Abram Believed the Lord

A Five-Day Devotional from Genesis 15:1–6

Day 1: Before Abram Speaks God Speaks

Read: Genesis 15:1

Genesis 15 begins with God taking the initiative. Abram has not yet voiced his concern about being childless. He has not asked for reassurance. The word of the LORD comes to him first: "Fear not, Abram, I am your shield; your reward shall be very great."

That order matters. God called Abram. God made the promise. God protected him. Now God sustains his faith by speaking again. Abram's future has never depended on his ability to hold everything together. It rests on the God who made the promise and continues to address the man who must live by it.

God identifies Himself as Abram's shield. This does not mean Abram will never suffer or face danger. God is assuring him that no threat can overturn His covenant purpose. Abram had just refused the wealth offered by the king of Sodom. His future was not in Sodom's hands. The God who promised was still the source and guarantor of what lay ahead.

Verse 1 gives Abram real assurance without changing his circumstances. He still has no son and no visible way for the promise to continue. God's reassurance is not empty because it comes before the answer. It is the word of the God who has promised one.

We need the same distinction. God has not promised that every illness will be healed now, every strained relationship will be restored on our timetable, or every good desire will unfold as we imagine. Faith does not take a preferred outcome, attach God's name to it, and demand that He provide it. Faith rests on what God has truly revealed.

God has promised that nothing can separate His people from the love of Christ. He has promised to complete His saving work. He has promised an eternal inheritance. Those promises remain certain even when suffering is real, sin feels stubborn, and much of what we can see is passing away.

Before Abram speaks, God speaks. Christian confidence begins with the God who has revealed Himself and fulfilled His saving purpose in Jesus Christ. We do not create a promise strong enough to carry us. We listen to the God whose Word is true.

Reflection Questions

1. Where are you tempted to turn a deeply desired outcome into something God has promised?

2. Which promise God has actually revealed do you need to remember today?

3. How does God's initiative in speaking to Abram strengthen your confidence in His grace?

Today's Practice

Write down one desire you need to hold honestly before God and one promise from Scripture on which you can truly rest. Pray about both without confusing them.

Prayer

Father, thank You for speaking before I could make myself secure. Forgive me for treating my desires as though they were Your promises. Help me listen to Your Word and rest in what You have truly revealed through Christ. In Jesus' name, Amen

Day 2: Bring the Contradiction to God

Read: Genesis 15:2–3

Abram's first recorded words directly to the LORD concern the promise that still appears unfulfilled. “O Lord GOD, what will you give me, for I continue childless?” Then he presses the matter: “Behold, you have given me no offspring.”

His words are honest and pointed. God had promised a great nation and offspring who would inherit the land. Abram still had no child. Unless God provided the promised son, a servant in Abram's household would receive the inheritance. Abram brings that apparent contradiction to the God who made the promise.

Scripture does not present this as Abram walking away from God. He addresses the Lord, remains engaged with His Word, and receives an answer rather than a rebuke. Faith can bring perplexity to God while remaining under the authority of what He has said.

That gives us a faithful way to pray when God's promises and our experience seem difficult to reconcile. We may say, “You have promised to keep Your people, but I feel weak.” We may admit that a sin still has more strength than we want to acknowledge. We may confess that the world feels fragile even while God promises an eternal inheritance.

Honest prayer does not require polished words or the appearance of certainty about every circumstance. It does require submission to God's revealed Word. Abram does not replace God's promise with his own conclusion. He brings his real situation under the authority of the One who speaks.

Christ makes that kind of prayer possible for us. Our welcome before the Father does not depend on our ability to hide confusion or produce impressive faith. Jesus has opened the way for sinners to come to God. We can confess weakness, ask hard questions, and remain under the Word because our access rests in Him.

God's people do not honor Him by pretending that tension does not exist. We honor Him by bringing the tension to Him and refusing to make our circumstances the final authority. Abram brings the contradiction to the God who made the promise. We can do the same.

That remains true even when the concern has lasted longer than we expected.

