



## How Do I Let Go and Let God?

**Psalm 37:5: (NASB) *Commit your way to the LORD, trust also in Him, and He will do it.***



"Let go and let God." This simple statement is focused on faith and trust, two fundamental challenges for Christians. We may think it is easy to have faith, but when we are in times of difficulty, the depth of our true faith is revealed and sometimes it is revealed as seriously lacking. We may think that we have trust, but when pressed, when we feel like we need answers or changes or insight, our trust becomes scarce while anxiety abounds. All of this can be depressing. We can feel like we are letting God down. The good news is that we are not alone in this struggle to "let go and let God." Many of God's faithful had these same struggles. Because their experiences are recorded in

Scripture, we can not only read about their struggles but also see how God's blessing worked in spite of their weakness!

This popular phrase, "Let go and let God" is not a scripture, but it still suggests an important question - how do we submit and let God control our lives?

When are we to struggle through our trials and when should we avoid them?

Our focus will be on Abraham and specifically on his wife, Sarah. Here is a woman who was blessed to be the mother of God's chosen people, Israel. She bore Isaac as a result of God's miraculous intervention when she was 90 years old.

While we can and should marvel at her faith and the role she played in God's plan, we also need to understand the difficult path she walked to become so privileged. Both she and Abraham had to grow through time and hardship to "let go and let God!" In different ways we often try to control the narrative instead of waiting on God.



**We choose the tools we use when we go through significant challenges.**

**Let's begin with a basic premise of our faith:**

**Lamentations 3:22-23: (NASB) *<sup>22</sup>The LORD'S lovingkindness indeed never cease, for His compassions never fail. <sup>23</sup>They are new every morning; great is Your faithfulness.***

This is a great scripture to memorize and repeat every time we wake up. If we believe in His lovingkindness as our baseline, we can fortify ourselves to reframe the difficult experiences of the day. Lovingkindness means tenderness, consideration and compassion towards others.





We will focus on FAITH and TRUST:

- FAITH is belief in that which we have clear reason to accept. Faith has logic behind it - it has a reason. It is not a wish or desire - it is something solid.
- TRUST is faith applied on a personal experiential level. It makes faith vital for our everyday experiences.

We need both trust and faith. Trust is built upon that strong faith in something solid. Trust is the daily action required from it.



Defining, applying and tracking the growth of true Christian faith



Building TRUST and HOPE on the foundation of FAITH

We will look at a story about Abraham and Sarah, but in the beginning their names were Abram and Sarai. We will drop into their lives to see how faith and trust were tested in them.



Abram was 75 years old, and Sarai was 65 years old when they left Abram's father's house and went to the land God had promised.

**While there, the promise of a family was first given:**

Genesis 12:7: (NLT) *Then the LORD appeared to Abram and said, I will give this land to your descendants. And Abram built an altar there and dedicated it to the LORD, who had appeared to him.*

The name Abram means "high father," or "exulted father," or "father of many."

This is an ironic promise because he does not have any descendants at this point! He was 75 years old and Sarai was 65 and they had no children, yet they were given this promise, *I will give this land to your descendants.*

Abram and Sarai went several more years and still had no children. After Abram paid tithes to Melchizedek, God again reiterated that Abram would be blessed.

**Abram responds to God with a measure of frustration that both he and his wife were undoubtedly feeling:**

Genesis 15:1-4: (NLT) *<sup>1</sup>Some time later, the LORD spoke to Abram in a vision and said to him, Do not be afraid, Abram, for I will protect you, and your reward will be great. <sup>2</sup>But Abram replied, O Sovereign LORD, what good are all Your blessings when I don't even have a son? Since You've given me no children, Eliezer of Damascus, a servant in my household, will inherit all my wealth. <sup>3</sup>You have given me no descendants of my own, so one of my servants will be my heir. <sup>4</sup>Then the LORD said to him, No, your servant will not be your heir, for you will have a son of your own who will be your heir.*

Abram assumed he knew how this would all work.



Let's not underestimate how amazing it is for God to say (in the NASB version) *Do not fear...I am a shield to you.* Abraham continually demonstrated his faith and trust in God, and God gave him these kinds of beautiful assurances. Along the way as time passes, God will give Abram faith and assurance boosters that God's plan is still in place.

God makes His promise very plain - Abram will have his own biological son. Let's look at verse 4 again in the NASB:

*<sup>4</sup>Then behold, the word of the LORD came to him, saying, this man (meaning Eliezer) will not be your heir; but one who will come forth from your own body, he shall be your heir.*

It does not seem very logical - Abram and Sarai are old. Sometimes God's promises go beyond what we can understand. The beautiful promise, *I will keep you in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on Me*, might seem more than we can do. Let's think about what Abram's reaction might have been to this promise of a son at his and Sarai's advanced ages. And how might we react when we are given something big that might seem out of our capabilities?

Isaiah 26:3: (KJV) Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on Thee: because he trusteth in Thee.



**WHAT I FEEL NEEDS TO BE DONE:** Sometimes I know the will of God requires me to walk a specific path of obedience and sacrifice. Then time weighs heavily upon me. Things seem status quo and I feel like nothing is different. Quietly I begin to allow discouragement to creep in and subtly become lethargic, making no effort to change my circumstances - physically, mentally or spiritually.

We can get too relaxed as time goes by. Quietly and subtly we may become lethargic. Our Christian life is not always full of excitement as in "God showed me this or that!" Sometimes it is just full of - wait - and wait some more. We need to learn, like Abram, to "let go and let God" fulfill His plan for us.



