

The Way Of Our Lord Is Being Restored

Reality 26. The Older Testament Convinces You Of Your Need For Unwavering Trust

The Older Testament is filled with examples for us today of unwavering trust and the consequences of distrust

We've emphasized often in previous materials that the Hebrew word for the depth of trust our Father commands His children is *emunah* [eh-moo-NAH]. The Hebrew root for *emunah* means "to jump off a cliff." *Emunah* depicts such an unyielding trust in the sovereignty of your heavenly Father that you immediately take action, authenticating your faith as genuine! And because of WHO your trust is in, *emunah* abolishes any and all fretting and worry on your part. It's with this proactive understanding of *emunah* and the overriding peace that it produces that the Older Testament can affirm this promise about His unfailing direction in your life: "*Trust in the LORD with all your heart, And lean not on your own understanding; In all your ways acknowledge Him, And He shall direct your paths*" (Proverbs 3:5,6).

In Reality 25 we pointed out that Abraham was commended for his unwavering trust in God. Within the Older Testament books you'll find numerous examples of the depth of *emunah* trust which God required of the individuals He specifically recruited to use—especially in the face of seemingly impossible situations:

- Noah constructing the ark before the flood and filling it with provisions;
- Moses trusting God along the Red Sea shores that his staff would part the waters;
- Joshua leading Israel across the flooded Jordan River, then later directing them to march around fortified Jericho for seven days;
- David standing firm against Goliath, as well as trusting God in the variety of ways He told him to fight his battles;
- Gideon prevailing over the Midianite army with just 300 men;
- Elijah challenging the pagan priests and anticipating that God would send fire from heaven;
- Daniel prevailing without fear in the lions' den;
- Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-Nego hurled into the fiery furnace with perfect peace and emerging unscathed.

These true accounts were the spiritual food of all Jewish people. That's why Paul, having been raised on the entire Hebrew Scriptures, had such a thorough understanding of *emunah*. As the Good News of the New Covenant reached into the Gentile world, Paul could point to his own trust relationship with our Lord as a role model for followers of Jesus in Corinth to emulate: "*Follow my example, as I follow the example of Christ*" (1Corinthians 11:1). But Paul was also well aware from Older Testament history that severe consequences came upon Israelites who refused to trust God and instead gave way to unbelief or to their own sinful choices. He warned the Corinthians (and followers of Jesus today) that the God of Scripture doesn't ignore sin: "*Now these things became our examples, to the intent that we should not lust after evil things as they also lusted*" (1Corinthians 10:6). This historical reality was so firmly embedded in Paul's heart that he reiterates it: "*Now all these things happened to them as examples, and they were written as a warning to us, upon whom the ends of the ages have come*" (1Corinthians 10:11).

There's a reason we're leaning so hard into this. Many within Christianity go about their spiritual lives completely heedless of the examples (both encouraging and cautionary) in the Older Testament. In particular, people who live in **fruitless thorns** have been deceived by anti-Semitic (Older Testament ignoring) theologians that "just believing" satisfies God. If this describes your own spiritual fruitlessness, please take to heart Paul's warning: "*Therefore let him who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall*" (1Corinthians 10:12).

We want to repeat a specific reality because we do deeply care about your eternal destination. The vast majority of self-identified Christians we've encountered abide complacently among the "thorns" about which Jesus speaks: *"Now the [seeds] that **fell among thorns** are those who, when they have heard, go out and **are choked with cares, riches, and pleasures of life, and bring no fruit to maturity**"* (Luke 8:14).

There's a distinct difference between wholeheartedly following Jesus as Lord versus pursuing the world's values and goals with a religious veneer over it: *"For all that is in the world—**the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life—is not of the Father but is of the world**. And the world is passing away, and the lust of it; but the one doing the will of God abides forever"* (1John 2:15-17).

From our holy God's perspective, choosing to mix the unbelieving world's standards and ways with your religious beliefs constitutes spiritual adultery. And that kind of "prostitution" is abhorrent to Him: *"You **adulterous people**, don't you know that friendship with the world means enmity against God? Therefore, **anyone who chooses to be a friend of the world becomes an enemy of God**"* (James 4:4). Are your cares and worries and even pleasures the same as those of people you know have no relationship with our Lord Jesus? Can they say about you, "You're just like me except for how you spend Sunday morning"?

