

# Faith is the Victory!

*“For whatever is born of God overcomes the world; and this is the victory that overcomes the world—our faith! And who is the one who overcomes the world, but He who believes that Jesus is the Son of God?” 1 John 5:4–5*

## Introduction

This beautiful verse in 1 John tells us that faith is the only way to have victory in this world: Victory to overcome the everyday tests and trials of life, and victory over death through faith in the saving work of Jesus Christ our Lord! Several times the Bible tells us, “The righteous shall live by faith” (Hab 2:4; Rom 1:17b; Gal 3:11; Heb 10:38). God expects His children to live by faith! By faith we gain God’s approval, pleasure, blessing, and reward (Heb 11:2, 6, 39). But what is faith? It is something we talk about and pray for but can’t always describe in terms we understand. Like trying to grasp smoke in the wind, we want to understand faith but can’t always put our hands on just what it is, or how we can lay hold of it for victory!

The Bible uses five Hebrew words to help us understand faith. Each of these words present a visual illustration of what faith looks like in our life. This study will look at these five word pictures for faith and see how the women of Scripture used that faith to overcome life’s troubles and trials. These are women that God the Father is not ashamed to call His children (Heb 11:16). These women are our forerunners in the faith, women that we should pattern our life and faith after as we, too, seek to be pleasing in our Heavenly Father’s eyes!

One of the encouraging things about these biblical women is that they struggled with the same tests, trials, hardships, and longings that we do. They had doubts, fears, pains, and sorrows that threatened their lives with darkness. Like us, they had problems for which they could not see a solution. But, by God’s grace, they learned in the midst of it all to “*walk by faith, not by sight*” (2Co 5:7). These women believed with eyes of faith that the love and power of their Heavenly Father was greater than any problem life could deal them. Even though these women of Scripture lived thousands of years ago, with different customs and cultures than we have, the things they had to overcome in the world were very similar to what we, as women, face today. Their examples remain as a standard for us to pattern our faith after.

Often our greatest tests of faith come in the areas of marriage, family, and home life. The man may “battle” out in the world, but God’s refining place for the woman is often in the home. For this reason, the home is where we can best display the love, patience, forgiveness, and power of Jesus Christ our Lord. This is where we can overcome the sinful thoughts and actions that lead to bitterness and hardness of soul. This is where we can lay up for ourselves treasures in Heaven that will bring honor and glory to our Savior, and this is where we can serve and minister to those we love.

What an awesome ministry God has given to the woman! It is a ministry that begins in the home, and then overflows to friends, neighbors, the church, and even to the world. But there can be no

true victory and no lasting ministry apart from simple faith! This is the victory that overcomes the world ... our faith (1Jo 5:4)!

## Amen

The first Hebrew word for faith is *amen*. This Hebrew word is translated in the Bible as **believe**. It means “to lean on the Lord for support.” Picture a crippled or injured woman leaning on a strong staff or cane to support her and give her the strength she needs to walk down the pathway of life.

When we believe in the Lord and in His Word, we can lean on Him for support and strength in the trials of life. He gives us strength where we have only weakness; He gives us wisdom where we would only fail; and He gives us the ability to stand when we would only fall in defeat. When we lean on God’s Word for support, we are living and walking with *amen* faith.

We may not be physically weak, but spiritually we are lost, crippled, and destitute without Jesus Christ. We need His Word in our soul to give us strength, wisdom, and discernment. As women, we daily make many choices and decisions that affect our lives and the lives of those we love. Our wisdom—or lack of it—influences our husbands, our children, our friends, and others in the Body of Christ. We are like the women of Proverbs 9, either calling out from the rooftop with understanding that offers life (Pro 9:1–6) or calling out with foolishness that leads to disaster. Therefore, the Word of God must be the staff we lean on.

*Amen* is used in Psalm 119:66, “*Teach me good discernment and knowledge, for I believe in Thy commandments.*” (emphasis added)

Why should we dare to believe with an *amen* faith? Why should we dare to lean on the Word of God for our strength and wisdom? Because Jesus Christ is the living Word of God! He became “*flesh, and dwelt among us and we beheld his glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth*” (Joh 1:14). He is the strength of our life! As John, the disciple whom Jesus loved, leaned upon the Lord’s breast at the Last Supper, let us also lean upon Him and His precious Word as our strength and support!

For other examples of *amen* faith, see Gen 15:6; 2Ch 20:20; Psa 27:13; Psa 106:12; Isa 43:10; Dan 6:23; and Jon 3:5.

## Abigail

Abigail is a great example for us of *amen* faith. Her story is found in 1 Samuel 25. Abigail demonstrated a faith that believed and leaned on God’s Word, resulting in discernment, courage, spiritual action, and deliverance. Her faith took a course that led to blessing for herself, and others. Let’s look at the characteristics of Abigail’s life that come from a love and knowledge of God’s Word and see what we can learn from her example:

- Wisdom. 1Sa 25:3 tells us that Abigail was intelligent. She had wisdom and understanding that can only come from knowing and applying God’s Word and being led by His Spirit. When the Word of God refers to someone as intelligent, it isn’t referring to human intelligence—but divine wisdom. Abigail was an eager student and disciple of the Bible.
- Beauty. 1Sa 25:3 also tells us she was beautiful. A woman with a soul that is surrendered to God’s Word and will has an inner beauty that excels any physical beauty and grows with the passing of time.
- Decisiveness. Abigail was a woman of action. In 1Sa 25:18, 23 and 42, Abigail “*hurried and ... arose quickly.*” God’s Word and Spirit gave her the wisdom to know what to do, and the courage to do it—without hesitation!
- Humility. 1Sa 25:23–24 show us that Abigail was humble and respectful, giving honor to others.
- Divine Guidance. 1Sa 25:32 tells us God guided her actions. Here again, we see that Abigail was dependent on God’s Word and God’s Spirit to lead her in the proper path at a very crucial time in her life.
- Discernment. 1Sa 25:33 calls her discerning. She had the ability to know right from wrong and good from evil—even in difficult situations.
- Honesty. In 1Sa 25:37, it says that Abigail is honest. When we live our life in the truth of God’s Word, then we have nothing to hide before God or man. We can be honest and open in our conversation and dealings with others.
- Blessed. 1Sa 25:33 says that Abigail is blessed by God. Remember, God promises us blessing when we obey His commandments (Deu 11:26–28). In 1Sa 25:39–40, we see that Abigail is rewarded for her faith in the midst of a crisis.

