



SIX PRINCIPLES TO FORTIFY YOUR FAITH

Preaching and Teaching Resources

ADRIAN ROGERS





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Six Principles to Fortify Your Faith

SERMON REFERENCE: Hebrews 11:8-13

LWF SERMON NUMBER: #2390

Hebrews 11:8 reminds us of the legacy of Abraham, who was called by God in his old age and became a champion of the faith: “By faith Abraham obeyed when he was called to go out to the place which he would receive as an inheritance...”

Abraham's example gives us six principles to fortify our faith.

1. The Voice Principle: Abraham heard from the Lord.

The Lord appeared to Abraham through a supernatural experience. We have a greater advantage, having the written Word of God, the mind of Jesus Christ, and the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

2. The Venture Principle: we must obey what we know.

Abraham heard and obeyed. If we are having a faith problem, it could actually be rooted in an obedience problem.

Adrian Rogers says, “Our responsibility is not to totally understand, but to readily obey.”

3. The Value Principle: We must establish priorities.

Abraham was a sojourner; he knew the land was not his home (See Hebrews 11:9-10.). If we live for this world, we will eventually conform to it and become an enemy of God. Instead, we must have the mind of Christ and prioritize knowing God's will.

4. The Vision Principle: we must stay focused and remain disciplined.

We must keep our eyes set on things above, and not on things of this Earth. When we see the promises of God, which are otherwise unseen by those without faith, we have a responsibility to live by them.

5. The Vigilance Principle: our faith will be tested through heartache and tears.

We must remember that where God leads us, He will sustain us in it.

6. The Victory Principle: we get to enjoy the blessings.

Hebrews 11:12 says, “Therefore from one man, and him as good as dead, were born as many as the stars of the sky in multitude—innumerable as the sand which is by the seashore.”

Abraham and Sarah conceived a child in their old age, and from that child, Abraham's descendants were innumerable as the sand. Their victory came by a fortified faith.

LIFE APPLICATION

Do you want a faith like Abraham, whose faith left behind a legacy? Listen to the voice of God, obey what you know to be true; remain disciplined, even when tested, keeping your eyes on things above.



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1) INTRODUCTION

- a) Spurgeon said: "A little faith will bring your soul to Heaven; a great faith will bring Heaven to your soul."
- b) When we come to Jesus in salvation, God enrolls us in the school of faith.
 - i) Life is the classroom.
 - ii) The Bible is the textbook.
 - iii) The prophets and apostles are the professors.
 - iv) Abraham is the dean.
 - (1) In the New Testament he is called, "the father of them that believe."
- c) Faith is not incidental.
- d) Without faith, it is impossible to please God.
 - i) If you please God, it does not matter whom you displease.
 - ii) If you displease God, it does not matter whom you please.
- e) Faith is the mark of a Christian.
 - i) Christians were called believers before they were called Christians.
- f) It is our chief duty to believe God.
- g) The supreme evil is unbelief.
 - i) The greatest sin is unbelief.
 - ii) The reason that people are lost, condemned and spend eternity in Hell is not because of the sin they have committed, but because they will not believe.
- h) Unbelief is the source of all other sins.
 - i) Adam and Eve sinned in the Garden because they did not believe.
- i) The Christian life is to be lived by faith.
 - i) We will never succeed in our Christian lives without believing God.
- j) Abraham was a pagan.
 - i) He was 75 years old.
 - (1) A person cannot be too wicked or too old to step into a life of faith.
- k) Abraham was not a fugitive running away from home.
- l) Abraham was not a vagabond looking for a home.
- m) Abraham was a stranger away from home.
- n) Abraham was a pilgrim headed home.

2) THE VOICE PRINCIPLE: WE MUST HEAR GOD

- a) Abraham was called.
- b) Abraham heard the voice of God.
- c) When we read about Abraham in Genesis, we see over and over again that "the Word of the Lord came to him."