Our Lord's sovereignty demands your complete, unwavering trust in Him

By grace our Father has chosen you to be His child and to serve as a faithful and loving ambassador for Jesus Christ. But you'll struggle with having the deep and abiding trust our Lord requires of you *unless* you thoroughly appreciate the Older Testament and all the various ways God revealed His divine power through the people He chose to use. God uses seemingly impossible circumstances from a human standpoint to reveal His divine power: *"I am the LORD, the God of all mankind. Is anything too hard for Me?"* (Jeremiah 32:27).

And when everything around you seems to be spinning out of control, the psalmist reminds us of this unchangeable truth about our Almighty Father: *"Be still, and know that I am God; I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth!"* (Psalms 46:10). What a testimony to the people you know and to the world around you when you trust in our God's sovereign power and love and then take action as His Spirit directs you to!

Your *emunah* trust in our heavenly Father and our Lord Jesus always produces inner peace in all circumstances. Our Lord Jesus assures you, *"Peace I leave with you; My peace I give to you; not as the world gives, do I give to you. Let not your heart be troubled, nor let it be fearful"* (John 14:27; see also Colossians 3:15). Your peace confirms the WHO you unwaveringly trust. (And remember, trust is a choice. If you aren't trusting Him that way, then repent and receive His forgiveness and cleansing so you DO choose to trust!)

⊗ There's an Older Testament caveat for you if your trust continues to waver. Be warned by the example of the Israelites who found themselves cornered by Pharaoh's army on the shore of the Red Sea. The very people who had witnessed God's miraculous plagues among the Egyptians didn't praise God until after they'd passed all the way across on the dry seabed. Their circumstances had to change before they could trust Him and praise Him. And what was the sorry fruit of their distrust? Forty years of grumbling rebellion that left that generation dead in the desert. But greater than someone crossing the parted Red Sea is the person whose heart can trust his Father and praise Him despite the circumstances!

Why didn't the apostles take a vote for who would replace Judas?

Not only in dire circumstances but even in your everyday life decisions, our Father wants His kids to trust Him. As a gracious Father He really does want you to avoid the tensions and pressure that are brought about by the **deceit of human rationale**. That's what happens when you rely on weighing the pros and cons of a matter and then hope your choice is the right one. In an upcoming Reality we'll discuss more fully why the Holy Spirit indwells the genuinely born again to provide divine guidance (*rhema*). But for now let Paul clarify for you what to avoid if you want to know God's will, and what to earnestly seek instead: "Do not conform to the pattern of this world [human rationalization], but keep letting yourselves be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to prove God's will—His good, pleasing and perfect will" (Romans 12:2).

In Reality 25 we noted, "The Older Testament reveals God's sovereign selection of people for His purpose." The God of the entire Bible retains the right to make and/or confirm our decisions for us as His own children. Here's an example recorded in Acts 1:20-26. After the Ascension of Jesus, the disciples recognized from a psalm of David written a thousand years earlier that the place of the betrayer Judas would "*be deserted*" and that "*another take his place*". Their only guideline was their need to "*choose one of the men who have been with us the whole time the Lord Jesus was living among us.*" They didn't evaluate the two candidates based on their popularity or prestige or any other human standards. Instead, "They prayed, 'You, Lord, Who know the hearts of all men, show which one of these two You have chosen ...' Then they cast lots, and the lot fell to Matthias; so he was added to the eleven apostles" (Acts 1:24,26).

Many anti-Semitic teachers disregard the Older Testament backdrop from which the apostles' action of casting lots was drawn. That's why they maintain that these men cast lots because they doubted that God would answer any other way! But the conclusion of these teachers only reflects their misunderstanding of the Hebrew Scriptures, and their own doubt in God's sovereignty and the unwavering trust in that sovereignty which His entire Word calls for: "The lot is cast into the lap, but its every decision is from the LORD" (Proverbs 16:33). God is well aware of our sin nature's propensity to want to get our own way when other people are involved in a decision. We can get caught up in strife and discord over the whole issue. So by casting lots, God gave mankind a way to avoid arguments and hurt feelings by trusting in His sovereignty to bring about what He wills: "Casting the lot settles disputes and keeps strong opponents apart" (Proverbs 18:18). When you cast a lot (or toss a coin) instead of arguing about the outcome with others, you're revealing your complete trust in God's sovereignty. And you wouldn't know the principle behind Father's command in this vital truth if it weren't for the Older Testament.

