

TODAY!

What Would Jesus Be Doing If He Were You?

“May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in Him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit” (Romans 15:13).

Insight 1. Our Father Abraham, the Model of Your Obedient Trust

Introduction To This Series Of Insights

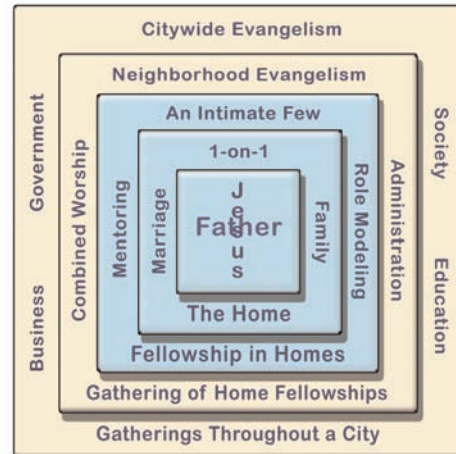
We realize that on the surface the title of this series of Insights, “What Would Jesus Be Doing *If He Were You?*” sounds like we’ll be giving you a list of activities you can do to be more like Jesus. And if that was all that was needed, we’d do it! But this series goes much deeper than that. We hope that you’ll establish the *Headship of Lord Jesus* in your daily life, pleasing Him in every way.

Parts 1 and 2 of these Insights reveal the biblical standard of **trusting obedience** in Jesus, which is modeled in the Hebrew Scriptures by the patriarch Abraham. In Parts 3 and 4 we’ll show you how the *Headship* of our Lord in His followers began to be eroded as early as the second century.

Certain men who later came to be revered as “Church Fathers” adopted the organizational structure of Rome and the philosophical reasoning of Greece. The result of their dominant influence is that an ***ecclesiastical hierarchy*** assumed central authority in Christendom, while the individual and communal *Lordship of Jesus* all but ceased. Sadly, little of *His Headship* in His people’s lives has been regained throughout Christianity today.

The foundation of these Insights is the restoration of the centrality of Jesus as the ONLY Head of those He has called out of the world system to serve Him in His Kingdom.

Our heavenly Father and Lord Jesus are *at the center* of the relational priorities by which the first followers of Christ lived in the Spirit. How do you RELATE



to a Father Who is God, the Creator of all that is? We’re talking about a *relationship* between you and your unseen yet very real Father through Jesus! Abraham had this relationship with God even to the extent of being called *His friend*—a relationship which was personal and proven by Abraham’s tenacious and unwavering trust-based actions.

Why Is Abraham Called Our *Father*?

Using Abraham as our model, let’s look at *your* relationship with our Father from His viewpoint. Father desires an intimacy with you that far surpasses just believing that He exists. Our Father and His Son want your *emunah*, your *trust-filled obedience* that Abraham lived by!



***Emunah* is a Hebrew word that’s charged with emotion reflecting your heartfelt confidence and unwavering trust in your Father. You relate to Him as His loving and grateful child, always yielded to the indwelling Spirit and actively seeking to do His will.**



As you read about Abraham in the book of Genesis you can't help but marvel how intensely he *trusted God* in so many dramatic ways of obedi-

ence:

- leaving familiar turf to take his family to an unknown place;



- waiting patiently for the son of promise;
- willing to sacrifice the boy;
- **t r u s t i n g** God for a wife for Isaac.



The truth of the matter is that your understanding of Abraham and his responsive relationship with God reveals how He measures *your* trust in Him. In other words,

Abraham's trusting-obedience is the standard by which our God of grace can measure *your* trust and obedience. Is that your measure too?

Over the past decades as our Father has been fulfilling His prophetic promises to return the Jewish people to Israel, He has been revealing to us Gentiles the Hebraic Foundations which were embraced by the first followers of Jesus. You might even call them the "Abrahamic Foundations" because His relationship with this man so keenly points to the kind of *responsive relationship* He requires of us in Christ through His Spirit.

