

Are You “Word” Focused or “Problem” Focused?

Part 4

Therefore it is of faith, that it might be by grace; to the end the promise might be sure to all the seed; not to that only which is of the law, but to that also which is of the faith of Abraham; who is the father of us all, (As it is written, I have made thee a father of many nations,) before him whom he believed, even God, who quickeneth the dead, and calleth those things which be not as though they were. (Rom. 4:16-17).

1. Abraham was faced with a problem. He needed an heir to his fortune. However, both he and his wife, Sarah, were old and beyond child production years. Yet, God had promised this child:
 - a. Thankfully, Abraham was Word-Focused and not Problem-Focused:
 - b. *Who against hope believed in hope, that he might become the father of many nations, according to that which was spoken, So shall thy seed be. And being not weak in faith, he considered not his own body now dead, when he was about an hundred years old, neither yet the deadness of Sarah's womb: He staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief; but was strong in faith, giving glory to God; And being fully persuaded that, what he had promised, he was able also to perform. (Rom. 4:18-21)*
 - c. Because Abraham chose to focus on the Word rather than the problem, God kept His Word and solved Abraham’s problem in a supernatural way by giving him and Sarah a child in their old age.
 - d. *That ye be not slothful, but followers of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises. For when God made promise to Abraham, because he could swear by no greater, he swore by himself, Saying, Surely blessing I will bless thee, and multiplying I will multiply thee. And so, after he had patiently endured, he obtained the promise. (Heb. 6:12-15)*
 - e. “Endure” in this passage is the Greek word *makrothumeo* which means “to persevere patiently and bravely in enduring misfortunes and troubles” (studylight.org).
 - f. The word “patience” in verse 12 comes from the Greek word *makrothumia*. This is basically the noun form which means “patience, endurance, constancy, steadfastness, perseverance” (studylight.org)
 - g. We are commanded to inherit God’s promises despite the problems and issues in life that make it appear as if God’s promises won’t come to pass. Abraham is our example.
2. Sadly, in spite of all of the great Bible teaching in our generation, most experiences are not like Abraham’s but closer to his descendants:

- a. Num. 13:1-3
- b. This passage is only one of several in which the Lord promised to bring the whole nation of Israel into the land flowing with milk and honey (Ex. 3:8, 17; 13:5; Lev. 20:24; 23:10; 25:2; Num. 13:2). He stated that the land was theirs.
- c. Why would God need to send spies to check out a land that He had already given? Looking further into Scripture we find that this was not God's idea. He condescended to the unbelief of the Israelites - .
- d. *And I said unto you, Ye are come unto the mountain of the Amorites, which the Lord our God doth give unto us. Behold, the Lord thy God hath set the land before thee: go up and possess it, as the Lord God of thy fathers hath said unto thee; fear not, neither be discouraged. And ye came near unto me every one of you, and said, We will send men before us, and they shall search us out the land, and bring us word again by what way we must go up, and into what cities we shall come. (Deut. 1:20-22)*
- e. In Num. 13 it says that the Lord sent the spies but then in Deuteronomy we see that it was the Israelites and not God who sent them. Always remember that in the Hebrew way of speaking, God is often said to do the thing that He actually allows or permits to be done by others.
- f. Num. 13:25-33
- g. Notice the statement: "...we saw" that was used a couple of times. Most of the Israelites were problem-focused instead of Word focused. Only Joshua and Caleb remained Word-focused.
- h. Sadly, the wrong focused cost them another forty years in the wilderness (Num. 14:28-36).
- i. Psalm 106:24-25; Heb. 3:17-19; 4:1-3 – They refused to believe God's Word because they had more faith in the visible problem than in the integrity of God.

Conclusion to part 4: The Bible does not only provide principles for living by faith, but provides excellent examples that we can draw and learn from. From these examples we can learn that a word-focus works, that a problem-focus does not work. Let us learn to be more word-focused and not problem focused.