

# Faith and Motivation

It is sometimes said that “*some people are so heavenly-minded that they are no earthly good.*”

The idea behind this statement is that:-

- a) People who pray a lot never have time to get things done.
- b) People who have visions never live in the present.
- c) People whose mind is so much on what God in heaven thinks, that they have little care about what is happening on earth.

**Romans 4:11** [NIV] “*...he [Abraham] is the father of all who believe...*”

Few people, if any, have made a greater impact on the earth than Abraham.

**James 2:23** [NIV] “*And the scripture was fulfilled that says, “Abraham believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness,” and he was called God’s friend.*”

Abraham was the friend of God so he must have talked often to God [prayer].

**Hebrews 11:8-10** [NIV] “*By faith Abraham, when called to go to a place he would later receive as his inheritance, obeyed and went, even though he did not know where he was going. By faith he made his home in the promised land like a stranger in a foreign country; he lived in tents, as did Isaac and Jacob, who were heirs with him of the same promise. For he was looking forward to the city with foundations, whose architect and builder is God.*”

This passage tells us of the great vision Abraham had and the great respect towards God’s Word [obedient of God’s Commands].

## What was the outcome of such a life guided by prayer, vision and respect towards God’s Word?

Powerful motivation and accomplishment.

Believing God, and this is what faith is, produces the motivation needed to have an impact for good in society right now.

By believing God we are shown by Him our individual calling, what God wants us to do.

The consequence is that we are motivated to fulfil that calling.

**Ephesians 2:10** [NIV] “*For we are God’s workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.*”

Motivated to fulfil the good works that God wants us to perform.

## Why is this study important?

Most of us need help by being motivated to accomplish more in our lives.

We have been given life by The Creator God for a purpose, but not all of us find that purpose and meaning of life.

**This study will show that the motivation needed to have a fulfilled life is within reach of all of us.**

All of us can receive this motivation by faith as Abraham did.

This study will show that we accomplish more on earth by having our eyes on God's Heaven.

## What is this motivating faith?

**Genesis 12:1** [NIV] *“The LORD had said to Abram, “Leave your country, your people and your father’s household and go to the land I will show you.”*

God called Abraham and gave him a command, a physical task to perform.

**Hebrews 11:8** [NIV] *“By faith Abraham, when called to go to a place he would later receive as his inheritance, obeyed and went, even though he did not know where he was going.”*

This was obedience of God's Command without knowing the reason why! An example of active faith.

This command of God was not without powerful motivation.

**Genesis 12:2-3** [NIV] *“I will make you into a great nation and I will bless you; I will make your name great, and you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and whoever curses you I will curse; and all peoples on earth will be blessed through you.”*

This motivation appealed to Abraham's self-interest, sense of satisfaction and need for protection.

- a) He was to become a great nation
- b) He would be blessed by God
- c) He would have a great name, be famous
- d) He would be a blessing to others
- e) Those who blessed him would be blessed
- f) Those who cursed him would be cursed
- g) Through him the whole world would be blessed

All the above were examples that would appeal to our self-interest.

God always motivates us in this same way.

**Luke 6:37-38** [NIV] *“Do not judge, and you will not be judged. Do not condemn, and you will not be condemned. Forgive, and you will be forgiven. Give, and it will be given to you. A good measure, pressed down, shaken together and running over, will be poured into your lap. For with the measure you use, it will be measured to you.”*

**2 Corinthians 9:6** [NIV] *“Remember this: Whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows generously will also reap generously.”*

**Galatians 6:9** [NIV] *“Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up.”*

**God does not despise our being great and famous, as long as He is the architect of that greatness.**

**Psalm 19:13** [King James] *“Keep back thy servant also from presumptuous sins; let them not have dominion over me: then shall I be upright, and I shall be innocent from the great transgression.”*

If however we are intent on making ourselves great and famous then we will be fighting against God, and we know who will win such a contest!