Let's take a closer look at what the Newer Testament tells us about the "first Hebrew" and his great trust:

"Consider Abraham: 'He trusted God, and it was credited to him as righteousness.' Understand, then, that those *who trust [God] are sons of Abraham.* The Scripture foresaw that God would justify the Gentiles by trust, and **announced the gospel in advance to Abraham: 'All nations will be blessed through you.' So those who have trust are **blessed along with Abraham, the man of trust...****

"He redeemed us in order that the *blessing given to Abraham* might come to the Gentiles *through Christ Jesus, so that by trust* we might receive the promise of the Spirit... The promises were spoken **to Abraham and to his seed. The Scripture does not say "and to seeds," meaning many people, but "and to **your Seed,**" meaning one person, **who is Christ**" (Galatians 3:6-9,14,16).**

"[Abraham] is the *father of all who trust* but have not been circumcised, in order that righteousness might be imputed to them. And he is also the *father of the circumcised* who are not only circumcised but also **walk in the footsteps of the trust that our father Abraham had before he was circumcised... Therefore, the **promise comes by trust,** so that it may be **by grace** and may be guaranteed to **all Abraham's offspring**—not only to those who are of the law but also to those who are of the **trust of Abraham. He is the father of us all**" (Romans 4:11,12,16).**

God promised to a mortal man who had such unshakable trust in Him an eternal covenant that would bless the world through his Seed, Jesus. One of the biblical stipulations of entering this covenant is trust (*emunah*). Our father Abraham serves as a convincing standard of the kind of resolute trusting-obedience that's called for to authentically follow Jesus as the beloved Lord of your life.

“If you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham’s seed, and heirs according to the promise” (Galatians 3:29);

“If you [are] Abraham’s children,’ Jesus said, ‘then you would do the things Abraham did’”

(John 8:39).

It wouldn’t be a stretch of truth to say that the “church” began with Abraham. The Greek word *ekklesia* [ek-leh-SEE-ah], commonly translated “church”, actually means **“called-out ones.”** Followers of Jesus are a *collective, extended spiritual family* whom He has called out of the world’s values and goals to be His family of ambassadors on earth (see 2Corinthians 5:20). We are the ones He has commanded to be intentional in our “going” to make disciples of every kind of person (*ethnos*) we meet (Matthew 28:19,20).

This is where the Patriarch Abraham is so valuable in our understanding of trust-based obedience. He was the first “called-out one” as God called him out of Chaldea to the land of Canaan. By trusting and obeying God’s will, this Hebrew set the pattern of obedient trust for today’s “called-out ones” in Christ.

Something to consider if you’re plagued by thoughts of your past sins and aren’t convinced that your Father wants to use your trust-based actions:

As one who belongs to Jesus as His very own, it’s essential that you don’t let Satan entice you into seeing your life in terms of your past failures and/or sins you’ve committed. It’s far, far more important that you hold dearly to your relationship with our Father *as His child* who by His grace has been called out of the world’s systems to do His will. Pressing forward in trusting obedience with Lord Jesus as your Head evidences your heart’s desire to please your Father. As Jesus instructed:

*“Not everyone who says to Me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the kingdom of heaven, but **only he who does the will of My Father** who is in heaven... For **whoever does the will of My Father** in heaven is My brother and sister and mother”* (Matthew 7:21,12:50) — in other words, is the *family* of Jesus.

Looking ahead to Insight 7 we discuss how we who follow Jesus as Lord of our lives in love-grounded obedient trust are *indwelled by His Spirit*. This means we’re empowered by Him to have both the resolve *and* the capacity to do our Father’s will (Philippians 2:13). In the manner of Abraham’s obedient trust, everyone who is born again is called to *respond to the Spirit’s direction*. As Jesus noted,

“The wind blows wherever it pleases. You hear its sound, but you cannot tell where it comes from or where it is going. So it is with everyone born of the Spirit” (John 3:8).

Being both led and empowered by the Holy Spirit results in a life of *responsive action* on behalf of the Kingdom of God as the name of Jesus is lifted up through us!

Getting The Most Out Of Each Insight

Discussion with other people leads to 70% retention of whatever you’ve learned. And *putting it into practice* (action) means you retain 90% of what you learned. When you finish reading an Insight, tell other people in your own words the key points you remember. Do this even if they haven’t gone through the Insight themselves. It’ll help *you* recall enough to put into practice!

The first four Insights offer historical background that affects how you live as a follower of Jesus. Beginning with Insight 5 you’ll find specific actions for you and those you care about to discuss and apply to your lives—responses that represent *what Jesus would do if He were you*.