Abigail was married to a harsh and evil man named Nabal. His very name means “fool.” Nabal was rich in land, servants, and livestock, but very poor in compassion and character. He had a good farming business, but had no business with God! In contrast to this, Abigail was a woman who loved the Lord and His Word, and her character reflected this divine romance. It is a difficult situation for a woman to be in a marriage union with an unbelieving or rebellious husband. However, no situation hinders God’s working in our life. Even in difficult circumstances, God expects us to walk and live by faith, and to stand victorious!

When Nabal’s servants were out shepherding their master’s flocks in the wilderness of Israel, David and his men protected them from attack and danger. During shearing time, David sent some messengers with a request to Nabal. In return for the care and protection David had given to Nabal’s servants and livestock, David asked him to provide some food and drink to sustain them in the wilderness. This was a reasonable request in the circumstances and culture of the day.

Nabal's response to David's request was far from gracious. Instead of showing appreciation for what David and his men had done, Nabal answered the servants in this way:

*"Who is David? And who is the son of Jesse ... Shall I then take my bread and my water and my meat ... and give it to men whose origin I do not know?"* (1Sa 25:10–11)

Nabal's words were a lie. They were an excuse for a selfish and ungrateful attitude. David was a hero in the land of Israel. He was the young man who had courageously and faithfully slaughtered Goliath, the Philistine giant who taunted the armies of Israel. David was anointed by Samuel to be the next king over God's people! Yet Nabal, out of his foolish and evil heart, refused to honor David's greatness and turned his back on David's request.

We see other places in Scripture that David was a patient and longsuffering man, withholding vengeance out of respect for God's law. In this situation, however, he turned to anger and revenge, and threatened to kill all of Nabal's servants. The scene was set for an intense battle between David and Nabal. That was where Abigail's wisdom and faith were crucial. One of Nabal's servants went to Abigail and warned her of the coming battle. He challenged Abigail to act with these words, *"know and consider what you should do"* (1Sa 25:17). Because Abigail had faithfully been walking with God and was filled with the knowledge of His Word, she quickly knew what to do when this crisis came into her life, and acted accordingly. Because she had been daily leaning on God's Word with an *Amen* faith, she could lean on Him now in this intense testing situation.

Abigail quickly had the servants prepare sufficient food for David and his men and sent them on ahead with the provisions. As Abigail followed after the servants, she met David in the wilderness and bowed before him with honor and humility. She began by taking all of the blame for Nabal's actions upon herself. Then Abigail did an amazing thing. She spoke to David with wisdom and respect and helped him to recall the protection of God in his life. She encouraged him to focus not on his own desire for revenge, but on the justice of God. Abigail reminded David that God would deal with Nabal, and would protect his servant David. It is interesting to notice the words Abigail used to encourage David in the faith. She said to him:

*"... the Lord will certainly make an enduring house for you because you are **fighting the battles of the Lord** ... the lives of your enemies He [God] will **sling out** as from the hollow of a sling."* 1Sa 25:28–29 (emphasis added)

Her words would have instantly reminded David of his greatest time of victory—the time he faced Goliath with courage and said, *"the battle is the Lord's"* (1Sa 17:47). In this way Abigail did not correct David, nor did she insult or humiliate him. Instead, she caused him to remember God's faithfulness. David's focus changed from intense anger to trust in His almighty Lord!

David then praised Abigail's wisdom. He recognized that she was sent by God and possessed discernment from Him. David blessed her for coming and said, *"Go up to your house in peace. See, I have listened to you and granted your request"* (1Sa 25:35). Abigail was used by God to keep David from unnecessary bloodshed and strife, and to bring his thoughts and actions back into obedience with God's will.

What is the end of this story? As always, God's justice and faithfulness prevailed! Abigail went home and told her foolish husband Nabal what had happened. When he heard the news from Abigail, his heart turned to stone, and ten days later the Lord struck him and he died! The Lord then blessed the widow Abigail in that David took her to be his wife. She was delivered out of the house of her foolish unbelieving husband, to wed the next king of Israel!

### How Does Abigail's Life Apply to Us?

Abigail was the wife of a rich man, but riches could not deliver her. She was a beautiful woman, but her beauty could not help her. Her only hope of overcoming the problems of this world was to lean on the precious Word of God. The wisdom and discernment she displayed came from her *Amen* faith in the commands and promises of God's Word.

We should pattern our life after Abigail's. We, too, should have a love and knowledge of God's Word that can only come through regular Bible study. As women, wives, and mothers, we can only live victoriously when we lean on the wisdom of God's Word. It can teach us how to respect our husbands, how to raise our children, and how to reflect the love and grace of Jesus Christ in our life. The Bible can teach us how to overcome temptations and be useful in God's mighty plan. It is the anchor of our soul that gives us stability in times of trouble. Consider these verses that show us what a treasure we have in God's Word:

- 1Co 2:16—the Bible is the mind of Christ. To know Him, we must know His Word.
- Psa 138:2—God has magnified His Word above His very name.
- Psa 19:10—the Bible is more desirable than earthly pleasures and riches. Therefore, we should be more diligent to seek God's Word than we would be to seek comfort and money.
- Mat 4:4—the Bible is spiritual food for the soul. When we are hungry, we are eager to eat to fill our stomach. We should be even more eager to fill our soul with the fullness of God's Word.
- Heb 4:12a—the Word of God is alive and powerful. We should seek its power in our life when we are weak and frail.
- Heb 4:12b—the Bible penetrates deep into our soul—judging our thoughts and motives. This is a blessing, because only then can the problems of our soul be revealed and corrected by God's Holy Spirit and truth.
- Psa 19:7; Rom 12:2; Psa 119:11—the Word of God restores the soul and renews the mind. When we believe and use the Word of God in our life, we are delivered from the power of sin.
- Psa 19:8—the Bible makes wise the simple. It replaces our human foolishness with divine wisdom. The wisest man in the world is foolish compared to one who knows and uses God's Word. It is the best education you can get!
- Psa 19:8a—the Bible gives us reason to rejoice.
- Psa 19:8b; Psa 119:69; 105—the Word of God gives us light, understanding, and guidance.
- Psa 119:28—It strengthens our soul.
- Psa 19:11—It warns us of spiritual danger.
- Psa 119:11b; Luk 11:28; Jam 1:25—keeping and obeying God's Word brings blessing in time.

As Christ was teaching the disciples in Luk 11:27–28, He was interrupted by the voice of a woman in the crowd. She called out to him and said, "*Blessed is the womb that bore You, and the breasts at which You nursed.*" Christ replied with these words, "*On the contrary, blessed are those who*

*hear the word of God, and observe it.*” Any woman of faith would consider it a great blessing to be the mother of the Lord Jesus Christ. But that honor was given only to Mary. Yet, Christ promises here that we can have even greater blessing than Mary did if we hear the Word of God and obey it!

