

God Expects Us to Live by Faith
International Bible Lesson
Genesis 21:13-14, 17-21; 26:2-5, 12-13
Sunday, October 20, 2013
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“Because that Abraham obeyed my voice, and kept my charge, my commandments, my statutes, and my laws” (Genesis 26:5—KJV).

“Because Abraham obeyed my voice and kept my charge, my commandments, my statutes, and my laws” (Genesis 26:5—NRSV).

Throughout the Bible, Abraham serves as a supreme example of what it means for people to live by faith. To begin the journey of living by faith, we must believe that God exists, but living by faith involves much more. To live by faith, we must believe in the power of God and that God can do whatever He wants. But more than this, we must believe in the moral character of God. The Bible says that God is holy; so we know that God always acts in love and always does what is just and merciful. To live by faith, we must believe that God will only require of anyone what is right and best for everyone in the Kingdom of God and all creation. To live by faith means trusting that God will never ask anyone to do anything contrary to His commandments, statutes, and laws.

Abraham lived by faith because he believed and acted on these and similar truths. He believed every promise God gave him, knowing that God would always tell him to do what would bless others and his family for generations. Abraham lived by faith because he believed God and did whatever God told him to do, even though he did not always understand all of God’s reasons for asking him to do something. Whenever God tested Abraham, Abraham passed the test because he obeyed God immediately and trusted that God would never do or ever ask him to do anything contrary to His loving moral character. The Bible reveals that Abraham did not live perfectly, but God counted Abraham righteous because he lived by faith in Him.

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Thinking Further

1. In what way or ways did God keep His promise to Abraham and Sarah?
2. In what way or ways did God keep His promise to Abraham and Hagar?
3. Do you think Abraham taught Hagar and Ishmael about the true God? Give a reason for your answer.
4. What reason does God give Isaac for blessing him and his descendants (see Genesis 26:5)? What might this reason mean to Isaac as a father of Esau and Jacob? What might this reason mean to all parents everywhere?
5. As an alien in the land, in what way or ways might Isaac have demonstrated and taught about the nature of the true God to others?