

## **How Am I Doing?**

**By Stan Toler**

**“Abram believed the LORD and he credited it to him as righteousness”  
(Gen. 15:6).**

**Today’s Focus:** You can depend on God—for everything!

**Food for Thought:** I will relax and rely on God.

### **Introduction**

Tim Hansel, in his book, *Holy Sweat*, tells an experience he had with his son, Zac. The two of them were out in the country, climbing some cliffs. Tim heard his small son yell, “Hey Dad! Catch me!” He turned around to see Zac joyfully jumping off a rock straight at him. The boy had jumped even before he yelled. It looked like a circus act, the man clutching his son in midair, then both of them falling to the ground. After catching his breath, the anxious dad asked in exasperation, “Zac! Can you give me one good reason why you did that?”

With remarkable calmness, the boy responded, “Sure . . . because you’re my dad.”

Wouldn’t it be great to have that kind of confidence in your heavenly Father? Here’s the good news; you can! God is trustworthy, and we can have full confidence in Him.

### **God Is Trustworthy**

I don’t trust some people. You can call me a cynic, but after someone lies to me or breaks his word, I have a hard time trusting him again. Is there anyone in your life you really can’t trust?

On the other hand, I would trust some people with my very life. The situation wouldn’t matter. If they gave me their word, I would believe them—no questions asked, because I know they are absolutely reliable.

That’s the way God is. He is completely dependable. We can always trust Him.

Today, we’re looking at the life of Abraham. You remember Abraham had followed the Lord faithfully since God called him out of the land of Ur. We’re not sure how many years had passed since God first spoke to Abraham in Genesis 12, but little by little, he had been learning to trust the Lord for some time. In the verses leading to today’s passage, Abraham asks God about the promises He had made—promises both to Abraham *and to his descendants*.

Now, Abraham was an older man—somewhere between the age of 75 and 86. He knew his wife, Sarah, could no longer bear children, and the couple was childless. If I were Abraham, I'd have wondered, "What is God up to? How in the world can He keep His promise now?" In fact, Abraham was already wondering about who would inherit his property when he was gone. He identified a servant, Eliazer of Damascus, as the one who stood next in line for his estate. He didn't think this was what God had intended in His promise, so he raised the question with God.

Abraham was trying to believe God, but he was having a moment of doubt.

Has that ever happened to you? You really want to trust God, but you're not sure you can. Maybe it occurred when you or someone you love became ill. You wanted to believe God could and would perform a healing, but could you really trust Him? Maybe it happened when you found yourself in financial need. You wanted to believe God would provide, but could you really trust Him?

God has given His word that He is faithful, and the Bible has many examples of people who experienced God's faithfulness. Adam and Eve, Noah, Abraham, Jacob, Joseph, Esther, Joshua, Ruth, and Samuel are a few who found God to be faithful to His word. The psalmist David said, "The LORD is faithful to all his promises and loving toward all he has made" (Ps. 145:13). When we have moments of doubt, we can read about or remember those to whom God has shown himself faithful. We can know as the Lord proved himself trustworthy to others, He will also be faithful to you and me. He won't fail us. We have God's promise He will never forsake us.

Some years ago, a pastor in Romania was arrested because of his Christian activities. Upon being confined, the pastor became the subject of abuse as the jailer taunted him for his belief in God.

Rubbing his stomach the jailer said, "Can your God take good care of you like the State takes care of me?" The pastor reassured the jailer his God could take care of him. "Oh! So you think your God can take care of you as well as the State takes care of me?" The pastor said, "Yes."

"OK," the jailer said. "I will give you only water for the next four days, and we will see how well your God takes care of you."

The pastor was placed in a cell, and the door was locked. He began to pray earnestly to God for his protection and needs. He told God he was His servant, and he did not know how God would provide for his needs, but he knew God would take care of him. As he prayed, he heard a cat meow. When he opened his eyes, he saw a cat just outside the cell with a slice of bread in its mouth. He reached through the cell and took the bread from the cat and ate it.

Each morning and evening for the following four days, the cat brought bread to the pastor.

On the fourth day, the jailer returned expecting to find a very hungry man. “Well,” the jailer said, “Look at how well the State has taken care of me, and how has your God taken care of you?” “Oh!” the pastor replied, rubbing his stomach, “God has taken good care of me also.” Dumbfounded, the jailer demanded to know how God had provided for the preacher.

“Well,” the pastor said, “Twice a day, God sent a cat with a piece of bread in its mouth for me.”

As he spoke, the cat meowed. The jailer looked down and saw the cat with bread in its mouth and exclaimed, “That is my house cat bringing my bread from my table. Yes, surely your God did take care of you.”

Although God may not use a cat to feed you, you can be certain God keeps His word. Time after time, He has proven that what He has said, He will do.

Are you willing to believe that today—and every day?

### **Since God Is Trustworthy, I Can Rely on Him.**

It’s one thing to know God is reliable; it’s another thing to actually trust Him. That’s the difference between faith and action. At some point, you and I have to decide if we will take the step of faith to trust God completely.

Abraham believed God, but he had trouble trusting God. As a result, Abraham got himself into some trying situations. Once, he and Sarah went to Egypt. Abraham was afraid Pharaoh would kill him and take the lovely Sarah as his wife. Consequently, Abraham told Sarah to tell Pharaoh that Abraham was her brother. This was not totally untrue, since they were, in fact, half brother and sister. But it was still deceitful, and they needed the Lord’s intervention to get them out of the mess they were in. Oh, and this once wasn’t enough. They did the same thing later in Gerar (see Genesis 20). Once again, God straightened out the problem they created.

