

How to Take That Crucial Step of Faith—Even If It Terrifies You

While on a mission trip in 2003, the Lord invited me to leave the comfortable for the unknown. The moment reminds me of Abraham and his call to leave home and family to go to the land of promise—the land of Canaan 1,500 miles away.

The writer of Hebrews states, “By faith Abraham obeyed when he was called to go out into a place which he would later receive as an inheritance. He went out not knowing where he was going” (Heb. 11:8).

At the time, I was a bi-vocational pastor, working a full-time job to support my family while pastoring our new church plant, Passion Church (). During that time, the church grew, but it was not enough to support a full-time pastor. In fact, we were the main financial givers in the church, but we gave and labored with joy—we were following Jesus.

During the trip, we had a time one morning of training and prayer for pastors and leaders. Afterward, along with many of the Brazilian leaders, I found myself consecrating my life and ministry afresh to the Lord. God’s tangible presence was heavy. I can still see the floor of the church in Rio de Janeiro as I write—it became holy ground for me.

As I lay yielded to God at that moment, the Holy Spirit spoke to me, “Bob, your job is your river Jordan and I need you to ‘cross over.’ The church cannot become what I intend it to be until you leave your job and pastor full-time.”

I was undone and shaken. I knew God’s voice and I was sure this was Him speaking, but what He had just spoken challenged me.

I was making an excellent salary with good benefits. We had money in savings but not enough to sustain us for very long. Yet I kept hearing, "Bob, your job is your river Jordan and I need you to 'cross over.'" Oswald Chambers once said, "Faith doesn't know where it is being led, but it loves and knows the one who is leading." True faith responds out of relationship and obeys God's guidance—no matter how bizarre. Faith does not rely on the natural senses or the wisdom of man to decide when to respond to God. It hears and obeys.

When I arrived home from the trip, I immediately shared this experience with Carolyn. To my surprise, she calmly said to me, "Before you left, God had been preparing me, saying that you might be leaving your job soon." I think she had more faith at that moment than I did. We both continued to pray and seek God for confirmation during the next few weeks. Each time we prayed, we sensed that this was God's will and that I was to leave my comfortable and secure job.

I spoke to my supervisor at work, talking to him about the church we started the previous year, and that I needed to attend to it full-time. To my surprise, he was supportive of my decision. He offered me a part-time position, but as we prayed, God reaffirmed to us that He needed us at the church full-time. With some trepidation, I turned in my notice to leave the company. We trusted that "as God guides, He provides," and provide He did.

Our savings ran out within a few months, but the church had grown and was able to pay me a small salary. God was providing. Random people would show up at our home at odd times with groceries. God continued to provide. By faith, we hired a worship leader and moved him and his family across the country to Tucson. Somehow, all the bills were paid, and God kept providing. God also directed us to purchase church property during this season. God was in the details, and all He needed was for us to trust and obey Him. He kept providing.

I am convinced that our church and our ministry is where it is today because we said “yes” to God when He asked me to leave the job. Our promised land was on the other side; we just had to trust God and cross over. We had to leave familiar territory for the inheritance we couldn’t fully see. Your “yes” to God is all that He needs—let your yes be louder than doubt and unbelief!

Is there anything God has told you to do that you may be delaying? Perhaps you have taken a shortcut or two hoping to fulfill His mandate. Could it be that the heavens are closed, that God’s blessings are withheld because of your partial obedience? Find out what the Spirit is saying and be obedient to do that!

Abraham Gave Himself to God’s Eternal Purposes (Heb. 11:10)

Abraham waited for the “city,” God’s eternal dwelling place. His natural eyes couldn’t see it, but He could see it as “revealed” by the Spirit to him. Abraham saw the church and the heavenly Jerusalem, God’s tabernacle among humanity. We have come to Mount Zion, the city of the living God through Christ and the New Covenant. We have become the very “city of God!” (See Hebrews 12:22-24.)

We want to live from that which was promised, with an expectant eye on the future. Abraham lived from prophetic expectancy based on God’s promise. Yet Abraham and Sarah didn’t see the fullness of the promise—larger than them. Abraham looked for the city that is now ours. He gave himself to the very eternal purposes of God. He kept his eye on that which was unseen, yet eternal.

The church should live in expectancy that is larger and later. Live from expectancy. Expect means *to look forward, to be pregnant*. We live best from expectancy—anticipating and yearning for what we hope for.

Many in the body of Christ are expecting—carrying

something—ready to birth something! We carry His glory and influence our world with the weightiness of His presence (Col. 1:27). God's glory should build in our midst and across the globe.

How can we give ourselves to God's eternal purposes?

What is God doing in your life, family, church, city and nation? Do you see with God's eternal perspective for these areas? When you do, things begin to look differently, and you will act differently.

Cultivate an intimate relationship with Jesus (John 15:7).

Walk in unity and love with one another (1 Pet. 3:8-9).

Follow and obey your leaders and others. Be submissive to one another (Heb. 13:17; 1 Pet. 5:5).

Get involved with small groups and fellowship consistently with others (Acts 2:46).

Make a commitment to your local church and become a servant leader—each of us is called to this. Support your church with tithes and offerings. Give God the best of your time, treasure and talents—steward well what you have been given in the local church community God has placed you in.

Final Thoughts

Abraham was a man who heard God's voice and simply obeyed. Abraham believed in what God spoke. He was convinced, based on God's character and nature, that if God promised something, God had the ability and the desire to bring it to pass. Abraham gave himself to God's eternal purposes. In a similar manner, you can believe and obey God to fulfill your purpose and participate in God's eternal purposes.

Abraham believed God's promises and walked with Him faithfully, and this friendship created a divine partnership

that greatly impacted our world. His life demonstrated that relationship with God transcends our failures. God chooses to use those He calls friends, despite their mistakes, to partner with Him here on earth. Therefore:

Believe God's promises to you—in His written Word and those He has spoken to your heart. Obey what He has revealed. He knows how and when to bring His promises to you to pass—you don't.

Do not fear when God's promise and leading take you in a direction you don't understand. God knows what He is doing—trust Him. Faith embraces adventure.

God's nature is to provide for us. As you follow the Lord, expect His provision to follow you in life. We can trust God will provide as He promises. God's nature is to provide. Jesus is the good Shepherd who loves His sheep and provides for them. {eoa}

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