**LET GO AND LET GOD - WHAT FAITH AND TRUST NEED ME TO FOLLOW:**

Lamentations 3:24-26: (NASB) <sup>24</sup>The LORD is my portion, says my soul, therefore I have hope in Him. <sup>25</sup>The LORD is good to those who wait for Him, to the person who seeks Him. <sup>26</sup>It is good that he waits silently for the salvation of the LORD.

Trust should bring expectation, not restlessness. There is an expectation and excitement that is not giddy, but anticipatory. That is what we are trying to develop. As we continue, we will focus in on the dual aspects of faith and trust as they apply to Abram and Sarai and to us.



My FAITH in God reminds me that I follow God who is all-powerful, merciful, loving and attentive. This is the MOST secure path I can possibly be on. I cannot have better leadership!



**My TRUST in God** develops when I accept that from God's perspective, time is a tool of extraordinary growth and not a tool of discouragement.



**TIME** is a tool of trust.

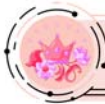
A level is a tool used in carpentry to make sure something is straight. The level must be calibrated accurately, or our work will be way off. We will never get a door to close right if the bubble on the level is not centered correctly. There will be gaps. It will never look or hang the way it should.

How important is it to use the right tool? The right tool produces the right result. If your only tool is a hammer, then every problem is a nail. This is not the way God works with us over time.

It is hard to tell exactly how many weeks, months or years passed between Genesis 15 and 16.

The frustration of being old, being promised to have a son and having ten years pass from that original promise with no results became overwhelming, especially to Sarai:

Genesis 16:1-3: (NLT) *<sup>1</sup>Now Sarai, Abram's wife, had not been able to bear children for him...*



The name Sarai means "princess."

Infertility was a big deal both then and now. Many of our listeners know this kind of heartache well and will be able to identify with the full range of emotions we will see

Sarai go through. Incidentally, Sarai (or Sarah as she will come to be known), is the most mentioned woman in the Bible.



*...But she had an Egyptian servant named Hagar. <sup>2</sup>So Sarai said to Abram, The LORD has prevented me from having children. Go and sleep with my servant. Perhaps I can have children through her.*

Sarai wants desperately to have a child and knows about the promise to Abraham. When she remains barren, she decides to take matters into her own hands and introduces Hagar as a solution. This opens a world of new problems.

*...And Abram agreed with Sarai's proposal. <sup>3</sup>So Sarai, Abram's wife, took Hagar the Egyptian servant and gave her to Abram as a wife. (This happened ten years after Abram had settled in the land of Canaan.)*

Sarai believes the promise of God but realizes that clearly, Abraham would not become a father in their present circumstances with her being of such advanced age. Something had to be done, and this most difficult action of sharing her beloved husband in this intimate way shows incredible humility and sacrifice - yes, she ran ahead of the LORD, but it seemed to make sense. She sacrificed to do her part. Can we at least give her credit for good intentions?





Yes, good intentions, but absolutely wrong actions. The model of marriage given to Abram and Sarai as an example was the model of Adam and Eve, and Noah and his wife. This was early on before the Law. This was before multiple wives were common. It was desperation that prompted them to step outside of that model. We will see that Sarai, who becomes Sarah, was incredibly faithful. It is hard to blame her; she was an old lady and she did not understand how having a baby could come to be with her as the mother.



**WHAT I FEEL NEEDS TO BE DONE:** There is a limit to waiting. At some point I need to step up and change the script so things can move forward. This change of script can include assuming solutions that I would not have previously considered. Time is precious. I need to fulfill that which I believe God has put forth before me.



One of the most difficult questions: "Do I wait one more minute or does God want me to take action now?"

- ➔ Should I go back to school to get a better job?
- ➔ Should I try online dating to find a Christian spouse?
- ➔ Should I find a new church?
- ➔ Should I move to a different location?

When do we wait it out to see what God has in mind, and when do we actually do something about it? Well, it depends on the circumstance. In some cases, we need to use our common sense, the spirit of a sound mind and pray and watch for His leadings. The key is to pray and watch for God's leadings. He guides those who are faithful to Him. Sometimes they are not recognizable right away; sometimes they take a lot of time. Time in the hands and providence of God is a precious tool. We need to let Him use the right tool.



Guidelines for making daily decisions in a godly way



### LET GO AND LET GOD - WHAT FAITH AND TRUST NEED ME TO FOLLOW:

**Psalms 27:12-14:** (NASB) <sup>12</sup>*Do not deliver me over to the desire of my adversaries, for false witnesses have risen against me, and such as breathe out violence.* <sup>13</sup>*I would have despaired unless I had believed that I would see the goodness of the LORD in the land of the living.* <sup>14</sup>*Wait for the LORD; be strong and let your heart take courage; yes, wait for the LORD.*

There are many scriptures that mention waiting because sometimes it is hard to do. It takes faith and trust to see His providence unfold before us.



My FAITH in God reminds me that my adversaries will always stand as a destructive detour to my loyalty to God. My faith also reminds me that I can be my own worst enemy, my own worst detour.



**My TRUST in God** develops when I remember that faith can only be proven by action and my actions are personal choices that bring glory to God or glorify self.



Think about it: faith and trust are key elements in any challenging experience. We might as well put our faith and trust in God!

**Abram and Sarai's path that seemed logical obviously ran ahead of God!**  
**What could possibly go wrong?**

It can be easy for us to look at their experience and shake our heads with that all-knowing nod that says, "What were they thinking?" We absolutely need to remember that the years of waiting and their obvious old age wreaked havoc on the principle of simply waiting. While self-directed choices made sense, they were not God's choices. They did show faith, but their trust was weaker. They needed a little more growth.



