

How's Your Faith? Faith's Reassurance

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Genesis 15

INTRO How's your faith? You may answer . . . "it needs some significant reassurance today." Your faith, if it is the real deal, by its very nature requires constant reassuring. Your confidence and active trust in God is dependent on continual support, comfort, encouragement, teaching, consoling and reminders from God and his words.

You may have heard about the exchange between husband and wife . . . the wife says 'you never tell me that you love me.' The husband replies . . . 'I told you when we got married that I did and I will let you know if I change my mind.' What is it about a vibrant marriage that makes it necessary to regularly and often reassure your spouse that you love them? Parents and children need constant reassurance that they are in fact remembered, thought of and loved. It can be a sign of weakness if it is exaggerated by self centeredness but is typically seen as evidence of a healthy and loving relationship. Reassurance is necessary and valid due to our human weaknesses, the struggles we face, and the distractions that come our way.

Your faith needs constant reassuring. Just as a child or spouse needs constant reminders and assurances of love and support, so your faith will become weak, self focused and anxious without daily doses of reassurance from God. The early stories recording Abram's faith reveal that he was regularly reassured by God and his words.

Read Genesis 15

Encounter with God #1	15:1-6
God speaks his promises	1
Abram questions/complains	2-3
God reassures with symbolic act	4-6

Encounter with God #2	15:7-21
God speaks his promises	7
Abram questions/complains	8
God reassures with symbolic act	9-21

3 reasons why your faith needs constant reassurance:

1. Faith thrives in conflicting tensions. 15:1
'after this' – context of battles of 14 'don't be afraid' – enemies from 14
2. Faith asks serious questions. 15:2, 8
'what can you give me since . . . ' 'how can I know . . . '
3. Faith faces difficult delays. 15:4, 13-14
son – 25 years land – over 400 years

2 ways your faith is reassured by God:

How did God answer/respond to Abram's questions/complaints . . .

1. Direct connection with God's words. 15:1, 4, 7, 9, 13

Your reward will be great	1
A son coming from your own body will be . . .	4
I brought you out to give you this land . . .	7

2. Regular attention to God's truth in signs and symbols. 15:5, 9-10

Look up at the heavens . . .	5
Arrange the animals . . .	9-11
Smoking firepot/blazing torch	17

- There is no new truth in signs or symbols
- Signs/symbols explain/represent truth . . . God's presence for example
- Signs/symbols encourage faith

2 ceremonies that connect truth and symbol to reassure your faith:

1. Baptism Matthew 28:18-20; Romans 6:3-4; Col. 2:12

- An act of obedience done once by every believer
- Sign/symbol of beginning of Christian life
- Expresses truths of . . .
 - Death to old life
 - Beginning of new life in power
 - Cleansed of all sin

2. Lord's Table Matt.26:26-29; 1Cor.11:17-34

- An act of obedience done repeatedly by every believer
- Sign/symbol of continuing fellowship with Christ
- Expressed truths of . . .
 - Christ's death and participation in it's benefits
 - Christ's presence
 - Christ's coming

Bring your faith questions and complaints . . .

1. Thank God for these visual reminders of his loving promises at work in Christ.
2. Examine your heart and life regarding your baptism and participation at the Lord's Table.
3. Submit your questions/complaints in active trust of God's promises fulfilled in Christ.