Let us daily turn to God’s Word for comfort, strength, wisdom, and encouragement. Let us—like Abigail—display faith in the trials of life, whether they are small or great. Let us live with an *Amen* faith—a faith that overcomes the world!

## Batach

The second Hebrew word for faith is *batach*. This Hebrew word is translated in Scripture as **trust**. It teaches us to cast our problems on the Lord because they are too much for us to carry. *Batach* faith pictures a person weighed down with a burden, a heavy load of sorrow or care, and then casting that burden into the strong hands of the Lord who is willing and able to carry it, What a relief and joy it brings to our soul when we have been weighed down with a heavy load and then become free of it! When we daily cast our cares, burdens, and problems on the Lord we are living and walking by faith.

*Batach* is used in Psa 62:8, “**Trust** in Him at all times, O people; pour out your heart before Him; God is a refuge for us.” (emphasis added)

This *batach* faith is often found in relation to prayer as we “*pour out*” our hearts to God in times of trouble, knowing He is the One whose ear is able to hear and whose hand is able to deliver.

Why should we dare to trust in Him at all times with a *batach* faith? 1Pe 5:7 tells us to cast our problems on the Lord because He cares for us! Jesus Christ cares about every detail of our life. He died to set us free from the bondage of sin, and the burdens of life. If He cares for the lilies of the field and the birds of the air, would He not much more care for us (Mat 28:26–29)? Jesus Christ is the friend who sticks closer than a brother (Pro 18:24). He knows every need of our body and soul. He always has time to listen to our prayers and carry our burdens. We are weak, but He is strong!

For other examples of *batach* faith look at Psa 33:21; Psa 56:3, 4, 11; Psa 125:1; Pro 3:5,6; Psa 9:10; and Psa 37:3, 5

## Hannah

Hannah was a woman weighed down with a great load of pain and sorrow. She was delivered from the burden of it all when, by faith, she poured out her soul to God in prayer and cast her cares into His hands. Hannah’s faith resulted in blessing to others, and peace and reward in her own life. Her story is found in 1 Samuel chapter one.

The name Hannah means “grace.” But in 1Sa 1:2–10, Hannah is not full of God’s grace. Instead, she is sad, bitter, and weeping. The problem that robbed Hannah of grace and joy was a barren

womb. Barrenness was a great disgrace in the time and culture of Hannah's day, and the burden of it lay heavy on her soul with each waking day. To make things worse, her husband Elkanah was also married to another woman named Peninnah, who bore him strong and healthy children. Peninnah had an open womb but a closed heart. She is called in the passage, Hannah's "rival" as she would "*provoke her bitterly to irritate her.*" Peninnah's cruel words were like salt in a wound to Hannah's tormented soul. The burden that Hannah carried brought sadness to her marriage relationship as well. For though Elkanah greatly loved Hannah, his love was not enough to fill the longing she had to bear a child.

Verse five tells us that the Lord had purposely closed Hannah's womb. The Lord was not being cruel and unloving to Hannah—cruelty is not a part of God's character! His plan is perfect and He always does what is best for His children. Before God would bless Hannah with a son, she had to come to a point of surrendering her problem to Him and casting her cares into His loving hands. Hannah had to come to the point of *batach* faith.

In verse 10, Hannah reached this point. She realized she could no longer carry the pain of her barrenness, nor could she solve the problem herself. So, by faith, she wrapped up all of the hurt, bitterness, and distress and cast them onto the Lord in prayer. This was a turning point in Hannah's life, where she was delivered from bitterness of soul to the peace that comes from trusting God. Then she did an amazing thing. She vowed to the Lord that if He would give her a son, she would give her child back to the Lord as a servant of God. Hannah asked for a son, not just for her own pleasure, but also for God's purpose. She turned from her selfish desires and became a channel of grace to others!

At this time in Israel's history, Eli was serving as priest in the land. His sons Hophni and Phinehas were serving with him, but 1Sa 2:12 tells us that they were worthless men who did not know the Lord. Therefore, God had a need for a faithful priest to serve in the land of Israel. The need of Israel and the need of Hannah were both met by the love and grace of our Almighty God. Although God had closed Hannah's womb for His purpose, now He would open it for His purpose, and for her blessing. God could have easily provided a priest from any woman in the land. Instead, He chose to bring forth, from Hannah's once barren womb, the next faithful priest of Israel. In this way, the faith of Hannah and the miracle of God would stand forever in the pages of God's Word.

As Hannah was in the temple praying and casting her cares on the Lord, Eli the priest noticed her. Because of her great emotion and tears at the time, Eli thought that Hannah was drunk! But in 1Sa 1:15, she answers Eli's accusations, saying, "*No, my Lord ... I have drunk neither wine nor strong drink, but I have poured out my soul before the Lord.*" Eli replied, "*Go in peace; and may the God of Israel grant your petition that you have asked of Him.*" Hannah did leave in peace, for the Scripture says her face was no longer sad. She returned home with her husband and soon the Lord remembered Hannah's prayers and opened her womb. She gave birth to the son she had prayed for and named him Samuel, which means "heard of the Lord."

Hannah then dedicated her son to God's service. She raised him until he was old enough to be weaned and then brought the boy to Eli to serve in the temple. In 1Sa 1:27–28, Hannah says, "*For this boy I prayed, and the Lord has given me my petition which I asked of Him. So I have also dedicated him to the Lord; as long as he lives he is dedicated to the Lord.*"

Samuel grew up faithfully serving with Eli in the temple and later became a prophet in Israel. Each year, Hannah would visit her son and bring him a new robe to wear. God continued to be gracious to Hannah and Elkanah and blessed them with three more sons and two daughters. Their life is an example of Psa 113:5, 9, which says, *“Who is like the Lord our God, who is enthroned on high? ... He makes the barren woman abide in the house as a joyful mother of children. Praise the Lord!”*

Hannah did praise the Lord, for her story had a sad beginning but a very happy ending. In 1Sa 2:1–10, we have the song of Hannah where she praised God for Who He is and what He had done in her life. By faith, she was transformed from a distressed and bitter woman who lived in scorn, to a woman who blessed the nation of Israel and praised God. In verses 6–8, Hannah recognized God’s plan of glory. First, He humbles us so that we will call on Him. Then, at the proper time, He exalts us for His glory! Let us follow Hannah’s example and cast our cares on the Lord, because He cares for us. Let us—like Hannah—live with *batach* faith.

### What Can We Learn from Hannah’s Life?

Hannah teaches us the futility of trying to carry our problems ourselves. She teaches us that prayer is the means of casting our cares on the Lord. Phi 4:6, 7 encourages us to escape the worries of life through prayer, *“Be anxious for nothing, but in everything with prayer and supplication let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God that surpasses all understanding, shall guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.”*

Prayer delivers us from anxiety into the perfect peace of God.