It helps me when I am going through an experience to look back and examine other experiences where God helped or protected me. We just went through hurricane Ian and had to prepare safety measures in advance. But watching and listening to the news beforehand can cause anxiety. We had to look back at past experiences how the LORD helped us in similar situations and have trust that He was with us. Trusting in Him strengthens my faith.

With all that had happened, Abram and Sarai took God's promise into their own hands by adding Hagar into the picture.

**As we would expect, whenever we run ahead of the LORD, the results are always laden with challenge and strife:**

*Genesis 16:4-6: (NLT) <sup>4</sup>So Abram had sexual relations with Hagar, and she became pregnant. But when Hagar knew she was pregnant, she began to treat her mistress, Sarai, with contempt. <sup>5</sup>Then Sarai said to Abram, this is all your fault! I put my servant into your arms, but now that she's pregnant she treats me with contempt. The LORD will show who's wrong—you or me!*

Sarai is asking Abraham, as head of the household, to fix this situation of Hagar gloating over her pregnancy.

*<sup>6</sup>Abram replied, look, she is your servant, so deal with her as you see fit. Then Sarai treated Hagar so harshly that she finally ran away.*

Ouch! No matter how we look at it, this is not good. We can see the strife that happens when we run ahead of the LORD. We get difficult results when we are a little bit desperate and think we know what God wants.



**WHAT I FEEL NEEDS TO BE DONE:** I make decisions that seem reasonable and then things go sour. Often my gut instinct is to look at the circumstances and point a finger of blame to anyone but me, so my gnawing guilt does not overwhelm me.



We definitely feel better when we convince ourselves it is someone else's fault. Abram, Sarai and Hagar all share in the blame of these circumstances.

One thing that seems to be missing from this account so far is Sarai and Abram asking for God's help in this. We do not see them taking the Hagar plan to God and asking if making an heir with an Egyptian maidservant was the way to go.

This is a fundamental lesson for us. Pause, consider and look UP! Often, this is why God has us wait so we can take the necessary time to do this.



God does not directly speak to us today, so we might look for some kind of indication for the right pathway; a door seems to suddenly open up or we get advice from trusted advisors like our brethren in Christ. We are trying to make the right decision. Bringing the options, as we see them, to Him in prayer should be our first step. Then, as we see things happen, prayer should be our continued step. Everything we do should be encompassed by prayerful consideration and prayerful listening. "Let go and let God" is what Sarai and Abram are teaching us.



The context for our next example is about the three Hebrews friends of Daniel. They were supposed to bow down to a golden idol or be thrown into a fiery furnace. They refused to bow down. Daniel was out of town at the time. They are now before King Nebuchadnezzar on trial for their very lives.



### LET GO AND LET GOD - WHAT FAITH AND TRUST NEED ME TO FOLLOW:

Daniel 3:16-18: (NASB) <sup>16</sup>Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego replied to the king, O Nebuchadnezzar, we do not need to give you an answer concerning this matter. <sup>17</sup>If it be so, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the furnace of blazing fire; and He will deliver us out of your hand, O king. <sup>18</sup>But even if He does not, let it be known to you, O king, that we are not going to serve your gods or worship the golden image that you have set up.

Their answer was that they were serving God and God only. Nebuchadnezzar could take their lives, but they would not change their worship. There is a sense of relief by putting things into God's hands. They had extraordinary faith. They said God could deliver them, and He did, but they did not know for sure that He would. What God would do did not matter in their decision; what they did mattered.



My FAITH in God reminds me that we are bound to follow the higher path of godly righteousness even though it may not look like the end result is happy or good. Faith encourages loyalty.

In all those thousands of decisions that we mentioned earlier, let us be prayerful and faithful as we consider these things.



**My TRUST in God** develops when I take personal responsibility for my chosen actions. This means I clearly define what my actions represent so I can clearly own them and their consequences.



**PERSONAL RESPONSIBILITY**  
is a tool of trust.

When Sarai said to Abram, *this is your fault...* frustration led to finger-pointing. Trust in God says I can take responsibility for what I have done because I can put it in God's hands. Responsibility is a tool of trust, and when we have trust we can be better about "letting go and letting God."

Patience is a big part of this also. Trust is hard to come by when we are impatient.

***When we stare anxiously at calendars and clocks rather than turn to God, we're looking in the wrong direction. — Liz Curtis Higgs***

Proverbs 3:5-7: (NIV) <sup>5</sup>*Trust in the LORD with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding. <sup>6</sup>In all your ways submit to Him, and He will make your paths straight. <sup>7</sup>Do not be wise in your own eyes...*

That is the key! When we look at this experience with Abram and Sarai, there was a misinterpretation of God's promise. Because so much time had gone by, they thought: "It must be God's will for us to supply a solution." God understands; He gets it." It is not that they were bad; they needed to learn.

**Abram and Sarai were special to God. He understood their inability to see beyond their own physical limitations and was merciful to Hagar:**

Genesis 16:7-10: (NLT) <sup>7</sup>*The angel of the LORD found Hagar beside a spring of water in the wilderness, along the road to Shur. <sup>8</sup>The angel said to her, Hagar, Sarai's servant, where have you come from, and where are you going? I'm running away from my mistress, Sarai, she replied. <sup>9</sup>The angel of the LORD said to her, return to your mistress, and submit to her authority. <sup>10</sup>Then he added, I will give you more descendants than you can count.*



The angel asks her two simple questions:

*Where have you come from, and where are you going?* She only answers the first one. Perhaps the answer to the second one was literally anywhere Sarai is not – even death in the desert was more desirable than living in THAT house.

Genesis 16:11: (NIV) *for the LORD has heard of your misery.*

Here the angel tells her that her son will be named Ishmael, meaning "God hears."





