

HOW GOD BUILDS YOUR FAITH

Created to Dream: The 6 Phases God Uses to Grow Your Faith
Rick Warren

(Jesus said) “According to your faith it will be done to you.” Matthew 9:29

“Everything is possible for the person who has faith.” Mark 9:23 (GNT)

How Does God Build My Faith?

PHASE 1: _____

“God is able to do far more than we would ever dare to ask or even dream of— infinitely beyond our highest prayers, desires, thoughts, or hopes.” Ephesians 3:20 (TLB)

PHASE 2: _____

“You must believe and not doubt . . . a double-minded man is unstable in all he does.” James 1:6, 8 (GNT)

- To invest: _____
- To let go of: _____

PHASE 3: _____

(God says) “But these things I plan won't happen right away. Slowly, steadily, surely, the time approaches when the vision will be fulfilled.” Habakkuk 2:3 (TLB)

PHASE 4: _____

“At the present you may be temporarily harassed by all kinds of trials. This is no accident—it happens to prove your faith, which is infinitely more valuable than gold.” 1 Peter 1:6-7

PHASE 5: _____

“At that time we were completely overwhelmed, the burden was more than we could bear, in fact we told ourselves that this was the end. Yet we now believe that we had this sense of impending disaster so that we might learn to trust, not in ourselves, but in God who can raise the dead!” 2 Corinthians 1:8-9

PHASE 6: _____

“He has delivered . . . and he will deliver us again!” 2 Corinthians 1:10

“I am expecting the Lord to rescue me again, so that once again I will see his goodness to me” Psalm 27:13 (GNT)

Examples:

Noah (Genesis 6-9)

Abraham (Genesis 12-22)

Jesus (John 14-20)

Joseph (Genesis 37-45)

Moses (Exodus 2-15)

David (1 Samuel 16-32)

Next Steps

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GOD'S DREAM FOR YOUR LIFE

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"For I know the plans I have for you, says the Lord, plans to prosper you and not hard you, plans to give you a hope and a future!" Jeremiah 29:11

How to Discover God's Dream for You

1. DEDICATE _____

"Offer yourselves as a living sacrifice to God, dedicated to his service . . . Do not conform to the standards of this world, but let God transform you . . . Then you will be able to know the will of God—what is good . . . pleasing . . . and perfect."
Romans 12:1-2 (GNT)

"Let us strip off anything that slows us down or holds us back . . . and run with patience the particular race that God has set before us." Hebrews 12:1 (TLB)

2. RESERVE _____

(To Job) "Pause a moment and listen! Consider the wonderful things God does." Job 37:14 (GNT)

Examples

- Abraham (Genesis 15:5)
- Jacob (Genesis 32:24-29)
- Moses (Exodus 3:1-10)
- Gideon (Judges 6:11-14)
- David (Psalm 5:3)
- Elijah (1 Kings 19:11-12)
- Nehemiah (Nehemiah 1:4)
- Habakkuk (Habakkuk 2:1-2)
- Paul (Galatians 1:17-18)
- Jesus (Luke 5:16)

3. EVALUATE _____

"For we are God's handiwork, created in Christ to devote ourselves to the good deeds for which God has designed us." Ephesians 2:10

"God has given each of you some special abilities; be sure to use them to help each other" 1 Peter 4:10 (TLB)

"We are to use our different gifts in accordance with the grace that God has given us." Romans 12:6 (GNT)

4. ASSOCIATE _____

"As iron sharpens iron, friend sharpens friend." Proverbs 27:17 (Knox)

"Bad friends ruin the noblest people." 1 Corinthians 15:33 (JB)

5. MAKE _____

"What is faith? It is the confident assurance that something we want is going to happen. It is the certainty that what we hope for is waiting for us, even though we cannot see it up ahead." Hebrews 11:1 (TLB)

"David served God's purpose in his generation, then he died." Acts 13:36 (GNT)

"I reckon on my own life worth nothing to me, in order that I may complete my mission and finish the work that the Lord Jesus gave me to do" Acts 20:24 (GNT)