Hannah prayed for Samuel’s birth. But surely she didn’t stop praying once he was born! I think we can assume that she also prayed for her young son as he served in the temple and grew up in the Lord. A woman has the great privilege of praying for her families; whether it is for her children or her husband. Many lives have been rescued and souls saved through God’s response to the faithful prayers of a humble woman. Many marriages have been rescued and families reunited by the power of prayer. Through the ministry of prayer, we can commit the lives of those we love the most into God’s hands.

### The Woman’s Ministry of Prayer

- We have great love for our family members and therefore great motivation to pray consistently for them.
- We know the spiritual and physical needs of our family better than anyone else in the world. We know weaknesses, temptations, and trials that can’t be shared with other people, but can be shared with the Lord in prayer.
- Before you pray for your family, examine your own life. We must pray without hidden sin and in the filling of the Spirit (Deu 1:45; Psa 66:18). We should not ask God to correct our loved ones if we are not willing to be corrected first. We should not pray that our loved ones be good servants of the Lord if we are not willing to serve. If you want power in prayer, you must have purity in life (1Jo 1:9)!



- We should not only pray **for** our children but also **with** our children. When we pray out loud with our children, they are constantly reminded of what we are asking God to do with their life. They will learn of God’s faithfulness when they see prayers answered! When we pray with our children, they learn how to pray from our example.
- Our greatest prayer should be for our family’s salvation. But once they have trusted in Jesus Christ as their Savior, we should consistently pray that they would fulfill the plan that God has for their life. All other matters in life are not nearly as important to their welfare and blessing as being obedient to God’s plan.
- When family members are disobedient, we should have the courage and faith to pray that God will do whatever it takes in their life to bring them back into an obedient walk with Him.
- When we pray this prayer, we must be willing to trust God with the answer. Perhaps the discipline that comes upon them as a result of your prayer will be severe. We don’t like to see our loved ones suffer. However, God will only do what is best for them. We can trust God with the lives of those we love, for He loves them even more than we do!
- Remember ...
  1. The love of God wants the best for us.
  2. The wisdom of God knows what is best.
  3. The power of God can accomplish it!

Hannah also teaches us the need to dedicate our children to God’s service. Remember the saying, “As the twig is bent, so goes the branch.” It is our responsibility as mothers to “train our children in the way they should go, so that when they are old they will not depart from it” (Pro 22:6).

### The Woman’s Ministry of Dedicating/Training Her Children

- Children are a blessing and gift from the Lord. With the blessing comes great responsibility (Gen 33:5; Isa 8:18; Psa 113:9; Psa 127:3–5; and Psa 128).
- God tells us to diligently teach His commandments to our children throughout the day (Deu 6:4–9).
- On his deathbed, King David instructed his son, Solomon, to walk in the ways of the Lord. This challenge was the greatest advice the king could leave his son, and it is the greatest advice we can give to our children (2Ki 2:1–4)!
- Psalm 78 commands us to tell of the works of God to each following generation—that His ways and wonders will not be forgotten.
- Pro 22:6 is a command with a promise. As our children grow and want to experience life for themselves, we may find them walking far from the Lord. This verse gives us the promise that they will return if we have trained them in God’s path.
- In 2Ti 1:5, 3:14, 15, the Apostle Paul exhorts Timothy to continue in the sincere faith that he learned as a child from his grandmother Lois and his mother Eunice. Apparently, Timothy was without the godly influence of a father, but his mother and grandmother taught him to live by faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. The spiritual effect of these women’s lives carried on through their descendant Timothy. Investing our time and energy in the lives of our children is one of the best investments we can ever make!

God, our Heavenly Father is waiting with open hands and strong shoulders to carry our heavy burdens in life. Let us cast our cares on Him and live in *batach* faith. Then, the joy of the Lord will be our strength (Neh 8:10b)!

## Chasah

The third Hebrew word for faith is *chasah*. It is translated in the Bible as **refuge**. It teaches us to flee to the Lord as our refuge and protection. *Chasah* pictures a rabbit being chased by a hungry lion and finding safety from danger in the cleft of a rock. For another example, think of a woman out walking in the fields when a fierce and angry storm comes upon her. Imagine her finding refuge from the rain by hiding under the cleft of a rock where she can remain warm and dry. Throughout our life, we encounter many dangers, whether they be physical dangers that affect the body, or spiritual dangers that can scar the peace and joy of our soul. When these dangers come upon us, we should seek refuge in the faithful fortress of Jesus Christ. When we live under His protection, we have courage in the trials of life and are living and walking with *chasah* faith.

*“The Lord is my rock and my fortress and my deliverer, my God, my rock,  
in whom I take refuge.” Psa 18:2a*

*“For my soul takes refuge in thee; and in the shadow of your wings I will take refuge.” Psa 57:1*

Why should we dare to live with *chasah* faith? Because Jesus Christ is the creator and sustainer of the universe (Col 1:15, 16)! He calmed the mighty storm for the fearful disciples. All things are under His control. Jesus Christ has faithfully promised to never leave us and never forsake us (Heb 13:15)! He is with us always to guide, shelter, and protect our lives. He is the One who holds our hand (Psa 37:24)!

For other examples of *chasah* faith, see Psa 2:12; Psa 5:1; Psa 7:1; Psa 11:1; Psa 14:6; Psa 16:1; Psa 18:30; Psa 25:20; Psa 31:1; Psa 31:19; Psa 34:8; Psa 36:7; Psa 57:1; Pro 30:5; Nah 1:7; and Zep 3:12.

## Sarah

Sarah's life teaches us a faith that takes refuge in God's presence and protection in the storms of life. Her faith and patience in God's promises were tested many times in her life, but she found strength to endure by fleeing to God as her stronghold. Sarah was a woman of submissive beauty. We are blessed by her example and told to follow after it (1Pe 3:1–6)!

Sarah's story starts in Genesis 11. Gen 11:29–30 tell us she was the wife of Abraham, and she was barren. In Gen 12:1–5, Abraham is told by God to leave his home and family, and journey to an unknown land. So, Abraham obediently packed up all of his belongings, livestock, and servants and traveled to the land of Canaan as God had told him to do. This was the beginning of Sarah's schooling in the life of faith. God was beginning to teach Sarah that He was her refuge and protection. She had to follow Abraham into an unknown land, away from family, friends, and all

that was familiar. But, she went under God's care, nestled safely under the protection of His wings!