### Then something amazing happens:

Genesis 16:13: (NIV) *She gave this name to the LORD who spoke to her: You are the God who sees me.*

What a statement coming from an Egyptian girl out in the middle of nowhere! The water well where she stopped is named in Hebrew *Beer Lahai Roi* - literally, a "Well to the Living One Who Sees Me." There is faithfulness to God by Hagar and there is faithfulness to Hagar by God.

The expansiveness of God's mercy begins to be revealed here. Even though Hagar was not God's choice for the development of His chosen people, God made provisions for her future son to be a father of many himself.

Genesis 16:15-16: (NLT) <sup>15</sup>*So Hagar gave Abram a son, and Abram named him Ishmael.* <sup>16</sup>*Abram was eighty-six years old when Ishmael was born.*

Through the eyes of Abram and Sarai, Ishmael must have seemed like the promised seed at last! Abram was 86 years old. It has been a LONG time since that first promise. Now they have this son. We know that current-day Arabs and Bedouin tribes trace their heritage back to Ishmael. Hagar is said to be the ancestor of the prophet Mohammed. Ishmael is the "father" of many people throughout the world.

The Genesis account records nothing for another 13 years. MORE WAITING!?!?! Why? So they would learn to "let go and let God!" Abram and Sarai were left to deal with the results of their own thinking and actions. It is likely that during this time they became used to the idea that Ishmael would be a promised seed. It seems like it was pretty obvious by this time - and if God did not want it this way, would Ishmael not have been a daughter? Maybe God's plan is working out in this way.

This is about our own heart and emotions and potentially what Abram and Sarai were feeling as well.

**WHAT I FEEL NEEDS TO BE DONE:** When my decisions have led to hurting others and results that cause me to want to have my blame shared, I have not only stifled my faith in God, but I have also smothered my trust in Him under the heavy weight of self-preservation. The question left for me to answer is: Can I, through God's mercy, see what I have done or am I dedicated to this downward cycle?



### LET GO AND LET GOD - WHAT FAITH AND TRUST NEED ME TO FOLLOW:

Psalms 37:1-6: (NASB) <sup>1</sup>*Do not fret because of evildoers, be not envious toward wrongdoers.* <sup>2</sup>*For they will wither quickly like the grass and fade like the green herb.* <sup>3</sup>*Trust in the LORD and do good; dwell in the land and cultivate faithfulness.* <sup>4</sup>*Delight yourself in the LORD; and He will give you the desires of your heart.* <sup>5</sup>*Commit your way to the LORD, trust also in Him, and He will do it.* <sup>6</sup>*He will bring forth your righteousness as the light and your judgment as the noonday.*

There is so much in these scriptures: commitment, focus, clarity, trust and delight. We have to ask on what our faith is founded. What is our focus?





Check out our CQ Kids videos:

WHAT IS FAITH?

christianquestions.com/youtube



My Faith in God reminds me that all justice, all judgment and all vengeance belong out of my hands and in God's hands. I can rest assured that no matter the time needed, or the circumstances faced, God WILL ALWAYS see that things are made right.

My TRUST in God develops when I let go of my envy and anxiety so I can again do good, grow in faith and actually delight in my hardship. All of this helps me recommit to godliness.



**REPENTANCE AND REFOCUSING**  
are tools of trust.

The deeper we go into these experiences, the more profound the lessons are regarding giving God His sovereignty in my life.

Hagar is spared, and Ishmael is born.

Now what? Does God use what Abram and Sarai have done to bless all?

The overriding theme of this lesson is the test of time. We will see that many years will again go by, and to the human mind all seems to be settled. However, God's plans and purposes are always far above our own. This next passage of time is yet another lesson in faith and trust as Abram and Sarai are faced with accepting what seems obvious - Ishmael is the promised seed. But God always knows better.

When Ishmael was 13-years old, God again spoke with Abram about His original promise given 24 years previously:

Genesis 17:1-6: (NLT) <sup>1</sup>When Abram was ninety-nine years old, the LORD appeared to him and said, I am El-Shaddai—God Almighty. Serve me faithfully and live a blameless life. <sup>2</sup>I will make a covenant with you, by which I will guarantee to give you countless descendants. <sup>3</sup>At this, Abram fell face down on the ground. Then God said to him, <sup>4</sup>This is My covenant with you: I will make you the father of a multitude of nations! <sup>5</sup>What's more, I am changing your name. It will no longer be Abram. Instead, you will be called Abraham, for you will be the father of many nations. <sup>6</sup>I will make you extremely fruitful. Your descendants will become many nations, and kings will be among them!

Look at all God says 24 years later! Abram is humbled, and God is honored. Abram, the "father of many," is now Abraham, the "father of many nations." There is an expansion of Abraham's role and a clarity that did not exist in all this time. Starting in Genesis 17:10, God specifically introduces to him how he and his offspring will be set apart from other nations by circumcision. This was something new that differentiated Israel from other nations, showing they had His blessing.





**WHAT I FEEL NEEDS TO BE DONE:** Sometimes despite my own restless reactions, God's blessing resurfaces and is forced to the front of my mind. My gut reaction to this is to see it as a verification of all that I have been a part of as being blessed by God. I feel relief and assurance.



***All I have seen teaches me to trust the Creator for all I have not seen.***  
— *Ralph Waldo Emerson*

God came through, of course, but it took time. After 24 years, He has added so much more to this promise that Abraham and Sarah could not have foreseen or understood.