God promised to make Abraham great and famous but not before he was ready to handle such success.

Dr. Martyn Lloyd-Jones once stated *“The worst thing that can happen to a person is to succeed before they are ready to handle success.”*

Abraham was a *“nobody”* when God called him, but God loves to take people who are of no consequence in society and make them someone who is successful and famous.

The only requirement on our part is obedience; faith produces such obedience.

**Genesis 12:1** [NIV] *“The LORD had said to Abram, “Leave your country, your people and your father’s household and go to the land I will show you.”*

The first step towards faith and obedience is for the believer to *“cut loose”* from the familiar, move out of our *“comfort zone”*.

When Abraham obeyed this command from God he had no way of proving to another person that this move was the right thing to do.

**Abraham acted in faith, believing God’s Word.**

**Hebrews 11:9** [NIV] *“By faith he made his home in the promised land like a stranger in a foreign country; he lived in tents, as did Isaac and Jacob, who were heirs with him of the same promise.”*

Because of his *“blind faith”* obedience Abraham became a stranger in a foreign world.

**John 17:15-16** [NIV] *“My prayer is not that you take them out of the world but that you protect them from the evil one. They are not of the world, even as I am not of it.”*

We also are not part of this society but remain within it as Abraham did, a stranger in a foreign land.

**Abraham was also a man of great suffering.**

We all would like the faith Abraham had. But how many of us are willing to accept the suffering that seemed to go with it?

**Abraham’s faith was not rewarded immediately.**

In fact, initially his faith led to the need for even greater faith.

When Abraham started out on his *“journey of faith”* not only did he **not** know where this journey was going to end but when he arrived in the *“Promised Land”* there was little to make it feel like home.

**Hebrews 11:9** [NIV] *“By faith he made his home in the promised land like a stranger in a foreign country; he lived in tents, as did Isaac and Jacob, who were heirs with him of the same promise.”*

Home is our “*comfort zone*” and is the place where we feel secure.

**It was by faith in God that Abraham made this new strange land home.**

**God motivated Abraham by His Word.**

**Genesis 15:5** [NIV] *“He took him outside and said, “Look up at the heavens and count the stars, if indeed you can count them.” Then he said to him, “So shall your offspring be.”*

Abraham could have argued with God, he was childless and Sarah was advancing in years.

**Genesis 15:6** [NIV] *“Abram believed the LORD, and he credited it to him as righteousness.”*

Abraham did not argue with God, he just believed God.

It was this kind of active believing faith in God that motivated Abraham to continue on under difficult circumstances.

God has a way of encouraging us with a timely word when we need it.

Although Abraham through faith in God was at home in this strange environment, he never “*settled in*” to become a part of that society.

**Abraham was always a stranger in a foreign country, not because of where he had come from but because of where he was going.**

Abraham lived in tents, hardly “*five star*” way of life.

It was because Abraham was detached from earthly things that God made him wealthy.

**Philippians 4:11** [NIV] *“I am not saying this because I am in need, for I have learned to be content whatever the circumstances.”*

Paul, after his meeting with Jesus Christ, learnt this detachment from physical possessions.

**1 Timothy 6:6-10** [NIV] *“But godliness with contentment is great gain. For we brought nothing into the world, and we can take nothing out of it. But if we have food and clothing, we will be content with that. People who want to get rich fall into temptation and a trap and into many foolish and harmful desires that plunge men into ruin and destruction. For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil. Some people, eager for money, have **wandered from the faith** and pierced themselves with many griefs.”*

To seek physical possessions causes some to lose their faith.

**Abraham was motivated by the vision of what could be his in the future.**

**Hebrews 11:10** [NIV] *“For he was looking forward to the city with foundations, whose architect and builder is God.”*

To be part of this new world founded on God and his promises, was the vision that motivated Abraham.

**Don't confuse “*cause*” and “*effect*” in our lives.**

For example:-

Our repentance, changed lifestyle is the “*effect*”.