Abraham was a great man of faith. He worshipped and served the Lord, calling on His name. But Abraham, like all of us, had weaknesses and failures. He had times when his faith failed and he turned to human solutions. Unfortunately, when we fail spiritually, it affects those around us. Sarah was put into a place of testing because of Abraham's failure. In Gen 12:10–20, we read that there was a famine in the land where Abraham and Sarah lived. Rather than trusting God to care for them, Abraham left Canaan—where God had led him to live—and journeyed to the land of Egypt. Abraham walked right out of God's will. Sarah followed in humble obedience; she remained in the plan of God by submitting to her husband's leadership.

Sarah was a beautiful woman. As they neared the land of Egypt, Abraham began to fear that someone would notice how beautiful she was and kill him in order to take his lovely wife. Abraham asked Sarah to tell the Egyptians that she was his sister in order to try to protect his own life.

Once in Egypt, Abraham's concerns came true. The Egyptians did notice how beautiful Sarah was and she was taken into the harem of the pharaoh, the king of Egypt. In God's perfect design for marriage, the man is to be the protector and guardian of the woman. The husband is the one responsible to protect his wife in both body and soul. In this passage, however, we see that Abraham's fear for his own safety caused him to compromise in his care for Sarah, allowing her to be taken into another man's house. Sarah could no longer rely on Abraham to be her safety and refuge!

No doubt, Sarah felt uncomfortable and out of place in the house of Pharaoh. She probably felt hurt and rejected by Abraham's failure to protect her. Where, then, could she turn for her protection? To the fortress and stronghold of God Almighty! Sarah was suffering according to the will of God. She entrusted her soul to her faithful Creator and did what was right (see 1Pe 2:21–23, 4:19). God became her refuge!

In Gen 12:17, we find that God intervened to deliver Sarah out of such a terrible situation. Because of Sarah, He caused a great plague to fall upon the household of Pharaoh. The king of Egypt was not given the opportunity to violate Sarah's honor in any way. Pharaoh discovered Abraham's deceptive plot and returned Sarah to her husband, sending his servants to lead the couple out of the land.

Sarah is a great example to us of how we should put ourselves under God's care and protection. Like Sarah, we need to hide under the rock of our salvation!

She is also our example of submission, as given in 1Pe 3:1–6. Sarah was able to submit to Abraham's leadership—even when it was wrong—because she was submissive to God's plan and obedient to His Word. As 1Pe 3:13 says, "*Who is there to harm you if you prove zealous for what is good?*" God's care and protection are on the submissive wife. When we submit to our husbands out of obedience to God's Word, we become Sarah's children in the faith. Then, our soul is

adorned, not with a beauty that is external and fading, but an inner beauty coming from a meek and quiet spirit. This beauty is precious in the sight of God!

Many years later, in Genesis 20, we find Abraham failing in the same way when the couple traveled into Gerar. Abraham wanted to protect his own safety, so he said of Sarah, “*she is my sister*” (Gen 20:2). Abimilech, king of Gerar, sent and took Sarah. God’s faithful care and protection remained with her again. God came to Abimilech in a dream and threatened him with death if he did not return Sarah back to her husband Abraham.

Sarah probably wondered how long it would be before the same thing happened again. Any time the rains failed to come or the food supply ran short, would Abraham again travel to a foreign land and allow her to be taken into another man’s house? But remember that in Sarah’s life God used the failures of others to teach, train, test, and refine her—as He does in our lives. Abraham may have been the human source of her test, but God allowed it for a reason. He was teaching Sarah the beauty of submission. God the Heavenly Father was teaching Sarah to trust in Him as her shelter.

At this time, Sarah had a need to forgive Abraham. No doubt, there were times when Sarah failed Abraham, and needed to be forgiven by him. Sooner or later, every married couple will face the need to forgive one another! It is part of married life. If we want God’s grace to prevail in our home, and if we want to live with mutual love and respect, then we must be quick to forgive. If God’s grace and forgiveness do not abide in the home, then bitterness and anger will! It has been wisely stated: A good marriage is the perfect union of two very forgiving people!

### Forgiveness

In Mat 18:21–22, Peter asked the Lord how many times he must forgive his brother. Peter thought that seven times would surely be enough! The Lord, however, corrected Peter with these words, “*I do not say to you, up to seven times, but up to seventy times seven.*” I have never been hurt by another person 490 times in one day. But I have found that in the quiet of my own mind, my thoughts can easily return to a previous hurt at least that many times in a day! When this happens, we must train our hearts to forgive over and over again.

Jesus Christ then followed the statement with a parable in Mat 18:23–35, teaching the importance of forgiveness. The parable shows that we all need to be forgiven by someone, and we all have need to forgive someone. If we want to receive forgiveness from others, we must also be willing to forgive those who have hurt us. In the parable, the one who failed to forgive was turned over to the torturers, to remain until his debt was fully paid. When we fail to forgive those around us, our soul is tortured with the heaviness of sin, and we are only hurting ourselves!

In Eph 4:32, God commands us to forgive with these words, “*And be kind to one another, tender-hearted, forgiving each other, just as God in Christ also has forgiven you.*”

By the same standard and in the same way that He forgives us, we are to forgive each other. To do this, we must understand the qualities of God’s forgiveness:

- God’s forgiveness is based on grace, compassion, and lovingkindness—we don’t deserve it! (Eph 1:7)
- God forgives **all** of our sins. (Col 2:13–14)
- He removes our sins from us as far as the east is from the west. In other words, they are gone forever, paid for through the death of Jesus Christ on the cross. (Psa 103:12)
- God doesn’t even remember our sins! (Heb 10:17)
- Those who have been forgiven the most, love the most. (Luk 7:37)
- Christ bore the pain and penalty of our sin. By His wounds we were healed. (1Pe 2:24)

Remember, we are to forgive others **just as** (in the same way) God has forgiven us:

- We don’t forgive another person because he deserves it; we forgive out of obedience to God’s Word. Only by God’s grace can we forgive one another.
- We should forgive all hurts and failures against us—both the small and the big ones.
- Once sins are forgiven, they should be remembered no more. In other words, the fact that you had to forgive someone else shouldn’t affect your behavior toward them; fellowship and friendship should be renewed.
- If we remember how much Christ has forgiven us, then it won’t be such a burden to forgive other people.
- We should be willing to bear that burden of forgiveness. Other people’s sins and failures often cause us great pain and sorrow. Forgiveness says that we are willing to bear the pain because Christ did it for us!

The greatest work of God toward man is forgiveness. The greatest work of man toward man is forgiveness. The greatest need of forgiveness is often in marriage—a happy marriage cannot survive without it!

