



# SERMON NOTES

From In Touch With Dr. Charles Stanley

## THE REQUIREMENTS OF FAITH

**KEY PASSAGE:** Genesis 12:1-8 | **SUPPORTING SCRIPTURES:** Genesis 12:12-20; 13:4; 15:1-6; 17:1-4, 9; 22:1-18  
Joshua 24:2 | 2 Chronicles 20:17 | Psalm 46:10 | Proverbs 3:5-6 | Isaiah 64:4 | Matthew 18:3; 19:14 | Acts 1:8

### ► SUMMARY

#### At salvation every believer enters into a life of faith.

At first, we know very little about the Christian life, so the Lord puts us in His school of faith to learn basic principles of Scripture that teach us how to live for Him in a world that's opposed to Christ. We all begin our journey in a state of weakness, but as we learn to believe that God is who He says He is and that He will do everything He's promised, our trust in Him grows until we become strong in faith.

### ► SERMON POINTS

Abraham is known in Scripture as a man of great faith, yet he didn't begin that way. With each revelation of God and the fulfillment of His promises, Abraham's trust grew. The Lord never gave up on him as He continued to work in Abraham's life to accomplish His purpose. He used each of his failures as a gracious teaching opportunity in His school of faith.

#### Five Requirements for Learning to Walk by Faith

We enter into relationship with God by faith and continue in the Christian life by learning to live by faith instead of relying on our own understanding (Prov. 3:5-6).

**1. Learn to listen to the Lord.** This is the first requirement for learning to walk by faith. We must know what God says. When the Lord first spoke to Abraham, He told him, "Go from your country, and from your relatives

and from your father's house, to the land which I will show you" (Gen. 12:1). Abraham passed this test of faith because He "went away as the LORD had spoken to him" (v. 4).

Throughout his stay in Canaan God spoke to Abraham several times, giving him more understanding of His plans and promises. On a few occasions Abraham built altars in the places where he heard from God, as reminders of His guidance and promises.

Abraham heard the Lord speak audibly. That probably won't be the case for most of us, but God will speak to us directly and personally in an internal way. There are several steps we can take to open our ears to hear Him.

- **Meditate on God's Word.** We do this by reading it, praying over it, thinking about it, and asking questions. But we shouldn't stop there. We also need to apply what we've learned and observe the results of our obedience to God.
- **Spend quiet time alone with God.** We need to shut ourselves away from the noisiness of the world for a little while so we can focus solely on the Lord and what He is saying.
- **Make notes in your Bible.** Recording what God has said to us serves as a reminder of His work in our lives much like Abraham's altars did for him.
- **Discipline yourself to hear the Holy Spirit.** He was given to help us discern what God is saying to us in His Word. He'll also, at times, simply impress something strongly on our hearts. So we must learn to identify His internal voice and respond to His promptings.
- **Expect to hear from God.** The Lord isn't silent. He's

given us His Word and His Spirit; He will speak to anyone who wants to hear from Him.

**2. Learn to obey God.** A life of faith is one of obedience, even in times of great difficulty and hardship. Although Abraham became a man of great faith, he didn't always trust and obey God fully. When the Lord told him to leave his family and go to the land He'd show him, Abraham partially obeyed. He left for Canaan as God commanded, but he brought his nephew Lot with him. After arriving in Canaan, instead of trusting the Lord to provide for and protect him in a famine, he went to Egypt seeking provision. Then he tried to protect himself by lying about his wife, saying she was his sister.

In moments of weakness, partial or full disobedience may make sense to us, but anytime we choose to go our own way, we too are on the way to Egypt and headed for trouble.

**3. Learn to depend on God.** When Abraham left Canaan, he wasn't depending on the Lord for protection. But after all his troubles in Egypt, he returned to Canaan with a repentant heart and worshipped God at the place where he'd previously built an altar (Gen. 13:4). The remedy for disobedience is always repentance.

Difficult circumstances force us to depend on the Lord. We may lose everything else we have, but we can never lose Almighty God. He teaches us to depend on Him over the course of a lifetime. That's why it's important to keep a record of how He has worked in the past. As we look back, we'll be reminded of God's faithfulness, and our faith in Him will grow stronger.

The Lord wants us to depend on Him for everything—guidance, protection, and provision. But we must also rely on Him for the strength to obey. It's only by the power of the indwelling Holy Spirit that we're enabled to do what God desires and become the person He's designed us to be.

**4. Learn to wait on God.** The Lord promised Abraham that he would become a great nation (Gen 12:2), yet he remained childless. Sarah suggested that they have a child through her Egyptian maid, Hagar. Instead of waiting for the Lord's timing, he and Sarah tried to fulfill God's promise their way. But this was not the child God promised.

They had to wait a few more years before the Lord allowed Sarah to bear the promised son. Their impatience didn't hinder God's ordained plan. Despite their mistake, He graciously gave them their son at just the right time.

**5. Learn to acknowledge faith failures and learn from them.** Along the way, Abraham stumbled in his faith journey, but he always learned from his failures and grew stronger. When God gave him the biggest test of his life, Abraham's strong trust enabled him to obey. The Lord told him to sacrifice Isaac, the son through whom all His promises would be fulfilled (Gen. 22:1-18). Abraham was so confident God would fulfill His promises that he believed He would raise Isaac back to life. So in obedience, he stretched out his knife to kill his son. Just then God intervened and provided a ram as a substitute sacrifice.

We learn to walk by faith the same way Abraham did—by listening to God, obeying His commands, and learning from each failure. And in key moments when so much hangs in the balance, we wait for the Lord, trusting Him to intervene according to His perfect time and desires.

#### ► RESPONSE

- How would you describe your faith journey?
- As you look back at your life, what milestones have marked your growth?
- What vital lessons have you learned from your failures? How have they strengthened your trust in God?

To purchase this message on CD or DVD, please visit [store.intouch.org](http://store.intouch.org) or call 1-800-789-1473.  
To download these Sermon Notes, visit [intouch.org/sermonnotes](http://intouch.org/sermonnotes).

