of the Torah and the chronicles of how God brought the Israelites through the Red Sea, of all the plagues of Egypt, and the wonders in the wilderness; when she didn’t have any precedent to encourage her, if you will get into God’s Word for 3 months, your faith will get there too!

## Sarah's Secret

Her secret is found in Hebrews 11:11: *“Through faith also Sarah herself...”* How explicit the Holy Spirit is with His words! When He says, *“Also herself,”* He wants us to pay attention to the fact that in addition to the faith Abraham had to believe God, and what God had done in his heart to bring him to the place of faith—**also Sarah herself**—*not Abraham and Sarah*, but Sarah herself came to faith to receive.

*“Through faith also Sarah herself received strength to conceive seed, and was delivered of a child when she was past age...”* Somehow in 3 short months, Sarah got on board and believed God, until she was no longer overwhelmed by the impossibility of her situation, and her faith was able to turn her biological clock back a good 50 years, so that she was no longer menopausal, and to reverse her barrenness. She was able to conceive, carry a baby 9 months in a 90-year old womb, not miscarry, not have a still born, but have a baby, who instead of coming out crying, came out laughing, because his name *Isaac* means *laughter*, because God said, *“His name is laughter, and I’m going to have the last laugh.”*

“So I want to know, Sarah, how did you do it? What allowed you to get over all the doubt and unbelief that had caused you to mess up so greatly with the Hagar-Ishmael thing? Not only did you face the

hurdles of your age and barrenness, but the ones you brought on yourself through unbelief—How did you get over them in 3 months?”

The answer is in the last line of verse 11: *“Because she judged him faithful who had promised.”* Here is her secret: **She got her eyes off of the promise.** Maybe you’re thinking, *What? Are you telling me to get my eyes off the promise? Everybody always says to keep your eyes on the promise, and you’re saying, “Get your eyes off the promise”?*

Many promises in God’s Word just require average faith and a little perseverance and a lot of patience. But when a promise seems so unimaginable that it causes you to become overwhelmed by the sheer impossibility of it, the more you study it, the more unbelief you have, and the bigger and greater the impossibility seems to be.

I believe how Abraham helped Sarah in those 3 months is, he said, *“Sarah, Stop looking at the promise, stop fretting about how you’re going to get pregnant, stop worrying about how you’re going to carry a baby, how you are going to give birth. Get your eyes off the promise, and get your eyes on the Promisor.”* That was the answer to Sarah’s overcoming 24 years of doubt.

This is the key when a promise is so overwhelming: When the doctors say that you only have so long to live, and there is nothing else they can do. When you receive a

bad report of something that seems impossible: You are served divorce papers, or you are already divorced, but are believing your marriage will be restored, yet it looks so impossible. It doesn't matter how long your child has been out in sin, or that they don't want to hear anything about God, if your child is in jail with absolutely no hope of parole, or if they have been to rehab 14 times, and they're still addicted. When the situation seems hopeless, you have to get your eyes off the promise when you are stumbling in your unbelief, **and get your eyes on the Promisor.**

*Sarah judged Him faithful who had promised.* You see, the magnitude of the promise was actually causing her to stumble. She kept stumbling over the promise in unbelief, because it was so huge. Abraham said, "*Sarah, walk in my footsteps of faith, and you won't stumble.*" I came to the place where I got my eyes off of the promise, and I looked to the Promisor. I had to get my eyes off of my dead body and your dead womb, and get my eyes on the Promisor. I got my eyes on the God who created the heavens and slung the stars in space, until they are uncountable. I got my eyes on *El Shaddai*, the Mighty God whom no one can defeat. I got my eyes on *Jehovah Jireh*, the God that sees and supplies every need. This is what you must do, Sarah. Get your eyes off of that which is mak-

ing you stumble, and get your eyes on the Promisor."

### **The Promisor is Faithful**

The Scripture says "*She judged him...*" Who is him? The one who had promised! She *judged the Promisor faithful*. The word *judged* means "to reckon, to count something up, to reflect on, and to consider." She considered the Promisor, and I know that in her 90 years of life God had done things for them. If you have walked with God 90 years, He has taught you some things. He's brought you out of some valleys. He's brought you out of some pits. He's brought you through some storms of life, through some hard places. When you start counting your blessings and rehearsing what God has done, you've got your eyes on the Promisor, and you'll say, "*I know He's faithful.*"

Now if our Promisor was a man, we'd be in trouble. But our Promisor is the God who cannot lie, who cannot fail, who said, "*I'm not a man that I should lie, nor the son of man that I should repent. Have I not said it, and shall I not do it? Have I not spoken it, and shall I not make it good? (Num. 23:19). I have stretched forth My hand, and who will turn it back? I have spoken, and who will disannul it?*" (Isa. 14:27).

### **Promise Only Good As its Promisor**

A promise is only as good as the Promisor. We have all had people to

make promises to us, and we stood there and smiled at them, while in our minds we were thinking: “*Yeah, right!*” Out of politeness, we just *don’t say it*, but we’re thinking, “*Your track record is not very good. I think I’ve heard this song before. I’d like to believe you, but your word is not good,*” **and a promise is only as good as the word of the one who gives it.** You can only have faith in a promise when you know the Promisor is: 1) *Able to do It*, and 2) *Faithful to do it*.

You know many people who would love to do things for you, but they don’t have the ability or the resources. You are not going to count on them to supply your need. Many people make pledges and vows, and they have no way of keeping them; nor do they have the faith to believe that God will supply it, so their promise and their vow mean nothing. When people make promises to us, we judge them based on their character, their track record, and their word.