- d) In Genesis 12:1-3, God says, "I will."
 - i) This is the root of faith.
- e) In Genesis 11:1-4, the people say, "Let us."
 - i) God told Abraham that He would make his name great.
- f) How do we hear the voice of God?
 - i) So often when we pray, we say, "Lord, if it is Your will..."
 - (1) If you do not know the will of God, then this is a good way to pray.
 - (2) The best way is to say, "Lord, this is Your will and I stand on it."
 - (3) Great faith does not come from guessing at the will of God.
 - ii) Abraham heard the voice of God in a supernatural way.
 - (1) The Lord appeared to him through an angel.
 - (a) This is not normally how we hear the voice of God today.
 - (2) God spoke to Moses through a burning bush.
 - (3) God spoke to Saul, who became the apostle Paul, on the road to Damascus in a brightness and a voice from Heaven.
 - (4) An angel came to Simon Peter on a rooftop in a vision.
 - (5) This is not the norm for us today.
 - (a) This does not mean that we have less advantage, but we have a greater advantage.
 - iii) God speaks to us by His Son.
 - iv) The Bible teaches that we have three things:
 - (1) The written Word of God.
 - (2) The mind of Christ.
 - (3) The guidance of the Holy Spirit.
 - (a) The Old Testament characters had to wait for God to give and open revelation or vision.
 - (b) Today, we can open the Bible and hear the inspired, infallible and inerrant Word of God.
 - (c) When we are born again, we receive the mind of Christ.
 - (i) The "natural man" refers to the unsaved man.
 - (ii) Those who are unsaved cannot understand us, but we can understand them.
 - (d) When our hearts are clean, our motive is clear and pure, and when we are walking in the Spirit, we can assume that what we desire is the will of God.
 - (i) It ought to be the normal condition of every Christian that we know the will of God.
 - (ii) If we say or do something outside the will of God, the Holy Spirit will convict us.
 - (iii) If we are walking in the Spirit and God has a different plan for us, then God will turn us around.
 - g) It is honoring to God when we believe Him and live in confidence.
 - i) If you are in doubt about something, just wait on God.
 - (1) Do not run ahead of God.
 - ii) If you are questioning whether or not God is speaking to you, then ask Him to keep speaking



and confirm it in your heart.

- h) If we are not living by what we already know in the Bible, then we are very hypocritical to ask God to guide us.
 - i) Why should God give us more light when we are not obeying the Word of God that is in the Bible?

3) THE VENTURE PRINCIPLE: OBEY WHAT YOU KNOW

- a) Abraham heard and obeyed.
- b) Abraham did not know where it was going to end.
 - i) That was none of his business.
 - ii) Our responsibility is not to totally understand but to readily obey.
- c) Abraham left all that he knew and all that he loved.
 - i) He was going out in sheer obedience.
 - ii) We have to be willing when God speaks to us, whether it makes sense to us or not.
- d) If we do not obey what we know, then God will not give us more light.
- e) If you are having a faith problem, then you are probably having an obedience problem.
 - i) Is there:
 - (1) A confession you need to make?
 - (2) A restitution you need to perform?
 - (3) A gift you need to give?
 - (4) A testimony that you need to offer?
 - (5) A place you need to go?

4) THE VALUE PRINCIPLE: ESTABLISH PRIORITIES

- a) "Tabernacles" in Hebrews 11:9 means "tents."
- b) Canaan was not Abraham's home at this time.
- c) He was living in a tent, and he did not put the tent pegs down too deeply.
 - i) His motto was, "This world is not my home; I am just passing through."
 - ii) He had a different priority.
- d) The reason many of us do not have faith is because our priorities are wrong.
 - i) Faith is God's way to get Heaven's will done on Earth.
- e) Our citizenship is in Heaven; we must not get too attached to this world.
 - i) "Our conversation" in Philippians 3:20 means "our behavior," "our citizenship."
- f) If we live for this world, then we will not have faith.
 - i) The bible warns about friendship with the world.
 - (1) "Enmity" in James 4:4 means "warfare."
 - (2) God will not give faith to His enemies.
 - (a) A Friend of the world is an enemy of God.
 - ii) A person who becomes a friend of the world will begin to live like the world.
 - iii) Then, they become conformed to the world.
 - (1) We need the mind of Christ to know the will of God.
 - (a) If it is the world that molds and shapes us, then it is the world that is conforming



us.

iv) Then, there is condemnation with the world.

(1) Lot pitched his tent toward Sodom.

(2) Lot moved into the world and lost everything because he gravitated to the things of the world.

(a) We ought to be different.

g) Abraham had a pilgrim character.

i) This does not mean he was a dropout.

ii) He was not molded by this world.

5) THE VISION PRINCIPLE: KEEP YOUR FAITH FOCUSED

a) He looked.

b) It is so easy to lose focus and to get earthly and worldly minded.

c) Abraham was a man who had a vision, and his vision enabled him to see the invisible.

i) They saw things that were not seen.

ii) Faith is seeing the invisible.

iii) In 2 Corinthians 4:18, Paul says we are looking at what we cannot see.

d) Faith sees the invisible, knows the unknowable and does the impossible.

e) Because of the vision, there is the focus.

f) There is a world that is more real than this world, and all the heroes of the faith in Hebrews 11 were people who could see the invisible.

i) Many Christians today live a life where all they see is what is before them.

(1) They never get a vision.

(2) They never look upward or onward.

g) Faith is setting your affection on something that is bigger than for what most of us are living.

6) THE VIGILANCE PRINCIPLE: GUARD YOUR HEART.

a) The devil will war against your faith.

i) God gave Abraham a promise, but both he and Sarah got their eyes off the Lord and made some terrible choices.

ii) Abraham went down into Egypt when God put him in Canaan.

iii) God put Abraham's faith to the test and Abraham failed the test.

b) God will test your faith.

i) A faith that cannot be tested cannot be trusted.

c) It will not always be easy.

i) Just because we have faith does not mean that we will not have any problems, heartaches or tears.