### **Let Go and Let God - What Faith and Trust Need Me to Follow:**

**1 Peter 5:6-9:** (NASB) *<sup>6</sup>Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you at the proper time, <sup>7</sup>casting all your anxiety on Him, because He cares for you. <sup>8</sup>Be of sober spirit, be on the alert. Your adversary, the devil, prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour. <sup>9</sup>But resist him, firm in your faith, knowing that the same experiences of suffering are being accomplished by your brethren who are in the world.*

*Humble yourselves...casting all your anxiety on Him* - Abram, now Abraham, had to learn humility over all these years.

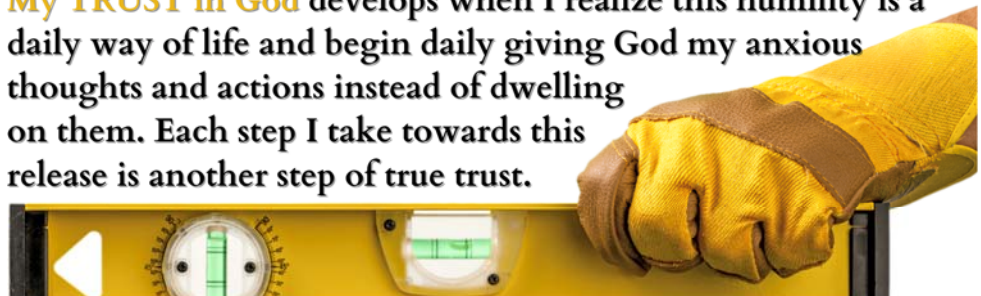
To stand in our faith, we need to resist temptation and put our anxiety away.



My Faith in God reminds me that without living a humility-based life, the blessings God would give me would be small, since I would have no room for them in my prideful heart.

If we are not humble, there is no room for big blessings - we are full of ourselves! When we are full, there is no room for something else. We have to humbly empty ourselves so that we have room for God's blessings. This kind of faith puts us in the position to develop trust.

**My TRUST in God** develops when I realize this humility is a daily way of life and begin daily giving God my anxious thoughts and actions instead of dwelling on them. Each step I take towards this release is another step of true trust.



**EMOTIONAL SURRENDER**  
**is a tool of trust.**

When we learn to put emotional surrender on top of a strong faith, we learn to trust in that faith.



## Next, God reintroduces His original promise of Abraham and Sarai having a son:

**Genesis 17:15-21:** (NLT) <sup>15</sup>Then God said to Abraham, Regarding Sarai, your wife—her name will no longer be Sarai. From now on her name will be Sarah.



Sarah now with an “h” at the end still means “princess” like Sarai with an “i” at the end, but this expands as well to mean “princess of the multitude” or “mother of nations.”

<sup>16</sup>And I will bless her and give you a son from her! Yes, I will bless her richly, and she will become the mother of many nations. Kings of nations will be among her descendants. <sup>17</sup>Then Abraham bowed down to the ground, but he laughed to himself in disbelief. How could I become a father at the age of 100? he thought. And how can Sarah have a baby when she is ninety years old? <sup>18</sup>So Abraham said to God, May Ishmael live under your special blessing!

*May Ishmael live under your special blessing* - It sounds like Abraham was worried about Ishmael and trying to express to God that it would be much easier to follow *Abraham's* plan of Ishmael having the blessing, rather than Sarah being pregnant in her old age. At the ages of 100 and 90, Abraham and Sarah were not “spring chickens”! But God said this would happen. Abraham was faithful but this was beyond his own understanding.

He graciously offers God what is logical from a human perspective - 13-year-old Ishmael is already here - yet God's plans are bigger:

<sup>19</sup>But God replied, No—Sarah, your wife, will give birth to a son for you. You will name him Isaac (the name Isaac means “laughter”), and I will confirm my covenant with him and his descendants as an everlasting covenant. <sup>20</sup>As for Ishmael, I will bless him also, just as you have asked. I will make him extremely fruitful and multiply his descendants. He will become the father of twelve princes, and I will make him a great nation.



Ishmael was still blessed under Abraham's household. He will have a blessing of his own, but not the blessing of being the “promised seed.”

<sup>21</sup>But my covenant will be confirmed with Isaac, who will be born to you and Sarah about this time next year.

This statement of the promise is undeniably specific, although physically impossible! How could this possibly be? But God has said it and Abraham is, as always, a man of faith.



**WHAT I FEEL NEEDS TO BE DONE:** (We can see this as being Abraham's perspective at this point.) After all of the time that has passed and all of the decisions I have made, I am now faced with God's clear providence. I can no longer hide behind my own thinking or continue to follow the conclusions of my rationalized actions. I now must follow in faith. I now must trust beyond myself.

Abraham's faith never wavered. He made a wrong decision but always had faith in God. God was certain of Abraham's faith but also knew Abraham had to grow up in that faith. This applies to all of us as well. This 25-year test helped him to grow into this man of incomparable faith. He is a great inspiration and example.





## Let Go and Let God - What Faith and Trust Need Me to Follow:

Isaiah 55:8-11: (NASB) <sup>8</sup>For My thoughts are not your thoughts, nor are your ways My ways, declares the LORD. <sup>9</sup>For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways and My thoughts than your thoughts. <sup>10</sup>For as the rain and the snow come down from heaven, and do not return there without watering the earth and making it bear and sprout, and furnishing seed to the sower and bread to the eater; <sup>11</sup>So will My word be which goes forth from My mouth; It will not return to Me empty, without accomplishing what I desire, and without succeeding in the matter for which I sent it.



