

5 Wondrous Ways to Strengthen Your Faith in God's Promises

Adversity is normal in the life of a believer, defeat is abnormal.” –pastor F. Dean Hackett

This may not be a very encouraging statement, but the fact is that we see its truth in nearly every page of the Bible.

From cover to cover, we see God promising someone something great, fantastic, miraculous; then we see their life go in completely the opposite direction before we see the fulfillment of that promise.

David was anointed king in 1 Samuel 16.

Not only did he not become king right away, but Saul spends the rest of 1 Samuel in a jealous rage, hunting David all over the kingdom in an effort to kill him.

Then we get to 2 Samuel 2, and Saul's son is made king of Israel while David is king of Judah. And David is completely fine with this.

In fact, two chapters later, we see a group of men go out and kill the king of Israel, thinking they were showing their loyalty to David by killing the son of his enemy.

Not only was David not impressed, he had them executed for their assassination—just as he executed the man who killed King Saul, rather than attempting to save King Saul's life.

Yes—their assassination brought about David becoming king over all of Israel ... but there is a lesson to be learned from David in all of this.

David had received the promise of God years before he ever became king, but he wasn't looking for the fulfillment of that

prophecy to happen immediately. He refused to rejoice in the death of Saul—his enemy and the man he would succeed as king. Not only did he not rejoice in Saul's death, he mourned his death, just as he mourned the death of Ishbosheth, who was made king over half of David's kingdom.

David did not set out to make God's promises come to pass, he had faith in God's timing and power to fulfill the promises He made.

David refused to grow discouraged and disillusioned when Saul sought to kill him.

He rejected the temptation to grow bitter and angry—even revengeful. Rather, he purposely maintained respect for the anointed kings of Israel (first Saul, then Ishbosheth).

He maintained a heart of great faith in God's hand in all circumstances; knowing that in each situation, no matter how horrible it seemed, God was working out a plan that would reveal a beautiful outcome that would bring Him glory.

We get to 2 Samuel 5, and David is finally made king over all of Israel. God's plan was finally accomplished. I wonder if David took time to sit and ponder the years between the given promise and the fulfillment of that promise.

Are you in that stage right now? The time of waiting between God's given promise and the fulfillment of that promise?

Don't give in to discouragement, disillusionment and the temptation to make that promise happen.

God's hand will not be moved before its time. Abraham learned this the hard way, that any attempt by man to bring about God's promise will result in an illegitimate result.

Instead take time to do these five things.

5 Ways to Strengthen Your Faith in God's Promises

1. Study the great men and women of God in the Bible.

Scripture is filled with multiple examples of God's faithfulness to those who walked in His ways despite the adversity they faced. In fact, we see through their lives how adversity prepared them for the promise.

So many times, we see adversity as only the work of the enemy; but God uses the evil things the enemy plans as a tool to strengthen our character and toughen our faith in Him so that when the promise is fulfilled, we continue walk in faithfulness to God rather than falling into the temptation of believing our own good works brought about the promise.

As you're waiting on God's' promise, study great men and women of the Bible and learn from their example of trust and faithfulness to God and His Word.

2. Meditate on the promises of Scripture.

God has given us thousands of promises in His Word.

As you're waiting on the fulfillment of His promise to you, do a study of the promises of Scripture, keep a journal of them and begin to daily pray through those promises as a way to strengthen your faith in God and His Word.

3. Focus on what God is doing in your life right now.

So often we grow far-sighted, seeing only the promise God has given to us while completely missing what He is doing in our life right now.

The fact is that the path to the promise is just as important as the fulfillment of that promise because every step along the way is preparing us to live faithfully in that promise.

Take a step back and ask yourself, "What is God doing in my

life right now?" Take time to see His hand at work in your life, and then ask yourself, "How is this preparing me for His promise?"

Teach yourself to be daily aware of what God is doing now, so that you don't become too focused on what will be in the future that you miss His hand right now.

4. Cultivate a heart of gratefulness in every season.

One of the dangers we face while in the season of preparation for God's promise is allowing discouragement, discontentment and disillusionment to grow in our heart.

This is the work of the enemy to sabotage us so we never make it to the promise God has for us.

One of the best protections against the enemy's strategy against us is to daily cultivate a grateful heart to God for all He has given and done in our lives and what He is doing right now. Grab a journal and write down things you are grateful for each day, purposing to not repeat anything you've already written.

5. Develop a life of worship.

One of the most neglected daily Christian disciplines is worship. We think of worship as being in church, surrounded by our church family, listening to the worship band play our favorite song and singing along with them.

But how often do we take time to sing and worship at home as a part of our daily quiet time?

Grab your favorite worship CD and begin to sing along daily. When a worship song comes to your heart, stop and sing, lift your hands and genuinely worship God.

Develop a life of daily worship to Him: Declare who He is; what He's done; His greatness, goodness, faithfulness and

love.

As you do these five things, you will find your faith growing stronger and stronger, so that like David, you will have great trust in the hand of God—even when you can't see the outcome from your present circumstances. {eo}

Rosilind Jukic, a Pacific Northwest native, is a missionary living in Croatia and married to her Bosnian hero. Together, they live with their two active boys, and she enjoys fruity candles, good coffee and a hot cup of herbal tea on a blustery fall evening. Her passion for writing led her to author her best-selling book *The Missional Handbook*. At *A Little R & R* she encourages women to find contentment in what God created them to be. You can also find her at *Missional Call*, where she shares her passion for local and global missions. You can follow her on Facebook, Twitter, Pinterest and Google +.

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