7) THE VICTORY PRINCIPLE: ENJOY THE BLESSINGS

a) God made Abraham's name great.

i) He has been a blessing to the world.

ii) God gave Abraham the land.



- iii) From Abraham came the Jewish nation and the prophets.
 - iv) From Abraham came the Bible.
 - v) From the lineage of Abraham (in the flesh) came our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.
 - vi) It all came by faith.
- b) There is no way that we will live in victory apart from faith.



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Would you take the precious Word of God and find Hebrews chapter 11. In a moment we're going to take up our reading in verse 8. Charles Haddon Spurgeon said, "Little faith will bring your soul to Heaven, but great faith will bring Heaven to your soul." How would you like to have great faith? I trust that's what you want. And when you came to Jesus Christ, God enrolled you in the school of faith. Life is the classroom, the Bible is the textbook, the prophets and the apostles are the professors, and Abraham would have to be the Dean in the school of faith. We're going to learn about Abraham.

Abraham, a great man. His name has been known through the centuries. It is loved and revered by Jews and Christians alike. What a great man was Abraham. He's called "The father of them that believe." And most of this eleventh chapter of Hebrews that speaks of champions of the faith is given over to the life of this man Abraham.

Let's look in Hebrews 11, beginning in verse 8 through verse 13, "By faith Abraham, when he was called to go out into a place which he should after receive for an inheritance, obeyed; and he went out, not knowing whither he went. By faith he sojourned in the land of promise, as in a strange country, dwelling in tabernacles with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise; for he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God. Through faith also Sarah herself received strength to conceive seed, and she was delivered of a child when she was past age because she judged Him faithful who had promised. And, therefore, sprang there even of one, of him as good as dead, so many as the stars of the sky in multitude, and as the sand which is by the seashore innumerable. These all died in faith, not having received the promises but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the Earth."

Now I'm going to stop the reading right there, except to also reference to you Romans chapter 4 and verse 11, which calls Abraham, "The father of all them that believe." So Abraham has more or less cornered the market when it comes to teaching faith.

I cannot emphasize enough the importance of faith. We're not talking about something that is incidental. Remember that Hebrews 11:6 says, "Without faith it is impossible to please God." Without faith it is impossible to please Him. Now you want to please God, don't you? I've told you before, if you please God, it doesn't matter whom you displease, and if you displease God, it doesn't matter whom you please. And there is no way to please God without faith. We're not talking to you about things that are incidental. Faith is the mark of a Christian.

Christians were called believers before they were called Christians. It is our chief duty to believe God. John chapter 6 verse 29, "Jesus answered, and said unto them, 'This is the work of God, that ye believe on Him whom He hath sent.'" You want to serve God? This is, your chief duty is to believe



Him. The supreme evil is unbelief. The greatest sin is not murder, rape, arson, pillage, tyranny; the greatest sin is the sin of unbelief.

When the Holy Spirit of God comes into the world, He comes into the world to convince men of sin because they believe not. The reason that men are lost, doomed, damned, and go to Hell is not because of some sin that they have committed; it is because they will not believe. The Bible says in John 3 verse 18, "He that believeth on Him is not condemned; but he that believed not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God." Unbelief is the source of all other sins. Eve sinned in the Garden of Eden. Adam sinned in the Garden of Eden because they did not believe in Him. The Christian life, according to Hebrews chapter 10 and verse 38, is to be lived by faith. The Bible says, "The just shall live by faith." Now I've given you some reasons, folks. I am telling you that without faith it's impossible to please God. You will never, no never, no never ever succeed in your Christian life without believing God. And that is the reason that we're in these studies, "Champions of Faith."

Now Abraham was a pagan, I mean, an absolute pagan, an idolater. He lived in a place called Ur of the Chaldees when God spoke to him, when God met him, when he himself enrolled in the school of faith 2000 years before Christ. He was a pagan. And furthermore, listen, he was 75 years or age when he enrolled in school. Now don't you tell me that you're too evil and don't tell me that you're too old. Today, if Abraham became, "The father of them that believed," can you not step into this wonderful, glorious life of faith? Indeed you can. Think of it, a man over 70 years of age. He's in a strange land. He's settled there. He has a beautiful wife. He has a business. He has kinfolks. He leaves it all, as we're going to see, to go to a country he has never seen, and he's marching under sealed orders as we're going to see. God doesn't tell him where he's going to go. God doesn't tell him how long it's going to take him to get there. God doesn't tell him what he's going to do when he gets there, how long he's going to stay there, or what's going to happen to him. God just says, "Get up and go." And he left, enrolled himself in a school of faith. And the Scripture that we read said that Abraham and Sarah were strangers and pilgrims in the land of Canaan.

Now so are we. Abraham was not a fugitive. He was not running away from home. Abraham was not a vagabond. He was not looking for home. He was a stranger away from home, and he was a pilgrim headed home. And that's what we're going to learn about him, because what was true about Abraham is not mere history. Friend, it is written for our sake. Why do you think God put this here in the eleventh chapter of Hebrews except to be an inspiration, an informational tool to you?

