



prayer *life!*

Weekly Prayer Focus

August 25, 2019

Faith in Fits and Starts

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." Then [Abraham] believed in the LORD; and He reckoned it to him as righteousness.

Abraham obeyed my voice and kept my charge, my commandments, my statutes, and my laws."

—Genesis 15:5-6; 26:5

You don't need to be a Christian for very long before you experience pangs of failure and lapses of faith. We desire to grow, please God, and be examples of Godly character, but life gets in the way. It's so easy to fall back into sinful habits, as we do what we have to do to take on the challenges of life. Then we look back, shake our heads, and wonder if our actions were pleasing to our holy God.

Self-examination is essential to growth as a Christian, but the Christian life focuses on God not on us. He is the transforming agent in every situation. It's His presence that makes the difference in a life. While we trust then falter, walk tall then stumble, our Lord is the One we look to for strength to press on and faith to become new. The alchemy of our soul is God's daily work in our lives. He is the one who transforms the noble desires and aspirations of His feeble followers into new life and Godly character.

And in His Word we have a stream of examples to follow. Without God in the picture, Abraham's life is a tale of happenstance—a mixture of good and bad, recurrent failures punctuated by occasional successes. But God's work in his life brings the picture into focus and shows the difference God made, as Abraham trusted in Him.

Abraham left Ur of the Chaldeans in Mesopotamia, boldly going where he had never gone before, then stalled in Haran until his father died. In Canaan, he called on the name of the LORD, but at the first sign of famine, he hightailed it to Egypt, where he told Pharaoh that Sarah was his sister rather than his wife. Doubtless lies like that didn't strengthen their marriage bond. Neither did Sarah's scheme—which Abraham readily accepted—to bear the child God promised with her handmaid Hagar.

Yet by faith, Abraham took on five Canaanite kings to save his nephew Lot. And he refused his share in the plunder to give God the credit. He offered tithes to Melchizedek, the mysterious priest who prefigured Christ. Then he convinced God to deliver Lot from destruction with Sodom and Gomorrah.

How could the LORD say that "*Abraham obeyed my voice and kept my charge, my commandments, my statutes, and my laws* (Genesis 26:5)? Only because of his faith. He believed God, and God counted that as perfect righteousness. Faith is the only way anyone ever stands righteous before holy God.

Like you and I, Abraham was a mixed bag. He laughed at God's promise that he'd bear a son at age 100 but later was willing to offer Isaac as a sacrifice. His faith was fitful, not perfect. It was the God he trusted who made the difference. In Abraham's life, we see that God fulfills His promise as surely as the sun rises. But He does it in ways we don't expect, in His time not ours, and in part not completely, so our hope won't be on this world but the next.

The life of faith isn't passive. It's receptive. It looks for God's provision as we wrestle with the difficulties and demands of daily life. True faith keeps on believing, despite doubts and failures. And it's that faith that makes us righteous before God and makes an eternal difference in His people and in the world for His kingdom.

To the praise of His glory.

Prayer

El Paso, Texas and Dayton, Ohio are only two of twenty-four mass shootings during the month of August alone. Accounts of police being randomly attacked are multiplying. Government leadership is becoming increasingly polarized. We are being inundated with signs of societal breakdown.

The problems in America are spiritual more than social, psychological, or political, and they call all of God's people to prayer. It's not prayer for particular solutions that we need, and we mustn't fixate on fixing specific problems or targeting mere symptoms. We need a movement of God among His people to be convicted of sin and shaken from complacency. Pray for the revival of God's people throughout the world.

It seems that revival is beginning, and there are signs that God is moving. Those signs give us hope and an impetus to pray more. It would behoove us to cultivate prayer as a response to the daily news, asking God to work in each violent or tragic event to turn people to Christ for hope.

We are the salt of the earth. Ask God to give us a savor that whets people's appetite for Him.

Continue to pray for our pastors and elders.

1. **Our Pastors and Directors:** Scott Williams, Tony Chute, Taylor Mendoza, Terilyn Brown, Geoff Grant, and Marti Wiegman.
2. **Our Lay Elders:** Tim East, Steve Flood, Mark Kiker, Mike Russell, Vinoj Zechariah, and new elders who come onto the board.
3. **Our Church Staff:** Michelle Balga, Bob Brown, Andria Brucks, Chelsae Grant, Carolee Jefferson, Amber McEwen, Tamene Menna, Mark Norland, Corie Saunders, and Teri Vaughn.

Praise Record

Note when and how God answers your prayers. It will help you to see that He really is paying attention.

Date	Request	Date	Answer

Trust in the LORD with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make straight your paths. –Proverbs 3:5-6