Perhaps more critical was Abraham’s decision to father a child with Hagar. Sarah suggested it, and Abraham acted on her suggestion. In their minds, they had rationalized this was the way God would keep His promise of children to them. After it was done, God came again to Abraham to renew His promise that Abraham and Sarah would have a son. The Lord also said He would bless the son of Hagar, but the unique covenant people would come through the son of Abraham and Sarah.

God honored His promises to Abraham. God also honored Abraham’s faith and helped Abraham’s faith in Him to grow. In the books of Romans, Galatians, and James, Abraham’s faith in God is noted. The verse for today, “Abraham believed the LORD and he credited it to him as righteousness,” is quoted in three places (Romans 4:3, 9; Galatians 3:6; James 2:23). In each instance, Abraham’s faith is cited as a model of the kind of faith you and I can and should possess.

Abraham lived in the difficult position between receiving God’s promise and seeing it fulfilled. He understood the promise, but he had trouble putting his faith into action.

If you are going to trust God totally, you must come to the point of *acting* on what you believe. You must not only believe that God provides. You must *act* as if God is going to take care of you. You must not only *believe* there is a heaven. You must *live* as if heaven is your home.

From his early boyhood, John Paton wanted to be a missionary. He went to the New Hebrides as a missionary. Three months after arriving on the island of Tanna, Paton's young wife died, to be followed by their five-week-old son. For three more years, Paton labored alone among the hostile islanders, ignoring their threats and seeking to make Christ known to them before finally escaping with his life. Later, he returned and spent fifteen years on another island.

One day, Paton was working in his home on the translation of John's Gospel—puzzling over John's favorite expression “believe in” or “trust in” Jesus Christ, a phrase that occurs first in John 1:12. “How can I translate it?” Paton wondered. The islanders were cannibals; nobody trusted anybody else. There was no word for “trust” in their language.

His native servant came in. “What am I doing?” Paton asked him. “Sitting at your desk,” the man replied. Paton then raised both feet off the floor and sat back on his chair. “What am I doing now?” Paton's servant used a verb which means, “to lean your whole weight upon.” That's the phrase Paton used throughout John's Gospel to translate to “believe in.”

We need to put our whole weight on God. He can hold us. He wants to hold us. He *will* hold us if we lean on Him in total trust. Because He is trustworthy, we can rely on Him. Do you believe God is trustworthy? Are you willing to lean your whole weight on Him? Will you let Him carry you and all the concerns of life? Isaiah 50:10 calls a person to “trust in the name of the LORD and rely on his God.”

Are you ready to lay all you are in His hands and totally rely on Him?

### **I Will Trust in Him**

Just as Abraham had to make a conscious decision to trust God, each of us must also choose to trust Him or not. Some days we'll find it's easier to trust God than others; but even when moments of doubt come, we can still choose to trust God.

Here's a gentle way to remind yourself that trusting in God is fundamental to every aspect of life:

Several years ago, a woman and her husband were invited to spend the weekend at the home of the husband's employer. The wife was nervous about the weekend. The boss was very wealthy, with a fine home on the waterway, and cars costing more than her home. The first day and evening went well, and she was delighted to have this rare glimpse into how the elite live.

The husband's employer was quite generous as a host and took them to the finest restaurants. She knew she would never have the opportunity to indulge in this kind of extravagance again and was enjoying herself immensely.

As the three of them were about to enter an exclusive restaurant one evening, the boss was walking slightly ahead of the couple. He stopped suddenly, looked down on the pavement for a long, silent moment. The lady wondered if she was supposed to pass him. There was nothing on the ground except a few cigarette butts and a single darkened penny.

Silently, the man reached down and picked up the penny. He held it up and smiled, then put it in his pocket as if he had found a great treasure. How absurd! What need did this man have for a single penny? Why would he even take the time to stop and pick it up?

Throughout dinner, the entire scene nagged her. Finally, she could stand it no longer. She casually mentioned that her daughter once had a coin collection and asked if the penny he had found was of some value. A smile crept across the man's face as he reached into his pocket for the penny and held it out for her to see. She had seen many pennies before!

What was the point of this?

"Look at it," he said. "Read what it says." She read the words, "United States of America."

"No, not that; read further." "One cent?"

"No, keep reading." "In God We Trust"?

"Yes!"

"And?"

He explained, "The name of God is holy, even on a coin. Whenever I find a coin I see that inscription. It is written on every single United States coin, but we never seem to notice it! If God drops a message right in front of me telling me to trust Him, who am I to pass it by?"

You might think of this next time you take a penny from one of those "leave a penny/take a penny" trays by the checkout counter. That little coin, which has so little value, is a reminder of the One we can truly trust.

Are you willing to trust God today with everything in your life? With your finances? With your family? With your health? With your career? With your future?

You're facing a problem today like Abraham was. You have the promise of God to provide for you—but you can't see the end result. You're tempted, like Abraham, to take matters into your own hands, but you can also lean your whole weight on the Lord.

Now's the time to ask yourself, "How am I doing in this vital area of trust?" Will you trust in yourself . . . or God?

### **Conclusion**

Perhaps today you would like to try an exercise in trust. Imagine yourself in a large room with God. You are surrounded by your possessions, family, friends, resources, and the other things you value. Take every person or thing and place them into God's hands. Trust Him with your most prized possessions. Trust Him with your most valued relationships. Give Him everything. If you find you're having trouble giving Him something, spend time praying about it. He is trustworthy. You can rely on Him. I like the way the poet expressed it—

Trust Him when dark doubts assail thee,  
Trust Him when thy strength is small,  
Trust Him when to simply trust Him  
Seems the hardest thing of all.  
Trust Him, He is ever faithful,  
Trust Him, for His will is best,  
Trust Him, for the heart of Jesus  
Is the only place of rest.

— Author Unknown