Now I want us to learn six powerful principles, and I pray God the Holy Spirit will write them on your heart. They're going to come right out of this passage of Scripture to help you to have that dynamic faith that will bring Heaven to your soul. Are you ready? Say yes. Okay. Now let's listen.

First principle is the voice principle: we must hear God. Now look if you will in Hebrews 11 verse 8, "By faith Abraham, when he was called," the operative phrase, "when he was called to go out into a place which he should after receive for an inheritance, obeyed; and he went out, not knowing whither he went." The operative phrase here is he heard the voice of God; he was called. Remember our Scripture that we come back to over and over again in Romans 10:17? "Faith comes by hearing,



and hearing by the Word of God.” There is the voice principle. You must hear God. If you read the story of Abraham in the Book of Genesis, go back to chapter 12 and read right on through about verse 25, you’ll read a phrase that will come over and over and over and over again, “The word of the Lord came to him.”

Let’s just take a significant passage. Take your Bibles now. Put your bookmark there in Hebrews 11 and then go all the way back to the first book of the Bible, and go back, if you will, to Genesis chapter 12, and let’s find what the writer of Hebrews is talking about. I want you to notice now how God comes to Abraham. This is Genesis chapter 12 and we’re going to read the first three verses, “Now the Lord had said unto Abraham,” there it is, “The Lord had said unto Abraham, ‘Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father’s house, into a land,’” now I want you to pay attention now and get ready. I’m going to give you four “I wills.” Four times God says “I will,” and I want you to listen to it. Here, He says now, “‘Get thee out from thy father’s house, into a land that I will show thee; And I will make thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing. And I will bless them that bless thee; and curse him that curseth thee; and in thee shall all the families of the Earth be blessed.’” Now, here’s the voice. He hears the voice of God, and God says, “I will, I will, I will, I will.” That’s the root of faith. That’s where faith comes from. Now that’s in Genesis chapter 12. If you were to go back to chapter 11, in contra-distinction, you would find the people who tried to build a massive tower to Heaven called the Tower of Babel. And I want you to notice the difference between Genesis 11, 1 through 4 and Genesis 12, 1 through 3.

Now go to Genesis 11 verses 1 through 4, “And the Earth was of one language, and of one speech. And it came to pass, as they journeyed from the east, that they found a plain in the land of Shinar,” and by the way, that’s Babylon; “and dwelt there,” and by the way, Babylon is Iraq; “and dwelt there. And they said one to another, ‘Go to,’” now watch this, “‘let us,’” now if you don’t mind marking in your Bible, just mark “let us,” “‘make brick, and burn them thoroughly. And they had brick for stone, and slime had they for mortar.’ And they said, ‘Go to, let us build that again,’” “‘let us,’” underscore that again, “‘let us build us a city and a tower; whose top may reach unto Heaven,’” now watch this; “‘and let us make us a name, lest we be scattered abroad upon the face of the whole Earth.’”

Now can you compare that? Compare Genesis chapter 11, 1 through 4 with Genesis 12, 1 through 3. In Genesis 12, God says, “I will, I will, I will, I will.” In Genesis 11, man says, “Let us, let us, let us. Let us make us a name.” God said, “Abraham, I will make your name great.”

Now I submit to you that most of the people in this city and the cities around the world are in the “let us do this.” We’re trying to build our high-rises to Hell. We’re trying to build our utopias. But faith, friend, hears the voice of God when God says, “I will.” These people were going to make themselves a name. Anybody know one of their names? We all know the name of Abraham because God said to Abraham, “I will make your name great.”

Now listen! There’s the voice principle. Comes the question, big question! How can we hear the voice of God? That’s what most of us are asking. You keep saying, “Pastor, I’ve got to hear the voice of



God. I want to know how to hear the voice of God. How can I, a mortal, say this is the will of God and, therefore, I'm going to believe God?"

Now, so often when we pray, and we all do this, we pray this way, "Lord, if it is Your will." Do you ever pray that way? "Lord, if it's Your will, do this; Lord, if it is Your will, do that; Lord, if it's Your will, heal; Lord, if it's Your will, show us what to do; Lord, if it's Your will, keep us safe, if it is Your will." Now if you don't know the will of God, that's a good way to pray. But that's not the best way to pray. The best way to pray is saying, "Lord, this is Your will, and I thank You for it and I stand on it." You see, put in your margin First John chapter 5 verse 14, "And this is the confidence that we have in Him, if we ask Him anything according to His will, He heareth us." Do you have the confidence to say, "God, this is Your will?" I have confidence. That's where great faith comes. Great faith does not come from guessing at the will of God.