Our hope of eternal life in the Kingdom of God, is the “*cause*”.

Not the other way round.

The purpose behind the gospel message is to prepare us for eternal life in the Kingdom of God. That is the “*cause*”.

The “*effects*” follow on, joy, contentment, marriages improved, crime decreases, etc.

If our “*gospel*” message seeks first to improve the lifestyle of those who accept it, this is seeking the fruit [effects] without the root [cause]. This is the “*health and wealth gospel*”.

**1 Corinthians 15:19** [NIV] *“If only for this life we have hope in Christ, we are to be pitied more than all men.”*

Paul was totally committed to the “*cause*”, preparing himself and others for eternal life and the Kingdom of God. If health and wealth was the “*effect*” he could “*take it or leave it.*”

Abraham did not mind living in a tent.

With all his wealth [effect of his faith] Abraham could have built himself a palace to live in, but Abraham was looking for a city with a palace beyond this limited life.

**Hebrews 11:9** [NIV] *“By faith he made his home in the promised land like a stranger in a foreign country; he lived in tents, as did Isaac and Jacob, who were heirs with him of the same promise.”*

Abraham’s example was passed on to his heirs, Isaac then Jacob.

**If we pass on to our children the promise of eternal life in the Kingdom of God then we give them the greatest possible inheritance of all.**

Examples of how Abraham’s vision of the future in the Kingdom of God influenced his day-to-day life.

**Genesis 13:8-9** [NIV] *“So Abram said to Lot, “Let’s not have any quarrelling between you and me, or between your herdsmen and mine, for we are brothers. Is not the whole land before you? Let’s part company. If you go to the left, I’ll go to the right; if you go to the right, I’ll go to the left.”*

Abraham willingly allowed Lot to choose what was “*best*” in this present life. Riches in this life did **not** motivate Abraham’s choice. This was the marked difference between Abraham and Lot.

**Genesis 14:22-24** [NIV] *“But Abram said to the king of Sodom, “I have raised my hand to the LORD, God Most High, Creator of heaven and earth, and have taken an oath that I will accept nothing belonging to you, not even a thread or the thong of a sandal, so that you will never be able to say, ‘I made Abram rich.’ I will accept nothing but what my men have eaten and the share that belongs to the men who went with me, to Aner, Eshcol and Mamre. Let them have their share.”*

In spite of saving the King of Sodom’s wealth along with his nephew Lot and his family, Abraham refused to accept any reward from the king.

Abraham looked to his Creator God for his reward and protection.

There is no record of Lot offering thanks to Abraham. Does this say something about his differing lifestyle?

**Acts 17:5-6** [King James] *“But the Jews which believed not, moved with envy, took unto them certain lewd fellows of the baser sort, and gathered a company, and set all the city on an uproar, and assaulted the house of Jason, and sought to bring them out to the people. And when they found them not, they drew Jason and certain brethren unto the rulers of the city, crying, These that have turned the world upside down are come hither also;”*

Christianity, only “turns the world upside down” when it has a vision of this reward in the Kingdom of God as its motivation. In fact what Christianity does is “turn the world the right way up.”

## **Conclusion**

**Revelation 21:1-4** [NIV] *“Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and there was no longer any sea. I saw the Holy City, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, “Now the dwelling of God is with men, and he will live with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God. He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away.”*

John the apostle was given, for us to share, a very close look at our future abode. What a vision! But it seems that Abraham through faith in his Creator God saw this same new world long before John was born.

One glimpse of this future was enough motivation to keep Abraham going whatever life threw at him or God demanded of him.

**It was Abraham’s faith in God’s Promises that motivated him in his life.**

The outcome of this motivation was twofold.

- a) To wait on God to supply his needs and to reward him in his own chosen time, being Sovereign in Abraham’s life.
- b) To accomplish more in his life for others than anybody in his day or who had lived before him.

**We too can have the same motivation through believing God.**