

## Consider Him Faithful by Rita Langeland

Have you ever tried to find a plumber, electrician or other type of workman and then received a recommendation with the words, "You can count on him. If he says he can do it, he will get the job done." Such a testimonial would give you confidence. Perhaps when other names were mentioned, you heard the opposite report. "That person is so unreliable! You cannot count on him showing up when he says he will be there, and then on top of that - his workmanship is shoddy!" Your expectations of any project which involved the aforementioned workmen, would certainly be influenced by the reports which you heard about each of them.

Reliability and faithfulness are so highly valued yet seem to be a rare commodity in our current generation. But there is one who is utterly faithful, perfectly reliable and always right on time – and that is God Himself. So why do so many people doubt God's faithfulness? Many times, it is simply because they have listened to and been influenced by the reports of others who accused God of being unfaithful. Yet there is a more trustworthy source of information that testifies of God's faithfulness and it is God's Word - the Bible.

One of the great attributes of the Bible is its unvarnished honesty. It shares both the victories and the failings of the human beings who were a part of the Biblical drama showcasing God's earliest interactions with mankind. In the book of Genesis, we find two imperfect people - Abraham and Sarah - who (eventually) learned that they could fully trust God's faithfulness. I love their story because it shows us both the human struggle to believe and then the victory that comes when a person **chooses to believe** God's promises in the face of natural circumstances which oppose them.

Abraham was more than 80 years old when God first promised him that he would have a son who would produce a lineage that would outnumber the sands on the seashore. Abraham had learned to hear God's voice and trust in His leading over the years. But this news was hard for him to believe because his wife had never been able to bear children.

Abraham shared this revelation with his wife and she suggested a surrogate wife be utilized in order to bring God's promise to pass. Here is where the "human failings" are revealed in the Biblical narrative. God did not need Sarah's help to fulfill His promise. In fact, every effort by humans to do so has always resulted in disaster, and this time was no different. Abraham went along with her idea and the result was a son named Ishmael. His birth brought strife between Sarah and the surrogate wife, Hagar, and Ishmael's descendants have continued to have strife with Isaac's descendants for centuries. All of this occurred because of the human failing of Abraham and Sarah. They did not take God at His Word – and tried to make His promise happen in their own strength. But Ishmael was not the "promised son" that God had intended.

A few years later, God visited Abraham and again spoke of the promised son who would be born from Sarah. Sarah was in the tent when she overheard the visitor's words, "...**Sarah shall have a son.**" Sarah laughed out loud! Her laughter was understandable because at that point she was almost 90 years old.

***And the Lord said to Abraham, "Why did Sarah laugh, saying, 'Shall I surely bear a child, since I am old?' Is anything too hard for the Lord? At the appointed time I will return to you, according to the time of life, and Sarah shall have a son." But Sarah denied it, saying, "I did not laugh," for she was afraid. And He said, "No, but you did laugh!"*** Genesis 18:13-15 NKJV

We can see that God has a sense of humor – since he teased Sarah about laughing and then instructed them to name the promised child - Isaac - which means “laughter.” Amusing as that observation may be, there is one far more important truth to grasp in this story. Even though Abraham and Sarah failed their first “faith test” by not believing God’s promise and by trying to make it come to pass in their own strength, God gave them a second chance. This is an encouragement to all of us who have failed our own faith tests in the past – God will let us take a “re-test!”

We know that somehow Sarah crossed over from unbelief to faith – from literally laughing in disbelief to fully believing God’s Word of promise that she would bear a child in her old age. But what was the secret to her faith victory? It is found in the following scripture -

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

How did Sarah come to a place of faith so that she believed God more than she believed her natural circumstances? How did she become so confident in God’s promise that she was able to ignore what she could see and feel in her own body? The secret is found in these four simple words:

***...she considered Him faithful...***

In the opening paragraph of this article I mentioned the influence of a testimonial about a plumber or an electrician. If you heard they were excellent in their work and highly reliable, you would welcome them into your home with the high expectation of them being faithful. You would “consider them faithful” before they even started the work. How much more should we consider God to be faithful when we have a more trustworthy “testimonial” in God’s Word? Read and meditate on the following three different versions of Hebrews 11:11 – and let the truth of it sink into your soul and spirit.

***...she considered [God] Who had given her the promise to be reliable and trustworthy and true to His word.*** (Amplified Classic)

***...she believed that the one who had given the promise was utterly trustworthy.*** (J.B. Phillips New Testament)

***...for the authority of her faith rested in the One who made the promise, and she tapped into his faithfulness.*** (The Passion Translation)

God is asking you the same question he asked Sarah in Genesis 18:14 - ***“Is anything too hard for the Lord?”*** He wants to prove to you and to the world that He is the God for whom nothing is impossible. But He wants you to believe that He is utterly trustworthy, perfectly reliable, true to His word and you can count on Him. When you are in an impossible situation you need to do what Sarah had to do before she received her miracle.

***CONSIDER HIM FAITHFUL!***