Well, you say, "Pastor Rogers, how then can I hear the voice of God?" Well, we're going to have to admit something first of all: that Abraham heard the voice of God in a way that none of us have ever heard the voice of God, at least I don't think we have. I never have. God appeared to him and spoke to him. God appeared to Abraham and spoke to Abraham. He appeared, obviously, through an angel, the angel of Jehovah, but the Lord appeared to him.

Look, Genesis chapter 12 and verse 7, "And the Lord appeared to Abram," his name was called Abram then, "and said, 'Unto thy seed will I give this land:' and there builded he an altar unto the Lord, who appeared to him." God never appeared to me like that. Or for example, Moses. In Exodus 3:2, God spoke to Moses out of a burning bush. I've never seen a burning bush, at least not one that burned supernaturally like that. God spoke to Moses supernaturally. I read in the Bible, in Acts chapter 9 verses 1 through 6, that God spoke to Saul. Saul, who became the apostle Paul, is on the road to Damascus to put Christians to death, and the Lord appears to him in a vision, a brightness above the noonday sun, a voice from Heaven. I've never heard that. I've never seen that. Simon Peter in the Bible, Acts chapter 10 verses 9 through 16, is on a rooftop. An angel comes to him. He has a vision.

All of these people have heard the Word of God in a supernatural way. Is that what we're waiting on today? No. That is not the norm for us today. Does that mean we cannot hear the voice of God? No. Does that mean that we are less? No. It means that we are more. Do we have less advantage? We have greater advantage. Don't miss this now. To know God, to know the will of God, we have the greater advantage.

Put in your Bible Hebrews chapter 1 verses 1 and 2, "God, who at sundry times," that means various times, "and in diverse manners," different kinds of ways, "spake in times past unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by His Son, whom He hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also He made the world." Well, how does God speak to us by His Son? The Bible teaches that we have two things, well, really three things. We have the written Word of God. We have



the mind of Christ. And we have the guidance of the Holy Spirit. Now that does not make us lesser than these Old Testament characters. That is a greater advantage.

Now these Old Testament characters, before they had the Bible, before they knew what we know by the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, they had to wait for God to break in with some open revelation, some vision, some ecstasy. We don't have to do that. Friend, I, this morning, can open the Bible and hear the inspired, infallible, inerrant Word of God. Right there. Hey, don't let that go past. When I was born again, regenerated; I received what the Bible calls the mind of Christ. Listen to First Corinthians chapter 2 verses 14 to 16, "But the natural man," that is, the unsaved man, "receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God; for they are foolishness unto him, neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned. But he that is spiritual judgeth all things," that means, he weighs things and makes appropriate decisions, "yet he himself is judged of no man," that is, people can't understand us; we understand them. "For who hath known the mind of the Lord, that he may instruct Him?" But now, listen to this, "But we have the mind of Christ." Don't just miss that by nonchalance. We have the inspired, inerrant written Word of God, and we have the mind of Christ.

How can I know the will of God? Friend, when my heart is clean, my motive is clear, and I'm walking in the Spirit, I can assume that what I think and what I desire is the will of God. I can just assume it.

You say that's arrogance. No, it's not. You see, the devil wants to put us under some sort of a pall, some sort of an idea that we couldn't possibly know the will of God. Of course we can know the will of God. That ought to be the normal condition that we know the will of God.

You say, "Well, what if I say to do something that's outside the will of God?" The Holy Spirit will blow the whistle. He'll blow the whistle. He'll say, "That's wrong. You sinned. Get back in bounds." If you're walking in the Spirit, friend, you will know when the Holy Spirit of God blows the whistle on you. And suppose you're in the Spirit and there's no sin, but God has a different plan for you? Then God will show you. God will turn you around. In Acts 16:7-10, Paul wanted to go into Bithynia, but the Spirit forbade him, and he heard a voice from Macedonia. But friend, we can walk in the Lord. It is honoring to God to believe Him and to live in confidence.

Now if you're in doubt about something, wait on God. Don't run ahead of God. The Bible says in Proverbs chapter 4 verse 18, "But the path of the just is as the shining light that shineth more and more unto the perfect day." It may be dark, and then it's gray dawn, and then there's deep shadows, but colors appear, and then, finally, it's high noon, and you say, "Lord, this is the will of God." If there's something you're wondering about, you're thinking God is speaking to you, say, "Lord, if this is You speaking, just keep speaking. Confirm it in my heart."

That's the way God called me into the ministry. "God, do you want me to preach? Lord, I think You want me to preach. Lord, if you don't want me to preach, You'd better let me know. Lord, You want me to preach." Now that took place over almost a year. "The path of the just is as a shining light that shineth more and more unto a perfect day." What is the first principle of these principles? It is the voice principle. You must hear from God. "The Word of the Lord came to Abraham," and God will speak to you. God is speaking to you. And before your saying, "Well, I don't know the will of God,"



let me ask you this question: are you living by what you already know in the Bible? If you're not, and you're asking God to guide you, you're a big hypocrite. If that offends you, come up and apologize to me and I'll forgive you. Now listen to me. Why should God give you more light when you're not obeying the revealed Word of God that's right here in this book? Think about it. There is the voice principle. We have something better than Abraham. Abraham did not have the revealed Word of God like we have here.