*If you will consider God’s character, God’s track record, God’s faithfulness to His Word*, it will cause your faith to rise up and make it over any hurdles of unbelief. I found this to be true in my own life. When things in my life looked like they were about to unravel, when it looked like the enemy was getting the upper hand, when I was pushed and shoved, pressed and bombarded with evil reports, I always came

back to the place: “*Lord, You are faithful!* You are the one who is keeping me, *and You are able!*”

When a promise seems so great that we are staggering at the idea of how it’s going to come to pass, that’s when we have to put our faith and confidence in the Promisor. That’s how Sarah received strength to conceive and bear Isaac, and that’s how *we follow in the steps of Abraham our father*.

### Let’s Try It Out

Here’s a little exercise to make sure you’ve got it: Read Romans 4:17-21 out loud and insert “*the Promisor*” for God, His name, or any pronoun that refers to Him.

*“(As it is written, I have made thee a father of many nations,) before **the Promisor** whom he believed, even **the Promisor**, who quickeneth the dead, and calleth those things which be not as though they were. Who against hope believed in hope, that he might become the father of many nations, according to that which was spoken, So shall thy seed be.*”

*“And being not weak in faith, he considered not his own body now dead, when he was about an hundred years old, neither yet the deadness of Sarah’s womb: He staggered not at the promise of **the Promisor** through unbelief; but was strong in faith, giving glory to **the Promisor**; And being fully persuaded that, what **the Promisor** had promised, **the Promisor** was*

able also to perform.”

This helps us to see what caused Abraham and Sarah to be able to get through their hurdles of unbelief, and what allowed Sarah herself in just 3 months time, after 24 years of unbelief and doubt and misunderstanding of what God had said, to receive strength to conceive, *because she judged the Promisor faithful who had promised.*

Sometimes our promises are **Ephesians 3:20 promises:** “*But now unto the Promisor who is able to do exceeding, and abundantly above all that we can ask or think...*” When you are facing situations that the resolution seems to be exceeding and abundantly above what you can ask, understand, or think with your natural mind, that’s when you have to say, “Now unto **the Promisor** who is able to do exceeding and abundantly above all that I can ask or think according to His mighty power that worketh in us.” Abraham and Sarah didn’t even have the Holy Ghost baptism. They didn’t have the Word of God or any written promises, but just getting their eyes on the Promisor was enough in itself to bring them to the place of having hallmark quality faith and to receive the promise.

### **The Promisor Believes Himself**

Even God Himself, the Promisor, has faith in His own promises. Look at Hebrews 6:13-14, and remember to insert “*the Promisor*” for God:

“*For when the Promisor made promise to Abraham, because the Promisor could swear by no greater, the Promisor sware by himself, Saying, Surely blessing, the Promisor will bless thee, and multiplying, the Promisor will multiply thee.*” God the Promisor has faith in His own promises! He said, “When I had no one greater to sware by, I swore by Myself.”

In the OT mindset, when you made a vow or a pledge, or when you came into an agreement with someone, you swore by another greater than yourself. That is why Jesus said, “*Do not swear by this one or that one. But let your answer be Yea, yea; Nay; nay*” (Matt. 5:33-37). Paul explained in Hebrews 6:16, “*For men verily swear by the greater; and an oath for confirmation is to them an end to all strife.*” Once an oath is made by swearing by a greater, that’s the end of any question or argument—It’s settled.

“*Wherein God, willingly more abundantly to show us, the heirs of promise, the immutability of His Word, He also confirmed by an oath: That by two immutable things, in which it is impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation*”—an unshakable confidence that He will keep His promises! (vv. 17–18)

The term **immutable** means “not able to mutate or change, unalterable, immoveable.” God said, “*Two things I can’t do: I can’t lie, and I*

*can't change!* Because there is no one greater, because I'm God all by Myself, because I need nobody else, because there is none like Me, because you can't compare Me to anyone, or anyone to Me; because I am *El Elyonah*, the Most High; because I am *El Shaddai*, the Almighty; I swear by Myself!"

That's good enough for me! I can hold fast to what the Promisor has promised: "*Let us hold fast the profession of our hope without wavering; (for the Promisor is faithful that promised;)*" (Heb. 10:23).

Hold fast to the profession of your faith, that the Promisor is able to do what He said He will do. 1 Thes. 5:24 says: "*Faithful is he...*" who is he? "*...the Promisor who calleth you, who also will do it.*" When you know that God has called you, you can continually put your trust in Him, because the Promisor is faithful.

### **The Burden is the Promisor's**

We know that the promise is only as good as the Promisor, but there's more: The burden to perform the promise is also on the Promisor. Sometimes we stumble,

because we do not realize *the burden to perform the promise is not on us!* So many times we try to make it happen, to bring something to pass. That's not our job; it is our job to believe and to profess and to confess what the Promisor has said. Phil. 2:13 says, "*It is God who worketh in you both to will and to do, according to His purpose and His pleasure.*" So stop struggling to try to make it happen. Otherwise, you will just go around and around, not gaining any ground, and after awhile you will get discouraged. Once you get discouraged, you will lose ground you already have. The solution is to keep your eyes on the Promisor. He is the one who does the performing, and He is more than able: "*Being confident of this very thing, that the Promisor which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ.*" (Phil. 1:6).

"*Cast not away therefore your confidence, which hath great recompence of reward. For ye have need of patience, that after ye have done the will of the Promisor, ye might receive the promise*" (Heb. 10:35-36).