Edwin Hubbell Chapin said, *“Never does the human soul appear so strong and noble as when it forgoes revenge and dares to forgive an injury!”*

When we graciously forgive one another, we are letting God’s grace and love abide in our life and in our home. Then, we are fulfilling the commands of 1Pe 3:8–9, which says, *“To sum up, let all be harmonious, sympathetic, brotherly, kindhearted, and humble in spirit; not returning evil for evil, or insult for insult, but giving a blessing instead; for you were called for the very purpose that you might inherit a blessing.”*

These verses are not often taught as a marriage passage, but when put to practical use in the home, they can greatly enhance the relationships in any marriage and family.

Let us never forget the way Christ has forgiven us. Let us never fail to forgive others in that same way. Let us live in harmony with one another, and the blessing of God’s love will prevail in our home!

Notice how the principles of *chasah* faith—hiding ourselves under God’s love and protection—relate to forgiveness. When we, by faith, are dependent on God as our shelter through life, we realize that He doesn’t just shelter our body, but He also shelters our soul. When God is the shelter

of our soul, the failures and flaws of others are much easier to bear. They deflect off of us because our soul is safe and secure in Christ our Rock!

*“For in the day of trouble He will conceal  
me in His tabernacle;  
in the secret place of His tent He will hide me;  
He will lift me up on a rock ...  
I will sing, yes, I will sing praises to the Lord.”*  
Psa 27:5–6

## Yaqal

The fourth Hebrew word for faith is *yaqal*. It is translated in Scripture as **hope**. *Yaqal* means “to hope in the Lord in the midst of extreme pain.” This faith pictures applying a bandage and ointment to an open wound so that the healing process can begin. Often in life, things happen to us that cause extreme pain of soul—the loss of a loved one, a tragic accident, a rape or physical abuse, a dream that is shattered, a trust that is violated, a marriage that failed. These are things that cannot be changed, but must be endured. They can rob us of the joy God has for us in life. At these times we need to trust in the healing power of God’s loving kindness. We need to use *yaqal* faith—the faith that heals the wounds of life.

Psa 31:24 is an example of *yaqal* faith: *“Be strong, and let your heart take courage, all you who hope in the Lord.”*

Psa 147:3 says, *“He heals the brokenhearted and binds up their wounds.”*

Why should we dare to hope in the Lord and live with a *yaqal* faith? Because Jesus Christ is the object of our faith. The Lord healed the sick, gave sight to the blind, and made the lame to walk. He cares infinitely more for the condition of our soul than that of our body. Knowing this, we can trust Him to bandage and heal the pains, sorrows, and wounds that we encounter in life. He is the great physician!

For other examples of *yaqal* faith see Job 13:15; Psa 33:18; Psa 38:15; Psa 42:5; Psa 42:11; Psa 43:5; Psa 71:14; Psa 119:49.

## Ruth

Ruth rested in God’s perfect plan even when it involved pain, loss, and sorrow. Her hope was a confidence in the Lord’s healing hand to bandage up her wounded soul and restore joy to her life. By allowing God to apply His healing touch to her life, she was able to support and encourage others who were also in pain and suffering.

Ruth’s story is found in the Old Testament book of Ruth. The book of Ruth teaches us many things. What we particularly want to focus on is the manner in which two different women faced a

similar crisis. One reacted to the crisis with bitterness of soul, and one with faith. In Rut 1:1–5, we have the background for Ruth’s story:

“In the days when the judges ruled, there was famine in the land, and a man from Bethlehem in Judah, together with his wife and two sons, went to live for a while in the country of Moab. The man’s name was Elimelech, his wife’s name was Naomi, and the names of his two sons were Mahlon and Kilion ... Now Elimelech, Naomi’s husband, died, and she was left with her two sons. They married Moabite women, one named Orpah and the other Ruth. After they had lived there about ten years, both Mahlon and Kilion also died, and Naomi was left without her two sons and her husband.”

After this tragic loss that affected three different women, Naomi told her daughters-in-law to please remain behind in their homeland of Moab, and she would return to Judah. The first daughter-in-law, Orpah, did return to her mother’s house. But, Ruth refused. Ruth responds to Naomi’s plea with words of devotion, “*Do not urge me to leave you or turn back from following you; for where you go I will go and where you lodge, I will lodge. Your people shall be my people, and your God, my God*” (Rut 1:16). Ruth’s words express not only her desire to comfort and help Naomi, but more importantly her intention to follow and serve the one true and living God of the Bible. She is a woman of faith.

So, Naomi and Ruth returned to Bethlehem. All of the people there were stirred up to see Naomi back in town after all those years. The women were talking with one another and asking, “Can this be Naomi?” Naomi answered them, and said:

“Do not call me Naomi (which means ‘pleasant’). Call me Mara (which means ‘bitter’) because the Almighty has made my life very bitter. I went away full, but the Lord has brought me back empty. Why call me Naomi? The Lord has afflicted me, the Almighty has brought misfortune upon me” (Rut 1:20–21).

We can certainly sympathize with Naomi’s great loss. She probably expected, as an elderly woman, to have her children and grandchildren around her, and to live in happiness with her family. But expectations of what we want life to be like are seldom fulfilled. When they aren’t, it often leads to unhappiness and a bitter soul. It is far better to trust your times, your family, and your future in the all-knowing hands of God the Father. Naomi was willing to accept good from the Lord, but not suffering.

Ruth went through a similar loss, yet with a different attitude than that of Naomi. She was a woman suddenly widowed at a young age. How did she respond to this tragedy? We can see by her actions that she accepted her suffering by faith and applied the healing of God’s loving kindness in her life. Job 5:18 tells us that God “*inflicts pain, and gives relief; He wounds and His hands also heal.*” Ruth’s trials were abundant, but so was the comfort of God in her life (2Co 1:5). She opened her torn soul to the healing hand of God’s love.

Because Ruth received God’s comfort in her own life, she was able to be a channel of blessing to Naomi. She stood by her mother-in-law in time of trial—encouraging and serving her the best way she could. “Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of compassion and

the God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our troubles, so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves have received from God” (2Co 1:3–4).

Part of God’s will for us in suffering is to learn how to comfort others in similar situations.

Naomi shows us the downward path our life takes when we don’t accept God’s perfect plan for us. Our emotions begin to control our thinking and actions. One sin leads to another until we are far from fellowship with God. Our spiritual growth is hindered. Our life defiles rather than blesses those around us (Eph 4:32). What a sad path to take!

Ruth, on the other hand, shows us the upward path we can take when we accept God’s perfect plan for our life and apply His healing. We are obedient to what the Word of God teaches us to think and do. We receive comfort and strength from the hand of God, have personal victory over suffering, grow spiritually, and become a channel of comfort and blessing to others. What a wonderful path to follow in life; the path of *yaqal* faith that is pleasing to God!