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HOW TO MAKE WISE DECISIONS

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"A person . . . unable to make up his mind and undecided in all he does, must not think he will receive anything from the Lord." James 1:7-8 (GNT)

SIX STEPS

1. STEP ONE: PRAY _____

"A man is foolish to trust himself. But those who use God's wisdom are safe." Proverbs 28:26 (TLB)

"The peace that Christ gives is to guide you in the decisions you make." Colossians 3:15 (GNT)

Ask: _____

2. STEP TWO: GET _____

"Every prudent man acts out of knowledge." Proverbs 13:16

"It's stupid to decide before knowing the facts!" Proverbs 18:13 (TLB)

Ask: _____

3. STEP THREE: ASK _____

"The more advice you get, the more likely you are to win." Proverbs 24:6 (GNT)

"Get good advice and you will succeed." Proverbs 20:28 (GNT)

Ask: _____

4. STEP FOUR: CALCULATE _____

"It is a trap for a man to dedicate something rashly and only later to consider his vows." Proverbs 20:25

Luke 14:28-29

Ask: _____

5. STEP FIVE: PREPARE _____

"A sensible man watches for problems ahead and prepares to meet them . . . The simpleton never looks and suffers the consequences." Proverbs 22:3 (TLB)

Ask: _____

6. STEP SIX: FACE _____

"If you wait for perfect conditions, you'll never get anything done." Ecclesiastes 11:4 (TLB)

"If God is for us, who can be against us?" Romans 8:31

FOUR BASIC LIFE DECISIONS

That I commit myself...

- to Christ and a church family
- to the habits necessary for spiritual growth
- to using my God-given gifts and abilities in serving God and others
- to sharing Christ with others

(Ephesians 2:19; Romans 12:4-5; 2 Peter 3:18; 1 Timothy 4:7; 1 Peter 4:10; 1 Corinthians 12:4-27; Matthew 28:19; Acts 1:8)

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DELAYED BY DESIGN

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"When Pharaoh let the people go, God did not lead them (directly) though that way was shorter. For God said, 'If they face war, they might change their minds and return to Egypt.'" Exodus 13:17

"God led you through the wilderness for forty years . . . testing you to find out how you would respond and if you would obey Him." Deuteronomy 8:2 (TLB)

What to Do While Waiting

1. DON'T _____

"They would not enter the land. They said . . . 'We are afraid . . . The people there are stronger and taller than we are" Deuteronomy 1:26, 28 (GNT)

Instead: _____

"Fear not, for I am with you. Do not be dismayed. I am your God, I will strengthen you and I will help you . . . and uphold you" Isaiah 41:10 (TLB)

2. DON'T _____

"On the way the people lost their patience and spoke against God and Moses. They complained" Numbers 21:4-5 (GNT)

"Impatience will get you into trouble." Proverbs 19:2 (GNT)

Instead: _____

"Rest in the Lord; wait patiently for Him to act . . . Don't fret and worry—it only leads to harm." Psalm 37:7-8 (TLB)

"God has set the right time for everything." Ecclesiastes 3:11 (GNT)

3. DON'T _____

"All the Israelites grumbled against Moses . . . 'If only we had died in Egypt! . . . We should choose a leader and go back to Egypt.'" Numbers 14:2-4

Instead: _____

"Let us never grow tired of doing what's right, for if we do not faint, we'll reap a harvest at the right time." Galatians 6-9

"You need to pray continually and not lose heart." Luke 18:1 (PHILLIPS)

4. DON'T _____

"They forgot the many times God showed them his love, and they rebelled . . . at the Red Sea. But He saved them as He promised . . . But they quickly forgot again! They wouldn't wait for God to act" Psalm 106:7-8 (GNT), 13 (TLB)

Instead: _____

"I will bless the Lord and not forget the great things He does for me."