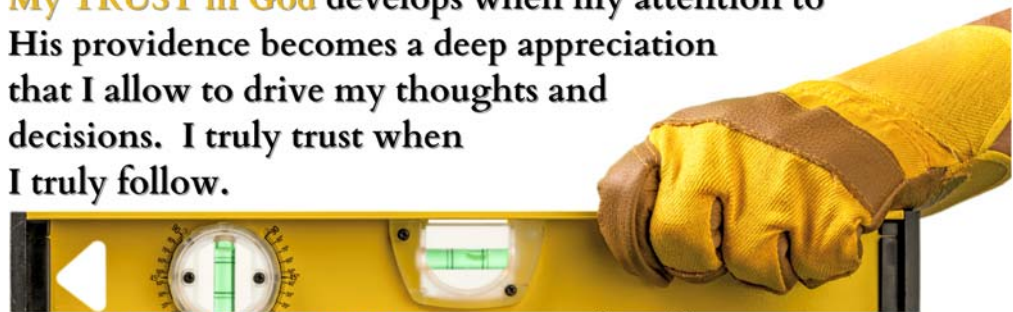
All of what God says here in Isaiah takes lots of time. For us to be able to accept that takes lots of faith.



My Faith in God reminds me that I see only what is around me, and He is all-knowing. I am weak and He is mighty. I am captivated by my emotionally-driven conclusions and He drives an eternal plan.

There is a great difference between God and us. Time is a great tool of His, and our faith needs to focus on managing that time in a godly way. Managing it through faith brings us to trust.

**My TRUST in God** develops when my attention to His providence becomes a deep appreciation that I allow to drive my thoughts and decisions. I truly trust when I truly follow.



**LOYALTY** is a tool of trust.

What God originally told Abram absolutely applied to Abraham later in his life. Time passing simply makes God's plans greater!

**Abraham has been specifically and unmistakably updated.  
What about Sarai? How will she respond?**

We can only imagine what Abraham told his wife after this powerful encounter with God. Rick imagines it went something like this: Abraham comes home after this talk with God, and she says, "How was your day, dear?" He responds, "God spoke to me! He changed my name to Abraham, your name to Sarah and instructed me to be circumcised. Oh, and by the way, you are going to have a baby! Happy 90th birthday!"

Technically, the Bible does not say Abraham told Sarah about how this baby would come about. Maybe he did not have time, or did not want to get her hopes up. Or, maybe there was so much trauma related to pregnancy in that household, he wanted to keep the information private between him and God.

In addition to the baby, God also instructed him about their name change and about circumcision. Genesis 17:23-27 makes it sound like Abraham, Ishmael and all the men of the household were circumcised right after that



conversation with God. It does not say that Sarah was told about any of this either, but it does seem plausible that they would have talked.

Massive changes were happening! Name changes, physical changes of circumcision and pregnancy - it all was changing because of God's plan.

Shortly after this amazing encounter where Abraham talked with God, three angels in the form of men came and visited Abraham.

### Why three angels?

Later in the narrative after their talk with Abraham and Sarah, two of the angels go to Sodom and Gomorrah as God's messengers. The third one stays with Abraham and talks with him. There are three messengers because there are different jobs that need to be done through these mouthpieces of God.

We are going to next drop in on the conversation with the angels where the narrative says, *And the LORD said...* Is the actual LORD God Jehovah and His own messenger disguised as a man? Or does it mean the LORD is speaking through one of these angelic messengers? It is going to sound like the LORD Himself is in the room.

Scriptural precedence shows God speaking either directly to a person such as the case of Adam, Moses and Abraham previous to this account, or He sends an angel as His messenger. The angel here is speaking to Abraham for God, like an ambassador. An ambassador speaks for the government he/she represents.

**Abraham and Sarah joyfully serve them the best of what they have to offer. In spite of their inconsistencies, their faith and reverence for God and His messengers was fully intact:**

Genesis 18:9-15: (NASB) <sup>9</sup>Then they said to him, Where is Sarah your wife? And he said, There, in the tent. <sup>10</sup>He said, I will surely return to you at this time next year; and behold, Sarah your wife will have a son. And Sarah was listening at the tent door, which was behind him. <sup>11</sup>Now Abraham and Sarah were old, advanced in age; Sarah was past childbearing. <sup>12</sup>Sarah laughed to herself, saying, After I have become old, shall I have pleasure, my lord being old also? <sup>13</sup>And the LORD said to Abraham, Why did Sarah laugh, saying, Shall I indeed bear a child, when I am so old? <sup>14</sup>Is anything too difficult for the LORD? At the appointed time I will return to you, at this time next year, and Sarah will have a son. <sup>15</sup>Sarah denied it however, saying, I did not laugh; for she was afraid. And He said, No, but you did laugh.

*Sarah was past childbearing.* After so many years of waiting for an unfulfilled promise, she dismissed the hard-to-believe idea of it happening now. We can imagine there were layers to her laughter - maybe some of it was a lack of faith or trust, some a kneejerk reaction to how pregnancy would look and feel at her age, and maybe some nervous excitement. It is also possible that she did not realize the "man" speaking to her was an angel and that the LORD was listening. She lied because she was caught off guard and afraid.

Abraham also *laughed to himself* in Genesis 17:17, but was not called out on it at that time. Some Bible commentaries (See Ellicott's Commentary for English Readers, Benson Commentary, Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible and others) say Abraham's laugh was one of joy and delight and Sarah's was one of distrust and unbelief.



We think Abraham's laugh had some of that doubt as well because God looks like He is correcting Him afterwards. But the point is that this was not natural. 24 years ago, when the promise was first given, Abraham was already old. Now he is practically decrepit, and yet God says it will be fulfilled. *Is anything too difficult for the LORD?* When God wants something to happen, He will make it come to pass.