### How to Apply the Healing of God’s Grace.

- Accept that God’s plan for your life is perfect. There is a visible cause, but also an invisible hand that controls our life. Rom 8:28 tells us, “... *God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose.*” That means both the good things and the bad things in life!
- If someone else caused the pain or tragedy, forgive quickly and freely.
- Accept by faith that God is able to heal. No pain or situation will cripple you for life if you deal with it by faith. (Hos 6:1; Job 5:18; and Psa 147:3)
- Remember, God is near when we hurt! (Psa 34:18)
- Healing is related to prayer. Call out to God for help. (Psa 30:2)
- Turn your thoughts to God. We must train ourselves to confess anxious and sinful thoughts to God so that our thinking is renewed. God can turn bad memories into thanksgiving and praise when we dwell on His goodness. (Phi 4:6–8 and Hab 3:16–19)
- Remember, weeping doesn’t last forever, there is joy ahead. (Psa 126:5; Eze 11:19; and Isa 25:8)
- He has left us with a Comforter. The Holy Spirit ministers to our needs. (Joh 14:16, Joh 16: 7)
- Live in the present, not the past. Old memories can be wonderful or they can be a curse to us. God is concerned with the “right now.” (Phi 3:13–14)

I AM

I was regretting the past and fearing the future.  
Suddenly my Lord was speaking, “My name is I AM.”  
He paused and I waited, then He continued,  
“When you live in the past,  
with its mistakes, regrets and sins,  
It’s hard ... I’m not there; my name is not I WAS.



“When you live in the future,  
with its problems, its fears, its doubts,  
It’s hard ... I’m not there, My name is not | WILL BE.  
When you live in this moment, it’s not hard,  
My name is | AM.”

Just as God breaks and then heals, He often restores blessing after suffering loss (Joe 2:25–26). It is encouraging to see how the Lord restored blessing to Ruth (and to Naomi, by association). She gleaned in the fields to help provide food for herself and Naomi. While in the fields working, Ruth was cared for by Boaz, a wealthy landowner. The story that follows in Ruth 2–4 is one of the greatest love stories in the Bible, resulting in a marriage between Ruth and Boaz.

Rut 4:17 tells us Ruth bore a son to Boaz and named him Obed. Obed became the father of Jesse, who was the father of David. Ruth went from a young, forsaken widow to the great grandmother of King David and an ancestor of Jesus Christ! (Mat 1:5–6)

Ruth’s faith was in God, her hope was in His healing, and her life was a testimony to the precious grace of God. His grace and loving kindness is able to take any pain or suffering and turn it into a cause for rejoicing—if we will only apply the bandage of His love!

## Qawah

The last Hebrew word for faith is *qawah*. It is translated in Scripture as **wait**. *Qawah* faith pictures a person weaving small strands of thread into a strong rope. As we learn and grow spiritually, we are tested in greater and greater ways. Sometimes it seems like God may be far from us, not hearing our prayers or coming to our rescue. At times like this, our faith is tested as to whether or not we will endure and wait for the deliverance of God. This is what *qawah* faith is for. During long times of trial, we must weave the experience of God’s faithfulness in our life together with the surety of His Word to give us a strong rope of faith. We must wait on the Lord’s perfect timing and never give up!

Isa 40:31 gives us an example of *qawah* faith: “*Those who wait for the Lord will gain new strength; they will mount up with wings like eagles, they will run and not get tired, they will walk and not become weary.*”

Lam 3:25 says, “*The Lord is good to those who wait for Him, to the person who seeks Him.*”

Why should we dare to wait on the Lord? Because Jesus Christ is the object of our faith. There are thousands of promises available to us in the Word of God. Heb 13:8 tells us that Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever. What He promised long ago is still true today. We should not waiver in our faith, because He who promised is faithful! Hebrews 12:1–3 challenges us to live our life with endurance, knowing that Jesus Christ endured the cross for us. We are told to consider His example so that we do not grow weary and lose heart!

Other examples of *qawah* are found in Gen 49:18; Psa 25:3; Psa 25:5; Psa 25:21; Psa 27:14; Psa 69:6; Psa 130:5; and Isa 49:23.

## Mary

Mary treasured God's Word in her heart and gripped His promises to give her stability in life's trials. By faith, she was able to look beyond her own life and current situation to see the part that she played in God's great plan of redemption for the human race. As she came to understand God's perfect plan, she kept a mental record—a diary of His faithfulness to her. Mary treasured each act of God's faithfulness and weaved them together with the truths and promises of Scripture. She weaved a rope of faith in which to wait on the Lord!

Gal 4:4 tells us “*when the fullness of the time came, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman ...*” In Luke 1–2, the long awaited time came when God was ready to send the Messiah who would enter this world in the form of a man and give His own life to redeem us from our sins. The first human to know that this long-awaited event was about to occur was a special, young Jewish woman—the virgin Mary.

Mary's story begins in Luk 1:26. She was engaged to Joseph—one of the descendants of King David. One day, unexpectedly, an angel appeared to Mary with good news. The angel told Mary that she would be the mother of a virgin-born son, and that His name would be Jesus. After the angel explained the purpose of the virgin birth to Mary, assuring her of God's grace and faithfulness, she totally surrendered her life to God's will and said, “Let it be done to me according to your Word” (Luk 1:38).

Any spiritually minded, young Jewish woman would have dreamed of the privilege of being the mother of the Messiah. What a great thrill this would have been to Mary to be so chosen of God! But with this privilege came a great responsibility from God and a great burden of shame from man. She had seen the angel with her own eyes and heard his words with her own ears. Her lips carried on a short but meaningful conversation with him. Her soul was encouraged by his words of comfort. But Mary was alone when the angel appeared. Her parents, friends, and neighbors had not seen the appearance. Who would believe, when she became swelled with child, that the pregnancy was of God and not of her own immoral actions? In the sight of critical and unbelieving people, this great and joyous news would bring a terrible shame. Yet, by faith, Mary was willing to trust the Lord.

Remember, God in His grace never asks us to bear anything without providing the strength and encouragement we need to overcome in faith (Phi 4:13; 1Co 13:10). God knew that this pregnancy and the events following would be a test for Mary, and so He prepared her with these words and events:

- Luk 1:28, 30—The angel called Mary “*avored,*” and promised that God's presence was with her.
- Luk 1:32–33—The angel gave Mary the reason for the virgin birth. She was able to see from this that her shame was not in vain, but to glorify the heavenly Father.

- Luk 1:37—The angel reminded Mary that God is always in control, and “*nothing is impossible with God.*”
- Mat 1:18–25—God also sent an angel to Joseph to assure him Mary’s child was of God. God’s kindness provided Mary with a husband who would trust God and care for her.
- Luk 1:39–45—Mary found encouragement from visiting her cousin Elizabeth who was also with child.