Now, number two. There is a second principle. It's what I want to call the venture principle. Not only must you hear God, you must obey what you know. Now look again in Hebrews 11 verse 8, "By faith Abraham, when he was called to go out into a place which he should after receive for an inheritance," here's the operative word now, "obeyed; and he went out, not knowing whither he went." He heard and he obeyed. Now he didn't know where it was going to end. That was none of his business. Our responsibility is not to totally understand, but to readily obey. Now remember all, he was leaving all that he knew and all that he loved and was going out in sheer obedience.

Let me give you a testimony. Years ago, a Pulpit Committee from this church spoke to me about coming to be your pastor. I was pastor, and Brother Jim Whitmire and myself were on a staff down in Florida at a very wonderful church, a growing church, a loving church, a happy church. But your Pulpit Committee came and began to speak to me about coming to this church. Now we did not want to come to Memphis, Tennessee. I did not want to come to Bellevue Baptist Church. Nothing negative about Memphis, nothing negative about Bellevue, I was just happy where I was. And felt that God was blessing, and He was blessing, and I could see no earthly reason, except that as Joyce and I began to fast and pray and seek the face of God, God spoke to our inner being, things that we did not understand. I could not have dared to believe what God was going to do here at Bellevue Baptist Church and let me be a part of it. I didn't know that. But I did know that in my inner person, as God spoke to me, as I understood the will of God, God said go, and I am so glad we obeyed. I'm so glad that we listened.

Now folks, I don't know where you are right now, but you have to be willing when God speaks to obey, whether it makes sense to you or whether it doesn't make sense. Very frankly, coming up here made no sense to me, none whatsoever. But I was impelled in the spirit to go.

I tell young preachers, they ask me, "When I go to a church, Brother Rogers, what should my attitude be?" I say to young preachers, "When you go to a church, there must be two things: number one, you must be prepared to spend the rest of your life there, and number two, you must be ready to leave in the next 15 minutes." Both are true. You can't say, "Lord, I'm building a nest." You need to pray, "Lord, if I'm building a nest, put a thorn in it. I am ready to go." Trust and obey, for there's no other way to be happy in Jesus, than to trust and obey. Now, friend, God gives you the choice. If you do not obey what you know, don't ask God for more light. God is not going to give it to you.

Now, are you having a faith problem? If you're having a faith problem, you're probably having really an obedience problem. Is there a confession that you need to make? Is there restitution that you need to perform? Is there a gift you need to give? Is there a testimony you need to offer? Is there



a place you need to go? Obey! Obey! Do you want faith? The voice principle: hear from God! The venture principle: obey God.

Now let's move to the third principle, and that is what I call the value principle: you must establish priorities. Look again if you will in Hebrews chapter 11 now. Let's begin in verses 9 and 10, "By faith," Abraham he's speaking of, "he sojourned in the land of promise, as in a strange country," now here's the operative word or phrase, "dwelling in tabernacles," that means tents, "with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise; for he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose Builder and Maker is God."

Now I told you that Abraham was a stranger away from home and he was a pilgrim headed home. Canaan was not his home at that time. He's looking for a city that had foundations, whose Builder and Maker is God. And he's living in a tent, and he won't put the tent-pegs down too deep because his motto was, "This world is not my home. I'm just passing through." He had a different priority.

Now the reason that many of us don't have faith is because our priorities are wrong. We think that faith is some way to get our will done in Heaven when faith is God's way to get Heaven's will done on Earth. Matthew 6:10, "Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done on Earth, as it is in Heaven." So he's living in a tent.

Now, do you realize, and I had to preach myself this message before I could preach it to you, that our citizenship is in Heaven, and we dare not, we must not get too attached to this world. It can end just like that. The things of this world. I mean, man's greatest achievement, gone, just like that. Philippians 3 verse 20, "For our conversation," that means our behavior, our citizenship, "is in Heaven, from whence also we look for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ." If you're living for this world, you will not have faith. Furthermore, you'll be in the junk business. The Bible warns about friendship with the world. James 4 verse 4, "Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity," warfare, "with God? Therefore, whosoever will be the friend of the world is the enemy of God."

Are you worldly? You wonder why you don't have faith. You think God's going to give faith to His enemies? Friend of the world. Abraham was not a friend of the world. When you become a friend of the world, then you begin to live like the world. First John 2 verses 15 through 17, "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world; the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world passeth away and the lust thereof, but he that doeth the will of God abideth forever." And remember that faith comes by the will of God. Now think of it.

First of all, you become a friend to the world, and then you begin to love the world, and then what's going to happen? Romans 12:2, you're going to be conformed to the world. Look at it, "And be not conformed to the world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, perfect, and acceptable will of God." Remember I said that you need the mind of Christ to know the will of God? But if this world is squeezing you in, molding you in, shaping you, Madison Avenue, television, it doesn't matter what it is. Your football team, the fashion designer.