For a real-life illustration of this, read page 2, Mike's Testimony, in [Lifebyte13. Freedom In Jesus Video Series \(Part 1\)](#) as he reminisces about "casting a lot" in our early days of following our Lord Jesus.



Keep in mind that our Lord's primary method for you to confirm anything is by two or three people (Deuteronomy 19:15; Hebrews 10:28; Matthew 18:16-20; 2Corinthians 13:1; 1Timothy 5:19). But if a decision involving someone else may end up in resentment and hurt feelings, then flip a coin so that each of you knows God's hand in the result. Proverbs 16:33 assures us that "every decision is from the LORD." Remove everything from your control so you can maintain peace and evidence your trust.

Let's look at another Older Testament example of *emunah* trust in God that was akin to Abraham's. In 1Kings 18:19 we read about Elijah taking a stand for God at Mount Carmel and

confronting evil Queen Jezebel's "pampered pets": 450 prophets of Baal and 400 prophets of Asherah. God intervened with a miraculous work on Elijah's behalf because of his unwavering trust. James builds off Elijah's trait of unwavering trust in God's sovereignty by making a bridge back to the prophet for the genuinely born again who live repentantly. He assures us, "*The effective, fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much*" (James 5:16b). (We know from 1John 1:9 our initial step to restoring a righteous standing with our Lord: "*If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.*")

James then encourages the genuinely born again that Elijah wasn't superhuman. Rather, his earnest prayer of trust resulted in God responding in ways that only the Almighty could! "*Elijah was only a human being like us, and he prayed fervently that it might not rain, and for three years and six months it did not rain on the earth. Then he prayed again, and heaven gave rain, and the earth bore its fruit*" (James 5:17,18). Internalize this essential point if you're earnestly yearning to be fully available to be used by our Lord: Elijah is a benchmark of *emunah* trust for the genuinely born again. Please get hold of this. Because of God's sovereignty He has a right to command your complete trust in Him, not just your belief that He exists. And because the Holy Spirit dwells in you if you belong to our Lord Jesus, this unwavering trust is His will for you.

🔴 How many Christians do you know, including yourself, who have walked in the responsive trust of Elijah at some point in your life? How many, including yourself, have humbly repented before our Father when you've doubted His sovereignty, and have absorbed His cleansing and forgiveness? In our many years of ministry, we've observed three common encroachments that have hindered Christians from consistently living with *emunah* trust:

- (1). They hold onto unconfessed sin. Even the blind man whom our Lord healed knew from the Older Testament God's condition for answering prayer: "*We know that God does not hear sinners, but if anyone fears God and does His will, God hears this man*" (John 9:31).
- (2). They listen to the voice of demons who sound just like the voice in their own head. Consider this truth before you decide to listen to the deceits and lies of the devil: "*You can't drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of demons. You can't partake of the table of the Lord and of the table of demons*" (1Corinthians 10:21). Entertaining demonic voices alongside your sharing in communion constitutes spiritual adultery!
- (3). They doubt that our Lord will answer them, lacking total confidence in Jesus' assurance when you pray in accordance with God's will: "*Truly, I say to you, if you have trust and do not doubt, you will not only do what has been done to the fig tree, but even if you say to this mountain, 'Be taken up and thrown into the sea,' it will happen*" (Matthew 21:21).

If any of the above three encroachments are hindering you, please repent and take hold of the trust you need in your relationship with our heavenly Father. And we continue to encourage you to purposely go through the Older Testament to more deeply comprehend our God as He reveals Himself in those accounts. And while you're there, take in the many examples of God-pleasing men and women who chose to live with unwavering trust. You'll also realize the dire consequences that came to those who refused *emunah* trust and instead gave way to their fears and rebellion and self-will.