**WHAT I FEEL NEEDS TO BE DONE:** Sometimes I reflect back on the time that has gone by with mixed emotions. When shown a blessing that I had long ago written off as beyond me, I laugh it off as a kind of dream. However, when God is ready to bless my feeble efforts, I need to step up and receive His gifts!



I am reminded of a personal experience. Many years ago, I changed careers because I was looking for a way to serve the LORD more fully. For the first many years it was the opposite - there was no extra time! I kept thinking I just had to work hard to survive. Then one day Jonathan calls me out of the blue and says, "You're not going to believe this. We have this opportunity to do a radio show. What do you think!?" All of a sudden, my frustration melted away. For me it was an answer to prayer. It did not come in the way, manner or time I thought it would. It came in His time. We need to adjust when we see His providence overwhelm us with blessing. We must learn to embrace it.

### Let Go and Let God - What Faith and Trust Need Me to Follow:

**Romans 8:35-39:** (NASB) <sup>35</sup>*Who will separate us from the love of Christ? Will tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?* <sup>36</sup>*Just as it is written, for your sake we are being put to death all day long; we were considered as sheep to be slaughtered.* <sup>37</sup>*But in all these things we overwhelmingly conquer through Him who loved us.* <sup>38</sup>*For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers,* <sup>39</sup>*nor height, nor depth, nor any other created thing, will be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.*

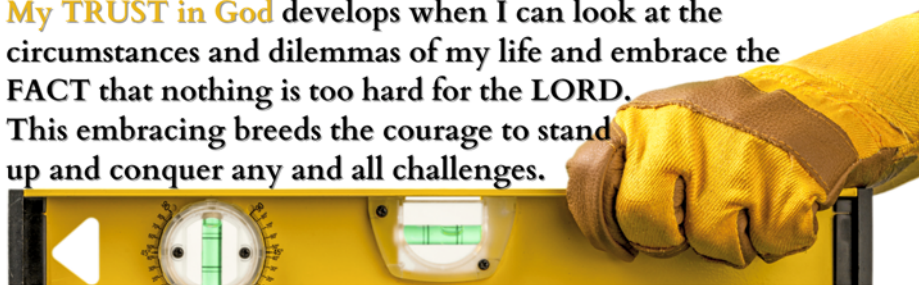


Foundational faith can help us see God's providences in a life given in sacrifice to serve Him. This allows our trust to grow.



My Faith in God reminds me that no matter how long or how hard I am pressed, challenged or in a state of not knowing, I am always protected and guided by God's mighty hand. This kind of faith brings us to trust.

**My TRUST in God** develops when I can look at the circumstances and dilemmas of my life and embrace the **FACT** that nothing is too hard for the LORD. This embracing breeds the courage to stand up and conquer any and all challenges.



**SPIRITUAL COURAGE**  
is a tool of trust.



Here is how this part of the story ends - God delivered on His promise to Abraham. God is dependable and trustworthy:

Genesis 21:1,2,6: (NASB) <sup>1</sup>Then the LORD took note of Sarah as He had said, and the LORD did for Sarah as He had promised. <sup>2</sup>So Sarah conceived and bore a son to Abraham in his old age, at the appointed time of which God had spoken to him. <sup>6</sup>Sarah said, God has made laughter for me; everyone who hears will laugh with me.

Her initial laughter which perhaps held a measure of distrust and disbelief turned to a laughter full of joy.



**SARAH IS THE ONLY WOMAN IN THE BIBLE  
WHOSE AGE AT DEATH IS RECORDED (GENESIS 23:1).  
SHE LIVED TO BE 127 YEARS OLD.**

She got to see Isaac grow up into a young man. What an incredible blessing for this faithful woman who learned from her difficult experiences.

How do we fully embrace the lessons of Abraham and Sarah so we can “let go and let God”?

Romans 4:16-22: (NASB) <sup>16</sup>For this reason it is by faith, in order that it may be in accordance with grace, so that the promise will be guaranteed to all the descendants, not only to those who are of the Law, but also to those who are of the faith of Abraham, who is the father of us all, <sup>17</sup>...in the presence of Him whom he believed, even God, Who gives life to the dead and calls into being that which does not exist.

Because Abraham believed God through his own doubts, he did everything that God asked, all the time:

<sup>18</sup>In hope against hope he believed, so that he might become a father of many nations according to that which had been spoken, so shall your descendants be. <sup>19</sup>Without becoming weak in faith he contemplated his own body, now as good as dead since he was about a hundred years old, and the deadness of Sarah's womb; <sup>20</sup>yet, with respect to the promise of God, he did not waver in unbelief but grew strong in faith, giving glory to God, <sup>21</sup>and being fully assured that what God had promised, He was able also to perform. <sup>22</sup>Therefore it was also credited to him as righteousness.

He grew strong in faith and it was also credited to him as righteousness - over time, he did the best he could. He learned what he needed to learn and did what God focused him on doing.

Sarah is honored as a hero of faith:

Hebrews 11:11: (NASB) By faith even Sarah herself received ability to conceive, even beyond the proper time of life, since she considered Him faithful who had promised.

**WHAT I FEEL NEEDS TO BE DONE:** It has now become simple. What I need to do is to continually reset my heart and mind on God, the giver of all good things. I need to remember where my ultimate strength, courage and patience come from!



If we are devoted to God and following in the footsteps of His son, Jesus, then we know nothing can happen to us - or not happen to us - that is not for our highest spiritual welfare. Maybe we are being prepared for something specific in the future of eternity. Perhaps there are lessons to learn, people we first have to meet, or a triumphant story of God's mercy and protection to later be told.