What is it? What is it that molds you, conforms you? And then you wonder why you don't have the mind of Christ. And then you wonder why you don't understand the will of God. First it starts with friendship with the world, then love of the world, then confirmation to the world, and then condemnation with the world. First Corinthians 11 verse 32, "But when ye are judged, when we are judged, we are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the world."

There are a lot of good illustrations about this. Abraham had with him a nephew whose name was Lot. Now Lot is following Abraham, and the Bible tells us that Abraham was living in a tent. But Lot pitched his tent toward Sodom. Read about that in Genesis chapter 13. He moved into the world. His wife, obviously, became high up in Sodom society; his daughters probably cheerleaders at Sodom High. He becomes a businessman in some sort of a civic council or something there in Sodom, and he lost it all because he was gravitating to the things of this world.

We hear so much today about the separation of church and state. Do you know the message needs to be preached today is the separation of church and world? "Come out from among them." I look at the average Christian today, they look alike, they dress alike, they talk alike, they smoke the same things, go to the same movies, drink the same things. We ought to be different. The Bible says in Second Corinthians 6:17, "Come out from among them and be ye separate, saith the Lord." If you were arrested for being a Christian, would there be enough evidence to convict you? We're to be different.

You want faith? Abraham had a pilgrim character. Now that doesn't mean that he was a dropout. Abraham was in business. He had a family. He taught. He even had to go to war several times. But Abraham was not molded by this world.

It's just us here this morning. May I ask you a question? What are your personal goals? Is your personal goal to make enough money to retire and have a nice house and to live in ease and to have certain things? What are your goals for your children? Do you want them to be successful and famous? Are you more concerned about your spiritual walk with God? Are you more concerned about the character of your children growing in Christ and the kingdom of Heaven? Would you leave your present job and take a lesser job for less pay if it were better for the character of your children? Would you do so? What is your goal? Is it to impress other people? In whose home had you rather visit: the rich and the famous, or the godly and the pure? Most of us are so squeezed in by this world and we wonder why we don't have faith. Put it down big, plain, and straight, Abraham was a man to whom this world meant very little because, "He looked for a city that had foundations, whose Builder and Maker is God." He had a pilgrim character. And Jesus epitomizes it in Matthew chapter 6 verse 33, "Seek ye first the kingdom of God and His righteousness." Now we're just talking about principles of faith, folks, and we're saying without faith it's impossible to please God.

Here's the fourth principle. It is the vision principle, the vision principle: keep your faith focused! Now you can hear the message today, and you can agree with it, but as soon as you get back home, you're going to get out of focus if you're not careful. Now, look again in Hebrews chapter 11 and verse 10, "For he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God." The operative word is, "he looked," "he looked." Now look again in Hebrews 11 verse 13, "These all died in faith, not



having received the promises but having seen them afar off,” that’s the vision I’m talking about, “having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the Earth.” It is so easy to lose the focus that we have of the right values. It is so easy to get earthly minded and worldly minded. Colossians 3 verses 1 and 2, “If ye, then, be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affections on things above, not on things of the Earth.”

Now, friend, Abraham was a man who had a vision, and his vision enabled him to see the invisible. Remember Hebrews 11 verse 1, our definition of faith? “Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.” Now that’s the important thing. Look again in Hebrews 11 verse 13, “These all died in faith, not having received the promises but having seen them afar off.” That is, they saw the invisible. They saw things that were not seen. Faith is seeing the invisible. And it is so true that we can, by faith, see the invisible. Let me give you an interesting verse, Second Corinthians 4 verse 18, “While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen.” Is that double talk? Paul says we’re not looking at what we can see, we’re looking at what we can’t see. Faith sees the invisible, it knows the unknowable, it does the impossible. Because of the vision there is the focus. You have to keep your faith on these things.

A man went into the psychiatrist’s office. The nurse came back to see the doctor and said, “Doctor, there’s a man out here says he needs to see you. Doctor, I think he’s crazy. He thinks he’s invisible.” The doctor said, “Go tell him we can’t see him.” There is an invisible world. There is a world that is more real than this world, and all of these heroes of the faith were people who could see the invisible.

Most of us live a life where all we see is what is before us, our car, our house, our jobs. We never get a vision. We never look upward. We never look onward. You know, even in the material world. You think of the people who make a mark: the explorers, the novelists, the artists, the creators, the inventors. All of these had the ability to see the invisible. Before I ever preached in this pulpit, I would come out here when it was sheer dirt and stand up here and preach. I know that may sound funny to you. But God put a dream in my heart of what we’re doing today.

