

# The Surprising Strengthening of Faith



## Introduction

- Faith is essential to the Christian life: without it we cannot please God (Hebrews 11:6).
- Abraham is our model of faith and we must “walk in his steps of faith” (Romans 4:12,20).
- Faith can be small but pure - OR - hindered by unbelief (*apistia*) which opposes God’s Word. Abraham didn’t waver through unbelief.

## Point 1: Faith Comes by Hearing, requires action, and Can be Purified by Trials

- Faith is a spiritual sense that perceives eternal, invisible realities (2 Corinthians 4:18).
- Faith arises from hearing God’s Word (Romans 10:17).
- Obedience and action is necessary for Faith to survive (Ja 2:26)
- Testing does not create faith but refines it—removing unbelief (1 Peter 1:6–7, Jas 1:2-4).
  - Like gold in fire, trials expose and remove impurities.
  - Parable of the house on rock vs. sand (Matthew 7:24–27).

## Point 2: Abraham’s Journey—A Life of Growing Faith

- God calls and blesses Abraham while in a pagan home (Genesis 12:1–3, Ac 7:2-4); he obeys partially, and slowly, but eventually complies.
- Early trials: opposition, famine, fear, and failure in Egypt (Gen 12:6–20).
- Conflict and rescue of Lot show faith maturing. His encounter with Melchizedek (Genesis 13–14).
- Covenant confirmed—faith credited as righteousness (Genesis 15:6).
- Setback with Hagar and Ishmael (Genesis 16); silence follows. Time is part of the testing.
- Renewal at age 99: circumcision, name change, and restored obedience (Genesis 17).
- Intercession regarding Sodom (Gen 18)
- Another failure regarding Sarah with Abimelech (Gen 20)
- Isaac’s birth fulfills the long-awaited promise (Genesis 21).
- The great test regarding the sacrifice of Isaac. Abraham obeys instantly and trusts God to raise Isaac (Genesis 22). God provides and reaffirms the promise: blessing and many descendants (Genesis 22:15–18).

## Conclusion: Practical Life Applications

- Faith grows through obedience, testing, repentance, and persistence.
- Like Abraham, be *fully convinced* that God can perform what He promised (Romans 4:21). Look at the invisible, and give God glory.

## Questions

1. What does it mean to you that faith can grow stronger through testing?
2. Have you experienced a time when acting on God's Word helped your faith grow?
3. How can we support each other in growing stronger in faith?