GUIA DE ESTUDO

What if God is calling you to step out in faith?

29 de agosto de 2026

New Hope Fulton · doxus.org

Gerado por Doxus · doxus.org

BIG IDEA

God has been faithful through the ages, and his kindness can make faith personal, strong, and life-changing.

Faith Passed Down, Faith Made Personal

Shifra's story begins with a black box, a boat on the horizon, and a family line marked by generations of faith. Yet her message is not only about heritage; it is about making God's faithfulness personal.

A Samoan Faith Heritage

Shifra describes her background as culturally and spiritually Samoan, with faith carried through oral history, prophecy, and ancestors who sought God before they knew the name of Jesus. She connects her story to Samoa's long memory, to the arrival of John Williams and the London Missionary Society in 1830, and to the legend of a black box that marked the coming of the Bible. For her, the Holy Spirit was active long before missionaries arrived, and God had already been faithful to her people through the ages.

Jesus Known by Name, God Known by Faithfulness

She emphasizes that before Jesus was known by name in Samoa, God had already shown up through prophecy. That is why the Holy Spirit matters so deeply to her lived faith. Even though Jesus walked in the Middle East and not in her part of the world, God's presence was still real, and the Spirit hovered over the waters in Genesis 1. Her faith is rooted in a God who was active before any human response.

> *My faith story is one that testifies to God who has been faithful through the ages.*
>
> — Shifra on her faith heritage

A Family Line of Ministry and Change

Shifra honors multiple generations of faith: great-grandparents, grandparents, missionaries, and six generations of pastors in the family line. She tells the story of her father's side of the family, where Adventism entered through a dramatic Bible study between brothers. Her grandfather once went out in an outrigger canoe, carrying only a knife, intending to confront his younger brother for changing faith traditions, but he was converted through the Bible study that lasted from sunset until sunrise. Her own father became a pastor, and Shifra grew up in a pastoral missionary family shaped by ministry and gospel work.

PARA REFLEXÃO

Discuss Together

What stands out to you most in Shifra's description of Samoa, the black box, and the arrival of the Bible?

How does her story challenge the idea that faith is only an individual or modern experience?

Why do you think she places such importance on the Holy Spirit in her cultural and personal story?

What does it mean that her ancestors were seeking Jesus before they knew his name?

How does her family's story show both continuity and change in faith?

REFLEXÃO

Your Own Faith Line

Who were the people, places, or stories that first formed your understanding of God?

Have you ever realized that your faith is more than your own decision, yet still must become your own choice?

Where do you see God's faithfulness in your family story, even before you could name it?

No Grandchildren of God

Shifra says plainly that there are no grandchildren of God. Even with a strong Christian home, a child must personally choose faith. She describes how her parents gave her freedom to ask hard questions about God, life, and love. They did not shelter her from real suffering either, including divorce, abuse, gang violence, death, and funerals. Because she was allowed to ask questions and observe ministry up close, her faith became inquisitive, honest, and personal.

APLICAÇÃO PRÁTICA

Let Children Ask and Choose

Shifra urges adults not to invalidate a child's genuine yes to Jesus. She was ready for baptism at seven and disappointed when she was asked to wait until eight, then was baptized on her ninth birthday. Her story encourages families to make room for children to ask questions, to participate in the life of faith, and to make eternal decisions sincerely and freely.

> *At seven years of age, had already come to a place where God had been so faithful to so many for so long that were really important to me, that at that young age, I knew I wanted to be baptized.*
>
> — Shifra on baptism and belonging

Born Again into God's Faithfulness

Shifra insists that baptism is not a promise of perfect behavior. After being baptized, she still failed and needed mercy. She says she was born again not into her own faithfulness, but into God's faithfulness. This distinction is central to her testimony: salvation is not about human performance, but about receiving God's faithful grace.

Kindness That Protects and Restores

One of the clearest examples of grace in her story is the 10-page letter written to her father listing her sins. She came home ashamed, expecting punishment, but her father handed her not only the accusations, but also his own written response full of kindness. He did not excuse her wrongdoing, but he protected her from shame. That kindness allowed her to lift her head the next day at school. For Shifra, this was a lived picture of how God's kindness leads to repentance and change.

> *It is not my faithfulness, but God's faithfulness, and it's the kindness of God truly that saves, like, whatever you're going through.*
>
> — Shifra on God's saving kindness

APLICAÇÃO PRÁTICA

Receive Discipline Without Losing Dignity

Shifra's father corrected her without crushing her. In the same way, she calls families to give grace, mercy, and compassion to children growing up. The goal is not to ignore sin, but to respond in a way that protects dignity and points back to God's kindness. Her story shows that holiness and kindness are not opposites.

A Young Adult Learning to Follow God

Around age 20, Shifra says she began to distinguish God from even the most godly people she admired. She was growing in love with Jesus, reading the Bible with new hunger, and considering mission service. While studying Spanish studies and clinical laboratory science, she felt drawn to student mission work, especially an opportunity in Laos. But after returning from a year in Argentina, she also recognized the pain her father felt when she was far away. The tension was not simply between good and bad, but between two legitimate callings.

PARA REFLEXÃO

Discernment and Calling

Why do you think Shifra needed to distinguish God from the godly people she loved?

Have you ever had to choose between a sincere desire and a deeper call from God?

What does her story teach about listening to God while still honoring family?

How does she describe the difference between pressure and a genuine calling?

REFLEXÃO

Where Is God Asking You to Trust?

Where are you tempted to confuse loyalty to people with loyalty to God?

What part of your faith is still being moved from inherited to personal?

How have kindness and truth worked together in your own growth?

APLICAÇÃO PRÁTICA

Follow the Heavenly Father First

Shifra says her father eventually told her, if there is ever a toss-up between following him and following the heavenly Father, she must always choose the heavenly Father. That conviction shaped her decision to move to Maryland for New Hope, even though it meant leaving her retired father in California. She prayed with her phone on airplane mode, asked God clearly what he wanted, and then trusted that if God called her to serve in Maryland, her aging parents would be held by God.

> *I see myself as, like, I was born again into the faithfulness of God.*
>
> — Shifra on being made new

ORAÇÃO

A Response to God's Faithfulness

God, thank you for being faithful through the ages and for meeting people before they even know your name. Thank you for Shifra's story, for the generations that formed her, for the kindness of a father who protected her, and for the grace that brought her to baptism and beyond. Make our faith personal, not merely inherited. Teach us to trust your Holy Spirit, to follow Jesus with courage, and to receive your kindness as the power that changes and strengthens our lives. Amen.

> *God wants to be kind to us.*
>
> — Shifra on God's desire

> *God's kindness, if we let it, can truly change and strengthen our lives.*
>
> — Shifra on transformation