Psalm 103:2 (TLB)

"The Lord is not being slow to carry out his promises . . . but He is being patient with you" 2 Peter 3:3-8 (PHILLIPS)

"These things won't happen right away. Slowly, steadily, surely, the time approaches when the vision will be fulfilled. If it seems slow, do not despair, for these things will surely come to pass. Just be patient! They will not be overdue a single day!" Habakkuk 2:3 (TLB)

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HOW TO DEAL WITH DIFFICULTY

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(Jesus) *"In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world."*
John 16:33

(Paul) *"In everything we do we show that we are God's servants, by enduring troubles, hardships and difficulties with great patience."* 2 Corinthians 6:4 (GNT)

How to Deal with Difficulty Acts 27

1. DETERMINE _____

Ask: _____

"I tried to think this problem through but it was too difficult for me until I went into your Temple." Psalm 73:16-17 (GNT)

Common Mistakes

- **We listen to** _____
"they followed the advice of the pilot" (vs. 11)
- **We follow** _____
"the majority decided that we should sail" (vs 12)
- **We rely on** _____
"When a gentle south wind began to blow, they thought they had obtained what they wanted" (vs 13)

2. DETERMINE _____

Ask: _____

"These little troubles, which are temporary, are winning for us a permanent, glorious and solid reward all out of proportion to our pain." 2 Corinthians 4:17

"We can rejoice when we run into problems and trials for we know . . . they help us learn to be patient. And patience develops strength of character in us and helps us trust God more each time" Romans 5:3-4 (TLB)

3. DETERMINE _____

Ask: _____

Wrong Responses

"To Drift"

"so we gave way to it and were driven along." (vs 15)

"To Discard:"

"they began to throw the cargo overboard" (vs 18)

"To Despair"

"we finally gave up all hope of being saved." (vs 20)

THE RIGHT RESPONSE

- **CONFESS** _____
"A man who refuses to admit his mistakes can never be successful. But if he confesses and forsakes them, he gets another chance."
Proverbs 28:13 (TLB)
- **CONFRONT** _____
(vs 34-40)
- **CLAIM** _____
(vs 22-25)

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FROM DEADEND TO DELIVERANCE

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Abraham's Example of Faith

Phase 1: A DREAM (Age 75) Genesis 12:1-3

(God) "I will make you into a great nation"

Phase 2: A DECISION Genesis 12:4

"So Abraham left as the Lord had told him to"

Phase 3: DELAY (Age 86) Genesis 16:1

"But Sarah still had not borne any children"

Phase 4: DIFFICULTY (Age 99) Genesis 17:18

"How can a son be born to a man my age?"

Phase 5: DEADEND Genesis 21:1-6, 22:1-12

"Take your only son, whom you love, and sacrifice him"

Phase 6: DELIVERANCE! Genesis 22:12-14

(God) "Don't hurt the boy... I've provided a lamb"

What to Do When You Reach "Deadend"

Romans 4:17-20

1. REMEMBER

"Abraham believed in God who gives life to the dead and who creates something out of nothing." vs 17 (TLB)

"What is impossible with men is possible with God." Luke 18:27

2. RELY ON

"When hope was dead within him, Abraham went on hoping in faith . . . He relied on the word of God" vs 18 (PHILLIPS)

"While God was testing him, Abraham still trusted in God and his promises, so he offered his son Isaac" Hebrews 11:17 (TLB)

"Though it seemed Abraham's hope could not be fulfilled . . . he did become the father of many nations, exactly as God had promised." vs 18 (PHILLIPS)

3. FACE THE FACTS

"Without weakening in his faith, he faced the fact that his body was as good as dead . . . and Sarah's womb was also dead. Yet he didn't waver with unbelief"
vs 19-20

"We fix our eyes . . . on what is unseen. For what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal." 2 Corinthians 4:8

4. EXPECT

"But Abraham never doubted . . . he praised God for this blessing even before it happened. He was completely sure that God was able to do anything He promised." vs 20-21 (TLB)

(Paul) *"But this happened so we might not rely on ourselves but on God who raises the dead! He has delivered us . . . He will deliver us... (and) we have set our hope that He will continue to deliver us"* 2 Corinthians 1:9-10

Three Kinds of Deliverance

(1) Circumstantial (2) Personal (3) Ultimate (Heaven)

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