When Disney World was being dedicated down in Florida, they opened it up; grand procession. They were all up there in the stands. And Walt Disney had died, and Mrs. Walt Disney was sitting there alongside of one of the executives. And everything was happening, and all of the fanfares Disney did in those days. And the lady sitting next to Mrs. Walt Disney said, “It’s a shame Walt is not here to see all of this.” She said, “Oh, he saw it, that’s why it’s here.” “That’s why it’s here. He saw it.” Friend, it begins with a vision. Faith, faith is setting your affection on something that is bigger than most of us are living for, just drawing our breath and drawing our salary.

Now here’s the fifth principle, and it’s the vigilance principle: you must guard your heart. The devil will war against your faith. Look in Hebrews 11:11, “Through faith also Sarah herself received strength to conceive seed, and was delivered of a child when she was past age, because she judged Him faithful who had promised.” Well, that all sounds well and good. God gave Abraham a promise. But you know that he got his eyes off the Lord and so did Sarah, and they did some terrible things.



Old Abraham went down into Egypt when God had put him there in Canaan. I wish I had more time to tell you about that. But God put his faith to a test in Genesis chapter 12 verses 10 through 20. God tested him and he failed the test at first. Friend, God will test your faith. A faith that cannot be tested cannot be trusted. The Bible speaks of the trial of our faith in First Peter chapter 1 and verse 7.

Now when you live the life of faith, it's not all honey and no bees. Your faith is going to be tested. Abraham should have stayed there in the land of Canaan, even though there was a famine if he knew that God had put him there. He should have said, "If I starve, I'm going to stay here. If God put me here, God's going to take care of me."

Be vigilant. Your faith is going to come under attack. I'm going to tell you again, it's not going to always be easy. In churches, don't get the idea that all the lost people are out there and all the saved people are in here. That's wrong. In the home, don't get the idea that you're not going to have any problem with your marriage just because you have faith. In life, don't think there are not going to be any heartaches or any tears. There are going to be problems. But Abraham returned. He came back to the life of faith.

I wish I had more time to speak about that, but let me give you the last of these principles because time has gone from us. And it is the victory principle: enjoy the blessings. Hebrews 11 verses 11 and 12, "Through faith also Sarah herself received strength to conceive seed, and was delivered of a child when she was past age, because she judged Him faithful who had promised." Sarah got her baby, friend, "Therefore spring there even of one, and him as good as dead, so many as the stars of the sky in multitude, and as the sand which is by the seashore innumerable." Abraham's name is great. His descendants are great. Abraham has been a blessing to the world. He's been a blessing to me. God gave Abraham the land. God made his name great. And, listen, think of all the things that God did through Abraham. From Abraham came the Jewish nation. From Abraham came the prophets. From Abraham came the Bible. And in the flesh, from the seed of Abraham, our dear Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. It all came by faith.

There is the victory principle. There is no way, no way you'll live in victory apart from faith. "This is the victory that overcomes the world, even our faith." And all of these things are there, right there in the school of faith. And these are six principles. Listen to me, I guarantee it, if you will put these things into practice, your faith will blossom and bloom. And don't tell me it won't if you have not tried it. And don't tell me that it can't work for you. Abraham was a pagan when God called him. And don't tell me you've missed your opportunity. He was 75 years of age when he got started in the school of faith.

And God wants to save you. And the life of faith begins with a step of faith. And that step of faith is to receive Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior.

Bow your heads. Now if you're not certain that you're saved, I want you to begin to soften your heart and open your heart right now. If you're absolutely certain that you're saved, I want you to begin to pray for those around you, that God would open their hearts.

Now the Bible says, "Therefore, being justified by faith, we have peace with God." May I, precious friend, lead you in a prayer, and you make it your prayer. And you receive the dear precious son of



God as your Lord and Savior. Remember this: that we're sinners by birth, by choice, sinners under condemnation, sin that must be judged and punished in Hell unless it is forgiven. Remember also that God in love sent Jesus Christ, who died for us and shed His blood upon the Cross, the Son of God to pay our sin debt. Remember, there's nothing to earn. We must receive it by faith. Put our faith in God's grace, which means God's loving-kindness toward us. And when we do, God forgives our sin, comes into our lives to give us peace and power, and when we die or when He comes again, He takes us to Heaven.

Are you ready to pray? Pray this way, "Dear God, thank You for loving me. Jesus, You died to save me. You promised to save me if I would trust You. Lord Jesus, I do trust You." Would you tell Him that? "Lord Jesus, I do trust You right now. By faith I receive You as my Lord and my Savior. Come into my life. Forgive my sin. Cleanse me. Save me, Jesus." Just come humbly but boldly. Stand on His Word. Don't look for a feeling. Don't ask for a sign. Just take Him at His Word. "Save me, Jesus." Ask Him. Ask Him sincerely. "Save me, Jesus."

Did you ask Him? Then I want you to pray this way: thank Him. Say, "Thank You for saving me. I receive it by faith and that settles it. You're now my Lord, my Savior, my God and my Friend. Now, Lord Jesus, I will not be ashamed of You. I will make it public that I've trusted You. In Your name I pray, Amen."



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