
A Walk of Faith

A journaling study on the life of Abraham
by Kay Daigle

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The Problem of Faith

Perhaps you, like me, often feel that your faith is small and weak. One of my ongoing prayers has been that God would increase my faith, and yet I still have doubts and fears that are quite its opposite.

Yet God often uses people whose faith isn't strong or consistent. I think of Gideon, chosen by God to judge his people and lead them against their enemies. Or Moses who wanted God to send someone else to Pharaoh. The prophet Habakkuk questioned God, wondering what in the world he was thinking. David's psalms often describe his doubts about God's care.

A bit different example is Peter. You may remember that he was so sure of his faith that he told Jesus that he would never desert him only a few hours before denying him three times. His story is a warning not to overstate the depth of one's faith based on feelings. Faith isn't faith until it is tested.

As we learn about the walk of faith, Abraham's story will guide us as God's Spirit speaks through the life of the great patriarch of Israel.

My prayer is that God will use this study to grow us all in faith throughout the journey of life. Even though we can expect to continue to have ups and downs in how well we trust God, may he bring the downs to a closer level with the ups!

Each lesson is accompanied by a free short video story of a women's journey walking by faith. Before you begin your study, you may want to watch the introduction at <https://vimeo.com/album/4254816/video/191561167> where I share my own story of struggling to walk by faith when I was slandered.

Kay Daigle

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What to know about this study guide

Simple doesn't equate to shallow

This study demands your involvement. Although the layout is simple, how deep you go depends on you. As you spend time talking to God and journaling your thoughts, he may lead you to other cross-references, but he will certainly give you insights into the stories. Don't stop with initial surface answers, but ask God to clarify the story and speak to you from it. The time you spend in the story with God gives him space to speak. Listen well, journal your thoughts, share them with your small group, and glean from others' insights.

Each week has 3 parts

If you like doing a little study at a time, the study is set up in three parts, but feel free to do it any way that works best for you. If you prefer daily time in the Word, consider using one part for 2 days by doing the optional starred section on the second day and journaling again, or reread sections several days in a row. You may be amazed at what you see in multiple times through the story. If you prefer to do the week's study in one sitting, you may want to read all the passages first and then journal at the end. Of course, it's great to be in God's Word each day, but you may have other ways of doing that. See what works for your schedule and stick to it.



A star symbolizes optional verses for those with extra time and interest. The additional reading may help you wrestle with the deeper meaning of Abraham's story and the nature of God.

What you need

- A quiet place, if possible!
- A Bible that you can understand. If you don't have one, ask your group leader for suggestions or email us at info@beyondordinarywomen.org. Modern versions are available as downloads, through Bible apps, or in print at any bookstore. (We are using netbible.org.)
- A notebook, laptop, or tablet to use as a journal which can be taken to your group meetings. If you prefer paper attached to the lesson, add a blank piece of paper or notebook paper after each lesson. (See Journaling 101 in the Appendix.)
- The commitment to listen to God and write out what you hear after reading and rereading

- Someone, or even better a group of women, to discuss this with you and provide support, encouragement, and spiritual challenge
- [This link](#) to the short 5-8 minute videos of today's women who tell their stories of learning to trust God as they come to know him more and more: Watch the [introductory video](#) now, and then view the video with the same number as the week's lesson during that week.

Best practices for your group get-togethers (See Appendix & Videos)

Plan a regular place, time, and leader.

The leader should:

- start on time, not waiting for late arrivals
- move the group along, being sensitive to God's Spirit
- encourage everyone to share without forcing it
- be a great encourager
- avoid dominating the conversation
- keep the focus on the women, not herself and her own stories
- provide time for the group to think and share from their journals
- contact absent group members to encourage them
- email the group weekly to remind them of their meeting and to share her excitement

As a group

- come prepared and on time with your study, journal, and Bible
- share freely and honestly
- encourage one another
- don't interrupt the speaker
- love one another
- don't try to fix the other members of your group or their problems by giving advice
- pray for one another and entrust each other and your problems to God
- be honest and vulnerable, but wise in how much detail you share
- stay in touch with each other between meetings for support and encouragement

If your group meets within a larger group in a church setting

- Look for a woman who is gifted in teaching God's Word to teach a short time after the small group discussion. (For help in preparing to teach, contact info@beyondordinarywomen.org.)
- Because the discussion isn't about the teacher's comments but focuses on the members' personal study, the discussion should precede the teaching time.
- The teacher may spend 15- 20 minutes adding to the background of the lesson, beginning and ending within the allotted time limit. The majority of the time should be in small groups.
- The teacher's role is to clarify and extend what the group has studied, not to retell the stories they have discussed.
- Each week the leader should send the link to our 5-8 minute video highlighting a woman's story. The women then watch them individually online. The collection is found at <https://vimeo.com/album/4254816>, and individual links accompany each week's study.

Week One: The Seeds of Faith

Now faith is being sure of what we hope for, being convinced of what we do not see. For by it the people of old received God's commendation.

