



THE LORD'S FLOCK GROWTH DIGEST

PASTORAL GROWTH SERIES

Part 1. The Trial of Faith

Sis. Maria Theresa Rodriguez, Elder-Founder

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The First Call to a Life of Faith and Friendship with God our Father. Before the coming of Christ, the most remarkable trial of faith in the salvation history happened to Abraham who was regarded as the friend of God because of his trust and obedience to Him (**James 2:23**). God promised him to be the *Father of many great nations, and his offsprings are as numerous as the stars (Gen 12:2; Gen 15:5)*. Thus, Abraham's name was magnified and blessed (**Gen 12:2**).

When God called Abraham, the latter believed, and in turn entered into a covenant with Him until the end. Despite Abraham's partial obedience from the time of God's first call, he learned to obey completely.

God's promise

However, It was very tempting for Abraham to question God who chose him to be a blessing not only to everyone but for generations to come, since he and Sarah, his wife, didn't even have a child of their own or were too old to bear a son. Indeed, God kept his promise by granting him and his wife Sarah a son at the age of a hundred and 90-years old, respectively (**Gen 17:16-17**). However, they waited for 25 years, for God to fulfill His promise, since Abraham partially obeyed God to leave Haran. (**Gen 12:4**).

The Lord said to Abram, "Depart from your land and from your kindred, and from your father's house and come to the land that I will show you. And I will make you a great nation and I will magnify your name and you will be blessed. I will bless those who bless you and curse those who curse you". (Gen 12:1-4). And so Abram departed just as the Lord instructed him, and Lot went with him. Abram was 75 when he departed from Haran.")

Trust the hinge of friendship with God

*"Do you see that faith was cooperating with his works and that by means of works, faith was brought into fulfillment? And so the Scripture was fulfilled that says "Abraham believed God and was reputed to him unto justice". And so he was called the friend of God - **James 2: 22-23**).*

It was also during Abraham's time that God wanted to reveal Himself as a Father who never gave up on His children. After a long silence with Adam and Eve who disobeyed Him, His desire was to reach out and reveal Himself to humanity in a more personal way. He wanted His presence felt and this experience paved the way for a multitude of believers whose faith developed and grew. Thus, there was the birth of Israel.

Abraham's Faith

Moreover, the magnitude of Abraham's faith in God impacted a multitude of believers who placed him above all , even among Jews and Muslims. Moreover, he was the first to believe in the One True God who hardly manifested Himself in a visible and substantial way.

The Trial of Faith. Abraham and Sarah saw how faithful and truthful God was to His promises. **But God tried Abraham's obedience and faith.** Abraham came to a point that he needed to make the toughest decision in his life – to offer Isaac, his one and only beloved son . He made Abraham experience what He also planned to do to save humanity through His only begotten Son Jesus Christ. *"And I am alive, though I was dead. And behold, I live, forever and ever. And I hold the keys of death and of hell" - Rev 1:18.*

Abraham passed the test! *(So that the testing of your faith, which is more precious than gold, tested by fire, maybe found in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ - 1 Pet 1:7).*

Record of Terah's (Abraham's father) descendants

And these are the generations of Terah. Terah begot Abram, Nahor, and Haran. Next Haran begot Lot. And Haran died before his father Terah, in the land of his nativity, in Ur of the Chaldeans. Then Abram and Nahor took wives. The name of Abram's wife was Sarai. And the name of Nahor's wife was Milcah, the daughter of Haran, the father of Milcah, and the father of Iscah. But Sarai was barren and had no children. And so Terah took his son Abram, and his grandson Lot, the son of Haran, and his daughter-in-law Sarai, the wife of his son Abram, and he led them away from Ur of the Chaldeans, to go into the land of Canaan. And they approached as far as Haran, and they dwelt there. And the days of Terah that passed were two hundred and five years, and then he died in Haran. **Gen. 11:27-30**

Problem in Abraham's home of origin

- People were perverted.
- Rigid forms of idolatry were prevalent.
- It was the center for astrology.

Fortunately, Abraham had broken free from idol worship, but his relatives continued.

Who or what is your Terah (idol) which causes your delays and hindrances in obeying the will of God?

Why did God call Abraham?

Only God knows! During his time, God probably called everyone, but only Abraham responded in faith. It is noteworthy to say that everyone whom God calls always feels inadequate and questions Him, ***Why me Lord?*** But as written in the letter of Saint Paul to the Romans, he ***asks us not to question God on those whom He chose.***

Rom 9:15-23 For to Moses he says: *"I will pity whomever I pity. And I will offer mercy to whomever I will pity."* For Scripture says to the Pharaoh: *"I have raised you up for this purpose, so that I may reveal my power by you, and so that my name may be announced to all the earth."* Therefore, he takes pity on whomever he wills, and he hardens whomever he wills. And so, you would say to me: *"Then why does he still find fault? For who can resist his will?"* O man, who are you to question God? How can the thing that has been formed say to the One who formed him: *"Why have you made me this way?"* And *does not the potter have the authority over the clay to make, from the same material, indeed, one vessel unto honor, yet truly another unto disgrace?* What if God, wanting to reveal his wrath and to his power known, endured, with much patience, vessels

deserving wrath, fit to be destroyed, so that he might reveal the wealth of his glory, within these vessels of mercy, which he has prepared unto glory?

"The word that came to Jeremiah from the Lord, saying: "Rise up and descend into the house of the potter, and there you will hear my words." And I descended into the house of the potter, and behold, he was making a work on the wheel. And the vessel, which he was making with his hands out of clay, broke. And turning away, he made another vessel, for it had been pleasing in his eyes to make it. Then the word of the Lord came to me, saying: "Am I not able to do with you, O house of Israel, just as this potter has done, says the Lord? Behold, like clay in the hand of the potter, so are you in my hand, O house of Israel" Jer. 18:1-6.

Small Bites To Digest:

- It is an honor to be called by God.
- The friends of God are those who put their trust only in Him and who completely obey His commands.
- Until we have done all that God asks us to do, we haven't done anything.
- Each day brings us closer to our grave. Let us not miss the precious opportunities to do the will of God, while we can still breathe.
- Precious opportunity of walking in the presence of God brings fulfillment.
- The faith walk puts us in the presence and provisions of God.
- Procrastination is not from God, it is Satan's work. Do not compromise with God.
- God will bless and honor His friends.
- God will magnify the name of His friends.
- God will try our faith.
- Let us give God our best!
- Don't give in to temptation!
- Do not question whom God choose to call and work for His kingdom.
- Allow the Potter to mold, rebuild and repair us.
- Let every moment count for the glory of God!

Transcriber/Writer: Sis. Irene L. Cruz

Editor: Sis. Maria Vera Tuplano

Printing Sponsor: Sis. Maria Vera Tuplano