Reflection Questions

1. What unresolved circumstance have you been reluctant to name honestly before God?

2. How can you express that concern without replacing God's Word with your own conclusion?

3. What difference does Christ's finished work make in the way you approach the Father with weakness or doubt?

Today's Practice

Turn one unresolved concern into a written prayer. State the situation honestly, name the promise of God that governs it, and ask for grace to remain under His Word.

Prayer

Father, You already know the concerns I struggle to express. Forgive me for hiding from You or letting my circumstances become the final word. Thank You that Jesus gives me access to

Your presence. Help me bring my perplexity under Your true and sufficient Word. In Jesus' name, Amen

Day 3: God Gives His Word Before the Answer

Read: Genesis 15:4–5

God answers Abram, but He does not answer every question. Eliezer will not be the heir. A son from Abram's own body will receive the inheritance. God clarifies who, but He does not explain how or when.

Then God directs Abram to the stars. “Number the stars, if you are able to number them.” Abram cannot, of course. God says, “So shall your offspring be.” The stars help Abram grasp the vast scope of the promise. They do not mean the promise has already been fulfilled.

Abram still has no son. Sarah remains barren. Nothing visible in the household has changed. God gives Abram a promise to believe, not a son to hold.

The difference between illustration and fulfillment protects us from treating every encouraging sign as proof that God will resolve a circumstance in the way we prefer. The stars direct Abram back to God's spoken promise. They do not become an independent guarantee of whatever Abram might desire.

We often want a timetable and a map of providence. We would like God to tell us when a circumstance will change, how He will accomplish His purposes, and what will happen between here and there. We assume an explanation would make trust easier.

God usually gives us something better than access to His hidden providence. He gives us His revealed Word and Himself. Faith must often rest there, not in knowing how God will work, but in knowing the God who has spoken.

This does not make every outcome we prefer certain. Abram's confidence concerns a promise God actually made. Our faith likewise rests on what God has revealed. The clearest place to see the certainty of His saving promises is Jesus Christ. The Son of God has come, died for our sins, and risen from the grave. We look back on a finished work that confirms God's faithfulness.

You may still be waiting for wisdom, relief, growth, or the resolution of a difficult circumstance. You do not need to pretend that waiting is easy. You also do not need a complete explanation before you can trust the God who gave His Son. His Word is not a substitute offered because He could not provide enough evidence. His Word is the speech of the faithful God who rules what you cannot see.

Reflection Questions

1. Where are you demanding a timetable or explanation before you are willing to trust God?
2. How do the stars in Genesis 15 illustrate the promise without proving that fulfillment has begun?
3. How does the completed work of Christ help you trust God's revealed Word while providence remains hidden?

Today's Practice

Read Genesis 15:4–5 slowly. Name one question God has not answered, then thank Him for one truth He has clearly revealed about Himself or His saving work.

Prayer

Father, I confess that I often want an explanation more than I want to trust You. Thank You for giving me Your Word and for showing Your faithfulness in Jesus. Help me rest in what You have revealed while I wait for what I cannot yet see. In Jesus' name, Amen

Day 4: A Gift Not a Wage

Read: Genesis 15:6, Romans 4:4–5

Genesis 15:6 says, "And he believed the LORD, and he counted it to him as righteousness." Abram trusts the God who has spoken. His faith is not positive thinking, emotional intensity, or the ability to keep doubt away. He regards the LORD as reliable.

God's promise gives that faith definite content. The heir will come from Abram's own body, and his offspring will be beyond counting. Abram trusts the LORD concerning what the LORD has said. Faith has strength because its object is sufficient.

God then counts that faith as righteousness. Abram receives a verdict he did not earn. Faith is not an impressive moral achievement that persuades God to pay a spiritual wage. God graciously declares Abram righteous.

Paul explains this in Romans 4 by comparing a paycheck with a gift. Wages are owed because work has been performed. Justification is different. God justifies the ungodly through faith apart from works. Justification is God's verdict about our standing before Him, not the gradual process by which He changes our lives.

