Following Jesus: Marks of a Disciple – Lesson 2

"Trusting God by Faith: Following When the Path Is Unclear"

Summary

Hebrews 11:1-8 and Proverbs 3:5-6 teach that faith is the foundation of a growing relationship with God. Faith is not merely believing that God exists; it is trusting His character, His promises, and His guidance even when the future is uncertain. Abraham's life demonstrates that discipleship requires obedience without having all the answers. As followers of Christ, we are called to trust God more than our own understanding and follow Him wherever He leads.

Scripture

Hebrews 11:1-8
Proverbs 3:5-6

1. Introduction

Opening Thought

Most of us prefer certainty. We like plans, schedules, and clear directions. We feel comfortable when we know where we are going and how everything will work out. Yet some of God's greatest works in our lives occur during seasons when we cannot see the entire path ahead. Perhaps you've faced a situation where you asked:

- "What should I do next?"
- "Why is God allowing this?"
- "How will this ever work out?"
- "Can I really trust God's plan?"

Faith becomes most important when clarity is absent. Anyone can trust God when life's circumstances make sense. True faith develops when we choose to trust Him despite uncertainty.

Today's lesson examines what biblical faith is, why trusting God is often difficult, and how disciples can grow in faith during uncertain seasons.

2. Understanding Biblical Faith (Hebrews 11:1)

Hebrews 11:1 declares:
"Now faith is confidence in what we hope for and assurance about what we do not see."

Faith is not wishful thinking, positive thinking, or blind optimism. Biblical faith is confidence in God's character and trust in His promises. Faith does not eliminate questions. Faith chooses to trust God while those questions remain unanswered.

The heroes of Hebrews 11 were not people who had perfect knowledge. They were people who trusted a perfect God. Faith rests not in the strength of the believer but in the trustworthiness of God.

Biblical Illustration
Noah built an ark before he saw the flood.
Moses led Israel before he saw deliverance.
Joshua marched around Jericho before the walls fell.
Their confidence was based on God's Word rather than visible evidence.

3. Abraham: A Model of Obedient Faith (Hebrews 11:8)

Hebrews 11:8 says:
"By faith Abraham, when called to go to a place he would later receive as his inheritance, obeyed and went, even though he did not know where he was going."

God called Abraham to leave:

- His homeland
- His security
- His familiar surroundings
- His future plans

Abraham received no detailed roadmap. Instead, he received a promise. God's call required complete dependence upon Him. Abraham demonstrates that faith is not merely believing God's promises but acting upon them. Obedience is the evidence of genuine faith.

Biblical Illustration
Imagine stepping onto an airplane without knowing the destination but completely trusting the pilot. That is similar to Abraham's journey. He did not know where he was going. He knew Who was leading him.

4. Trusting God Above Our Own Understanding (Proverbs 3:5-6)

Proverbs 3:5-6 teaches:
"Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways submit to Him, and He will make your paths straight." This passage presents two choices:

- Lean on God
- Lean on Yourself

Human understanding is limited. God's understanding is unlimited. Trusting God means submitting our perspective to His wisdom. Faith acknowledges that God can see what we cannot. The disciple recognizes that God's wisdom is superior to human logic.

Biblical Illustration
Joseph's life often appeared confusing and unfair.

- Betrayed by his brothers
- Sold into slavery
- Falsely accused
- Imprisoned

Yet God was working behind the scenes to accomplish His purpose. What looked like tragedy became God's pathway to blessing. God's perspective is always greater than our immediate circumstances.

5. Practical Application

Why Trusting God Is Often Difficult
Trusting God can be difficult because:

- We Want Control – Human nature desires certainty and control over outcomes.
- We Focus on Circumstances – Like Peter walking on water, we often become more aware of the storm than the Savior.
- We Fear Disappointment – Past hurts and unmet expectations can make trusting difficult.
- We Forget God's Faithfulness – When facing new challenges, we often lose sight of previous victories.

Throughout Scripture, God's people repeatedly struggled with trust despite witnessing His faithfulness. The problem was rarely God's reliability. The problem was their memory.

Faith and the Disciple's Journey
Every disciple is called to live by faith. Faith is not a one-time decision made at salvation. Faith becomes a daily lifestyle. As followers of Christ, we trust Him:

- In success and failure
- In joy and suffering
- In certainty and uncertainty
- In beginnings and endings

Spiritual maturity is measured not by how much we know, but by how much we trust and obey God. The Christian life begins with faith and continues through faith.

Ways to Grow in Faith

Principle	Application
Remember God's Faithfulness	Reflect on past answers to prayer and God's provision.
Read God's Promises Daily	Build confidence through regular Scripture reading.
Obey Promptly	Take the next step God has revealed.
Pray Honestly	Bring fears and doubts before God.
Walk with Other Believers	Surround yourself with people who strengthen your faith.

6. Discussion Questions

1) According to Hebrews 11:1, how is biblical faith different from wishful thinking?
2) How did Abraham demonstrate faith in God?
3) Why do you think God often reveals His plan one step at a time rather than all at once?
4) Why is trusting God often difficult?
5) What does it mean to "lean not on your own understanding"?
6) How can remembering God's past faithfulness help us trust Him in the present?
7) What area of your life requires greater faith right now?
8) What practical step of faith could you take this week?

7. Closing Thoughts

Hebrews 11 reminds us that faith has always been the pathway through which God's people walk with Him. Abraham did not have all the answers, but he trusted God's promises. Proverbs 3 reminds us that discipleship requires trusting the Lord with all our hearts rather than depending on our limited understanding.

Faith does not demand that we see the entire journey. Faith requires that we trust the One leading us. As disciples of Jesus, we can move forward with confidence because God's character is unchanging, His promises are trustworthy, and His plans are always good.

Challenge for the Week
This week, identify one area of uncertainty in your life that causes worry, fear, or hesitation. Each day, pray: "Lord, I choose to trust You more than my own understanding. Help me take the next step of faith."

Write down one practical act of obedience that demonstrates trust in God and commit to taking that step this week.