Sometimes the hardest experiences, even if we do not understand them, teach us the greatest lessons when we look back and appreciate their value. To “let go and let God” means letting go of the anxieties of not living up to what we could have done better for the LORD. This is too heavy a weight. Hand it over to God and start new every morning to do the best you can in doing His will. Pray, read His word and watch. You will be blessed. There is great comfort in this. The Scriptures tell us this over and over. Abraham and Sarah’s experiences tell us this, too. Wait on the Lord, be godly in your thinking, pray.



### Let Go and Let God - What Faith and Trust Need Me to Follow:

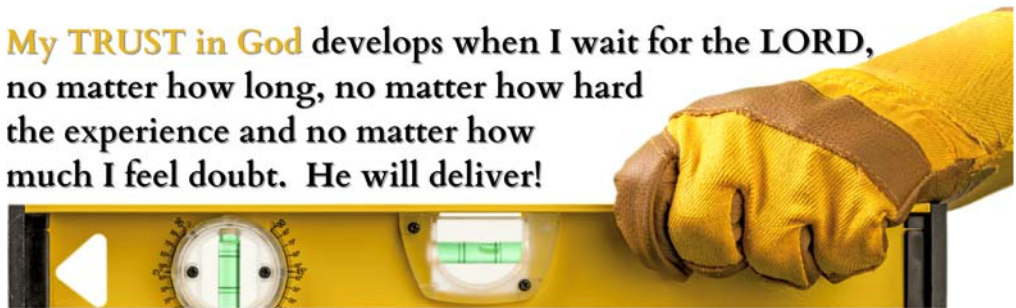
**Isaiah 40:28-31: (NASB)** <sup>28</sup>*Do you not know? Have you not heard? The Everlasting God, the LORD, the Creator of the ends of the earth does not become weary or tired. His understanding is inscrutable. <sup>29</sup>He gives strength to the weary, and to him who lacks might He increases power. <sup>30</sup>Though youths grow weary and tired, and vigorous young men stumble badly, <sup>31</sup>Yet 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.*

Who do these words apply to? Those who wait on the Lord. Those whose faith is strong enough to experience time in a way that helps them to grow.



My FAITH in God reminds me that His unfathomable power, His precise plan and His never-ending love are what I am called to serve. Faith in God provokes godly service.

My TRUST in God develops when I wait for the LORD, no matter how long, no matter how hard the experience and no matter how much I feel doubt. He will deliver!



## FAITH IN GOD IS THE FOUNDATION FOR TRUST IN GOD.

We need both faith in God and trust in God. We cannot live our life saying we have faith and not also live a life of trust. Learn from Abraham and Sarah that time is a tool in God’s hands. It is not something that should make us restless, but is something to rejoice in because it is in His hands, not ours.

Let go and let God!

*So, how do I let go and let God?  
For Jonathan, Rick, Julie and Christian Questions...  
Think about it...!*

All quoted scriptures are from the 1995 version of NASB unless otherwise indicated.



Join us next week for our podcast on November 7, 2022

Ep. 1254: Do I Walk in the Spirit or the Lusts of  
My Human Nature? (Part I)

### Christian Questions Weekly Newsletter

CQ Rewind Show Notes and  
Study Questions

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# Study QUESTIONS

## Ep. 125: How Do I Let Go and Let God?

<https://christianquestions.com/character/1253-let-go-and-let-god/>

See:  **CQ Rewind**  
SHOW NOTES

1. What is faith? Did anything surprise you in this definition? How is it related to trust? How does Lamentations 3:22-23 help with our difficult experiences?
2. What is promised to Abram in Genesis 12:7? Be exact. How old were Abram and Sarai at this time? After several more years of waiting, who did Abram suggest his heir be? What was God's reply?
3. Describe the lesson we should gain from Abram and Sarai's frustration. How did God expand the promise from Genesis 12 in Genesis 15:5? (See Genesis 15:1-5, Lamentations 3:24-26) How does our "Faith in God" point for this section support the "My Trust in God" point? (See CQ Rewind Show Notes)
4. Why did Sarai think she needed to come up with the solution in Genesis 16:1-3? Do you think she did this easily? If you had been Abram or Sarai, what might you would have done after many years of waiting for this promise? (See Psalms 27:12-14) How does the next "Faith in God" point support the "My Trust in God" point?
5. What was the result of Abram and Sarai's attempt to have an heir by Hagar? What did Abram and Sarai neglect to do? What lesson should we take away from this experience for ourselves? (See Genesis 16:4-6)
6. How did Daniel's three friends illustrate extraordinary faith? (See Daniel 3:16-18) How does this "Faith in God" point support this "My Trust in God" point? How did Sarai and Abram miss this point? Were they bad people? What happened to Hagar in the desert? Why did she return to the household of Abram and Sarai? (See Genesis 16:7-16)
7. How did God expand the promise of Genesis 12 and 15 even further in Genesis 17:1-6? What was necessary for Abraham - and necessary for us - in the "My Faith in God" point? What does this allow us to do in the "My Trust in God" point on page 11 in the CQ Rewind Show Notes?
8. When God again talked about a son for Abraham, what did Abraham suggest? Did God agree? How old were Abraham and Sarah at this time? What was constant about Abraham throughout this experience? What did the 25 years of waiting do for his character? (See Genesis 17:15-21)
9. What did the three angels tell Abraham and Sarah? What was their initial reaction? What was Sarah honored for in Hebrews 11:11? What aspect of Abraham and Sarah's faith in God will help you develop spiritual courage in your life? (See Genesis 18:9-15, 21:1,2,6, Romans 4:16-22)
10. When have you had to wait for an answer to prayer from God? How does your faith in God's power, His plan and His never-ending love develop your trust that He will deliver? What lessons will you apply in your life from the experiences of Abraham and Sarah?