Mary responded to God’s encouragement with a song of praise to Him. It is recorded for us in Luk 1:46–55. In these ten verses, Mary repeatedly quotes Old Testament Scripture. As a Jewish child, Mary would have learned the Holy Scriptures from an early age and been taught the ways and works of God. But, now, she was seeing them firsthand in her own life, and as a result, her faith grew. Mary had a need to remember the promises and kindness of God in the days ahead. As the baby Jesus grew, there was a continued need for Mary to trust in God’s plan and walk by faith. Let’s look at the events in Mary’s life after the angel’s announcement:

- In Luke 2, the shepherds came to visit the baby Jesus in Bethlehem. They told Mary and Joseph that angels had appeared to them and spoken these words, “*For today in the city of David there has been born for you a Savior, who is Christ the Lord.*” In verse 19, it says that Mary “*treasured up all these things, pondering them in her heart.*” The word “*treasure*” in this passage is the Greek word *syntereo* meaning “to hold close, to preserve, to remember.” The word “ponder” is *sumballo* meaning “to combine, to consider.” This verse is telling us that Mary was thoughtfully considering all that God was showing and teaching her, and keeping it close to her heart. She was writing a spiritual diary of God’s faithfulness to His plan. In other words, she was beginning to weave a strong rope of *qawah* faith. God was helping Mary to face the future by again emphasizing the purpose for Jesus’ life.
- Later, in Luke 2, the baby Jesus was taken to the temple to be presented to Simeon. In Luk 2:34–35, Simeon reminded Mary of the purpose for Jesus’ life and warned her with the words, “*and a sword will pierce even your own soul.*” Again, God was preparing Mary for the cross to come.
- When Jesus was twelve, He sat in the midst of the teachers in the temple and they were amazed at His understanding. He remained behind after His parents had left because He had to “be about His Father’s business,” In Luk 2:51, we are told that Mary once again “*treasured all these things in her heart.*” She continued to keep a mental diary or record of God’s Word, God’s plan, and God’s faithfulness. She kept on using these things to weave a stronger faith.

What was God so carefully preparing Mary for? The cross of Jesus Christ! As a sinner, Mary needed Him to die to pay the penalty for her sins. But, as a mother, it would be a tragedy to see her firstborn son forsaken, beaten, scourged, and hung on a cross like a common thief! Every woman that has born a child into this fallen world knows that motherhood brings a mixture of joy and sorrow, blessing and heartache. This is never truer than in the heart of Mary. Why would God ask Mary to watch as her perfect Son went through the shame and pain of crucifixion for a crime He never knew? Because God had prepared Jesus Christ for such a time, and God had prepared Mary for such a time! Indeed, the sword pierced her own soul when she saw the Son, she had so tenderly cared for, endure the beating, scourging, and shame that led Him to hang on Calvary’s cross for the sins of man. But her soul rejoiced to know that in the fullness of God’s time, He sent Jesus to die in order to save the world. She lived to see the completion of the work her Son had come to do! In Joh

19:25–27, we see Mary staring at the cross in support of her firstborn Son. God knew Mary’s faith was strong enough to watch the cross. She had been weaving together God’s promises and God’s faithfulness since she was a young woman! Now she had a strong rope of faith!

The last time we see Mary in Scripture is in Act 1:13–14. After Christ had died and ascended into Heaven, the apostles of the early church joined together in prayer. But they were not alone, for the verse tells us *“these all with one mind were continually devoting themselves to prayer, along with the women, and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with His brothers.”* Mary remained faithful to God’s plan after the crucifixion of her Son. She was a vital part of the fellowship of believers in the early church of Jerusalem!

God’s Word and God’s kindness continually prepared Mary for the trials in her life. Each time, she treasured up what He taught her for the days ahead. Mary took strands of His faithfulness and wove them together with His Word to make a strong rope of faith.

### Weaving a Strong Rope of Faith Involves

- Learning God’s Word. Rom 10:17 says, *“Faith comes from hearing and hearing by the Word of God.”* Mary had the spoken word of the angel to prepare her for trials. We have the written Bible to prepare us for trials in our lives. The Scriptures are just as true and vital today as the angel’s words were to Mary!
- Reflecting on His faithfulness to past generations. What God did for the believers throughout history, He can do for us! (1Co 10:11 and Heb 12:1)
- Experiencing God’s faithfulness in your own life. Deu 10:21 says, *“He is your praise, and He is your God, who has done these great and awesome things for you which your eyes have seen.”*
- Considering and remembering:
  1. Prayers He has answered for you
  2. Promises He has kept to you
  3. Desires He has fulfilled in your life
  4. Open doors of service He has given you
  5. Blessings He has bestowed on you (1Sa 12:24; Psa 103:1–2)
- Waiting on Him tomorrow, for He was faithful yesterday and today (Heb 13:8). Ralph Waldo Emerson said, *“All that I have seen readies me to trust the Creator with all I have not seen.”* Corrie Ten Boom said, *“Never be afraid to trust an unknown future to a known God.”*

The prophet Jeremiah, like Mary, kept a mental record of God’s faithfulness that gave him courage to face each new day. First, his soul remembers the horrific things his eyes have seen—things that caused his soul bitterness, weakness, and despair (Lam 3:15–18). But then Jeremiah’s heart is changed by looking beyond the pain to the faithfulness of God. In Lam 3:20–25, Jeremiah states it in this way:

*“Surely my soul remembers and is bowed down within me. This I recall to my mind therefore I have hope. The Lord’s loving kindness indeed never cease, for His compassions never fail. They are new every morning; great is Thy faithfulness. ‘The Lord is my portion,’ says my soul, Therefore, I have hope in Him. The Lord is good to those who wait for Him.”*

It was in remembering the faithfulness of God that Jeremiah's heart was transformed from despair to hope. His personal and national circumstances had not changed, but the condition of his heart was transformed by faith!

The same God that was faithful to Jeremiah, Abigail, Hannah, Sarah, Ruth and Mary is faithful to you, to me, and to every member of the family of God. May our hearts daily be weaving strands of faith into our every thought, word, and deed that we may stand strong in faith until the day we meet our faithful God face to face!

*“For yet in a little while, He Who is coming will come, and will not delay. But My righteous one shall live by faith; and if he shrinks back, my soul has no pleasure in Him.” (Heb 10:37–38)*

*“For whatever is born of God overcomes the world, and this is the victory that has overcome the world—our faith. And who is the one who overcomes the world, but he who believes that Jesus is the Son of God?” (1Jo 5:4–5)*

Faith is the victory that overcomes the world!