Sanctification matters. God truly changes His people. Prayer, Scripture, service, resisting temptation, and obedience all matter. They are means of grace and fruit of life with Christ. They are not the basis of our acceptance.

It is surprisingly easy to turn our relationship with God into a performance review. A good week can make us assume God accepts us because we have done well. A hard week can leave us wondering whether He will still receive us. Our assurance rises and falls with our record.

The same danger applies to faith. We can begin measuring whether we believe strongly enough, as though the intensity of faith were the ground of our salvation. But faith has strength because of its object. Weak faith in a sufficient Savior does not make the Savior insufficient.

Faith is the hand that receives, never the coin that pays. Christ's saving work is the ground of the verdict. That truth humbles the believer who had a good week and comforts the believer who failed. We confess sin and pursue obedience, but we do so from a righteous standing received through faith rather than toward a verdict we hope to earn.

Reflection Questions

1. What part of your spiritual performance most often becomes a measure of whether God accepts you?

2. Why is justification a verdict rather than the gradual transformation of sanctification?

3. How would your response to a good or difficult week change if your assurance rested fully in Christ?

Today's Practice

Make two short lists titled "Fruit" and "Foundation." Put prayer, Scripture, service, and obedience under Fruit. Write "Christ's saving work" under Foundation, then thank God for both in their proper place.

Prayer

Father, forgive me for measuring Your acceptance by my performance or the strength of my faith. Thank You that justification is Your gracious gift. Help me rest in Christ as my foundation and pursue obedience as the fruit of Your grace. In Jesus' name, Amen

Day 5: The Savior Is Sufficient

Read: Genesis 15:6, Romans 4:23–25, 2 Corinthians 1:20

Genesis 15 ends with Abram holding a promise rather than a son. The following chapters show that waiting did not produce flawless obedience. Abram and Sarah tried to secure the promise through their own plan, and their failure brought pain into the household. Genuine faith did not make them free from serious sin.

God remained faithful. Genesis 21 says He gave Sarah a son "as he had said" and "as he had promised." Isaac was a real fulfillment of God's word, but he was not the final goal. God's promise moved through Isaac and the history of Israel toward Jesus Christ. All God's redemptive promises find their Yes in Him.

Romans 4 returns to Abram's righteous verdict and says that the words "it was counted to him" were written for us. Righteousness will be counted to those who believe in the God who raised Jesus from the dead. Jesus was "delivered up for our trespasses and raised for our justification."

That answers an essential question. How can a perfectly righteous God declare ungodly sinners righteous without compromising His justice? God did not set His justice aside. At the cross, He dealt justly with our sin. Christ bore the judgment our trespasses deserved. His resurrection is God's vindication of His Son and confirms that Christ's saving work is sufficient and complete.

Our assurance therefore rests on Jesus Christ. It does not rest on how strongly we believe, how faithfully we have obeyed, or how well we have managed to hold everything together. Faith receives Christ and rests in what He has done.

This gives us honest hope. We do not need to excuse sin, because Christ paid for it. We do not need to hide failure, because our righteous standing is a gift. We do not need to make the strength of our faith into another work, because the Savior is sufficient.

Abram had God's promise before he held Isaac. We can look back to the cross and the empty tomb. The question is not whether your faith is strong enough to save you. The question is whether the Savior you are trusting is sufficient. Scripture's answer is unmistakable: He is.

Reflection Questions

1. Why did Abram and Sarah's failure not make God unfaithful to His promise?

2. How do Christ's death and resurrection uphold both God's justice and the believer's justification?

3. Where are you tempted to place assurance in your record or the strength of your faith rather than in Christ?

Today's Practice

Read Romans 4:23–25 aloud. Confess one failure you have been hiding, then thank God specifically that Christ was delivered for your trespasses and raised for your justification.

Prayer

Father, thank You for keeping Your promises in Jesus Christ. I confess that I still look to my record and the strength of my faith for assurance. Help me rest in Your Son, who died for my sins and rose again. Keep me trusting the sufficient Savior. In Jesus' name, Amen