Hebrews 11:1-2

Science has influenced our world to believe that only what can be proven is true; yet, there is no way to prove history scientifically. We depend entirely on other kinds of evidence: eyewitness accounts, manuscripts, letters, film, art, and archaeological relics. We cannot prove Julius Caesar and his actions scientifically any more than we can prove biblical history because we cannot recreate history in a lab. Historical proof relies on written accounts of that era. The Bible is the written account of God's work, revealing him to us today.

Faith is not blind; there is evidence. But even with evidence, faith is more than mental recognition of the evidence; true faith impacts our lives because we act on what we believe. Just as we trust a jet engine only when we actually fly in a plane, we trust God in the here and now as we rely on him day to day and for eternity.

As a young girl, I once enjoyed a summer vacation to Colorado with my aunt and uncle. At the hotel pool my uncle tried to encourage (maybe force is more accurate) me to float on my back. Instead, I kept trying to sit up, scared that he would not support me. Floating was beyond my limited swimming experience, requiring me to trust someone else's support. If I had been with my father, I would have believed that he would never let go. But my uncle? I wasn't so sure because I didn't know him well enough to trust him.

This study focuses on Abraham's story of faith. Instead of picturing Abraham and what sometimes seems like his crazy amount of trust in God, let's consider what it was that Abraham believed about God that led him to respond as he did.

What is our God like? Why can we trust him enough to walk with him in faith as Abraham did?

Before you begin reading Abraham's story, read these verses:

- "By smooth words he will turn to godlessness those who act wickedly toward the covenant, **but the people who know their God will display strength and take action,**" (Daniel 11:32, NASB).
- "The Lord says,
'Wise people should not boast that they are wise.
Powerful people should not boast that they are powerful.
Rich people should not boast that they are rich.
If people want to boast, they should boast about this:
**They should boast that they understand and know me.
They should boast that they know and understand
that I, the Lord, act out of faithfulness, fairness, and justice in the earth
and that I desire people to do these things,**'
says the Lord," (Jeremiah 9:23-24).
- "For I delight in loyalty rather than sacrifice, And **in the knowledge of God** rather than burnt offerings," (Hosea 6:6 NASB).
- "My sheep listen to my voice, and **I know them**, and they follow me," (Jesus in John 10:27).
- "Now **this is eternal life – that they know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ**, whom you sent," (Jesus in prayer to the Father in John 17:3).

Since acting in faith rests on knowing God, ask God to use this study to build in you a firm foundation of knowing him as he truly is.

Part One

As is true of most stories, it's best to begin at the beginning, and so we do with Abraham's. Initially his name was Abram. Keep in mind that we are reading his story to understand his faith—what he understood about God that enabled him to trust God as he did.

Read the Bible's introduction to Abram in Genesis 11:27-12:9. Then read these verses that provide more detail about the story: Joshua 24:2-3; Acts 7:2-4; Hebrews 11:8-10.



Read all of Hebrews 11:1-10, 13-16, focusing on the nature of faith.

Respond to the story by journaling:

- How would you define faith? Consider the definition of faith in Hebrews 11:1-2, written out at the top of this week's study. In what ways does it describe your faith or lack thereof, and what does God's response to a person's faith reveal about him?
- By comparing all the verses you read, how would you describe Abram's early faith or its lack?
- How do you personally identify with faith that is limited?

Part Two

I am frankly amazed that Abram would leave behind all of his security to follow God, not only to a new home but a place he had never seen, and travel there when there were no planes, trains, or automobiles. We want to think through what he must have believed about God to actually follow through with this plan.

Reread the promises that God made Abram in Genesis 12:1-3.



Read a piece of Moses's story in Exodus 3:7-12 & Paul's in Acts 26:9-18, considering what God asked of them and what his call required them to believe about him.

Respond to the story by journaling:

- What kinds of things would Abraham have to believe about God—his character and abilities—to trust these promises and obey him? (The Appendix section **Who is this God?** lists some of the characteristics of God—what God is like—compiled from biblical teaching. When you find yourself stumped about what the Abram believed about God, turn to it to spur your thinking.)
- Consider a difficult situation in your life right now. What kinds of things do you need to believe about God to entrust that situation to him?

- What is God saying to you through this story?

Part Three

Once Abram was in the land where God sent him, he found that it wasn't Eden. He had to deal with challenges of caring for his wife, animals, and servants in the desert.

I find that I often do better with my faith in the big hard places than in the everyday. Perhaps I am more aware of my need to depend on God when what faces me is huge than when it seems small or everyday.

Read Genesis 12:10-20.



Read about Elijah and the widow of Zarephath in 1 Kings 17:1-16, considering how their faith contrasts with Abram's in the story.

Respond to the story by journaling:

- What do Abram's reactions to his circumstances reveal about his faith?
- How aspects of God's character does he reveal through his responses to Abram's actions in this story?
- We all have areas of weakness in our faith, so it is important to honestly know ourselves if we are to grow and learn. In what kinds of situations do you, like Abram, seek your own solutions, act in fear, or manipulate circumstances rather than trust God?
- What do you need to believe about God's character and abilities in order to trust him in those situations?

Watch Katie's story of leaving behind a job she loved to walk with God at <https://vimeo.com/195035531>.