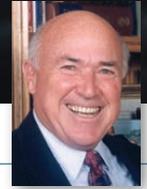




a word from Pastor Chuck

Faith, Part 6: Four Keys to Faith



Abraham was strengthened in faith, giving glory to God. Romans 4:20

Three: Abraham's faith prompted him to glorify God

In the last issue, we looked at God's promise to Abraham to give him a son. *As soon as he received the promise*, Abraham thanked the Lord for his promised son. He may have said things like, "Lord! What a blessing to have a boy ... my own son! How happy Sarah will be! Thank You, Lord!" If you had stopped by Abraham's tent that day, you may have seen an elderly man sitting inside, beaming and happy, almost bubbling over. You might even have heard him whistling and shouting, "Lord, You're so good to me!"

"Hey, old man," you might have said, "why are you so happy?" "My wife and I are going to have a son." "Really? How old are you?" "Oh, I will be 100 before too many years pass." "Well, how many children will this make for you?" "It will be our first." "Your first? How long have you been married?" "About 60 years or so." "That's ... interesting. Is your wife pregnant?" "Oh no, not yet."

At this point, you'd walk away and say, "Poor fellow. Senile, you know. But he's not hurting anybody." But Abraham is giving glory to God before there is any evidence that God will keep His promise. All Abraham has is God's Word. But based on that word alone, he gives glory to God. We find it very easy to praise God when we begin to see evidence of His answer. We think, *All right! Looks like God's going to work.* We find it especially easy to praise Him when we see the thing transpire. But that isn't faith. Faith is rejoicing before there is any evidence of the fulfillment.

Years ago, when our children were still young, we were living in Corona, CA, and pastoring a small church. I wasn't able to support the family, so I had taken a job with Alpha Beta markets. When my mother-in-law died in Phoenix, we made arrangements with Alpha Beta for a short leave of absence

and traveled to Arizona. It took us about two weeks to get all of her affairs in order. Returning home, I went to work to check my schedule. The manager said, "Before I can put you back to work, you have to check with the union. You're late on your dues."

I went to pay my back dues and I'd been assessed a \$50 late fee. I didn't have the money. "I can't pay the fine unless I'm working," I answered. "That's your problem," they retorted. I told them my mother-in-law had died and that I had been out of state. But their only reply was that I had to come up with the money. So I couldn't work for some time, and we found ourselves slipping deeper into debt. The situation discouraged me considerably. About this time, I received an offer. Alpha Beta proposed I go into management, which meant I wouldn't have to belong to the union. The company laid out a very attractive salary and excellent opportunities, but I would have to leave the ministry and make marketing my career. I was tempted. One morning, feeling frustrated and confused, I woke up early and thought, *Maybe I should forget the ministry. We're going deeper into debt and the church isn't growing.*

Later that same morning, the phone rang. The person calling was an old friend of the family. She told me that she had sent a check for \$425 to arrive the next day. I had totaled up my bills that morning—\$416. Overjoyed, I began praising God and rejoicing in His provision. "All right, I'm out of debt! Lord, You're so good." I went to the kitchen, grabbed my wife, and swung her around. "We're out of debt. Praise the Lord!" About a half-hour later, when I began to settle down, the Lord spoke to my heart. "Why are you so happy?"

"Oh, Lord," I said, "thank You, Jesus. You're just so good to me." Once more He spoke to my heart. "How do you know they're going to send that money?"

"Come on, Lord, You've got to be kidding," I thought. "They told me it's coming special

delivery. These are good people. I would trust their word any day, Lord."

"This morning," He said, "when you woke up feeling so discouraged, complaining and griping to Me as you were totaling up your bills, you already had My promise that I was going to supply all Your needs. But I didn't see you rejoicing or waltzing your wife around the kitchen then. Now that you have

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the word of a man that a check is on the way, you're ecstatic. Whose word is greater?" I had to apologize to the Lord and repent for my attitude. I had staggered at the promises of God. Only when I had evidence of His provision did I start up with the hallelujahs.

Just knowing Philippians 4:19 should have been enough to cause me to praise Him: *"My God shall supply all of your needs according to His riches in glory."* I should have said, "Thank You, Lord. It's all taken care of." But I wasn't strong in the faith. The Lord was teaching me to become stronger—but He still met my need before I grew new faith muscles. How many times have you staggered at Philippians 4:19? Instead of stumbling and staggering, go to the Word of God and find a promise that relates to your situation. Read that promise, meditate on it, and stand on it. 🚀