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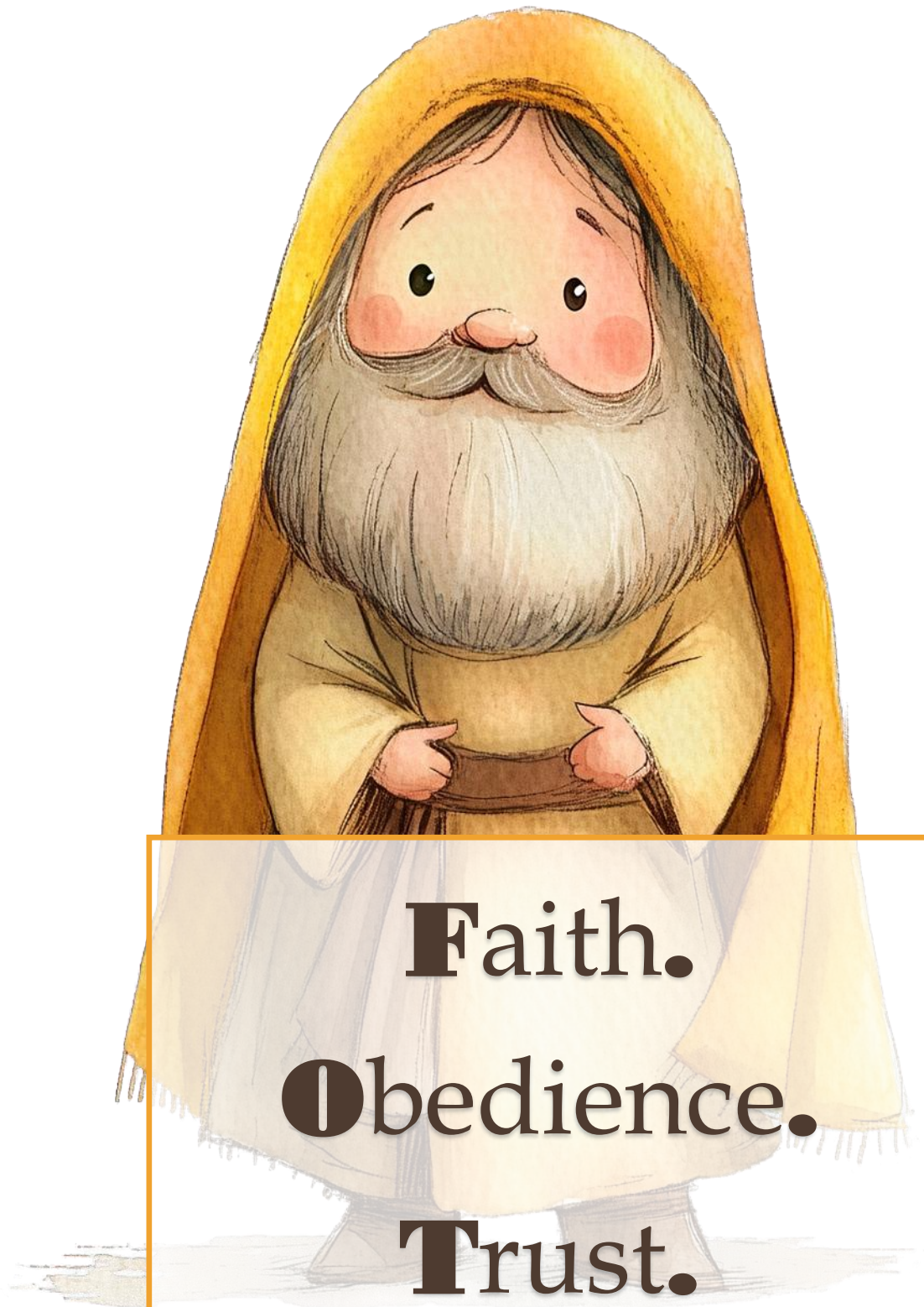
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Faith.
Obedience.
Trust.

INTRODUCTION



Abraham's life resonates with profound lessons in faith and unwavering obedience. It also reflects a fierce trust in God's promises, even during life's worst adversities. He passionately exemplifies the necessity of acting boldly on faith. He is relentless in his belief that God's power will bring His promises to fruition. His extraordinary journey shows the importance of courageously leaving the familiar. It highlights the need to embrace a higher calling – God's magnificent purpose.

We are going to study the life of Abraham and focus on these key points:

- **Faith and Obedience**
- **Trusting God's Promises**
- **Taking action based in Faith**
- **Willingness to Sacrifice**
- **Learning from Mistakes**
- **Leaving a Legacy**

To start this journey, Read the following passages of scripture:

Genesis 12-18 and Genesis 20-23.

FAITH AND OBEDIENCE

8 By faith Abraham, when he was called, obeyed and set out for a place that he was going to receive as an inheritance. He went out, even though he did not know where he was going. 9 By faith he stayed as a foreigner in the land of promise, living in tents as did Isaac and Jacob, coheirs of the same promise. 10 For he was looking forward to the city that has foundations, whose architect and builder is God.

Hebrews 11:8-10

Abraham's story ignites in Genesis 12:1-4, where God passionately calls him to forsake his homeland, his beloved kin, and his father's house, embarking on a journey to an unknown land that God would reveal. Amid the swirling fog of uncertainty and the heart-wrenching act of leaving behind the familiar, Abraham radiates an intense faith and unshakeable trust in God's magnificent promises. This saga powerfully underscores the vital lesson of embracing faith amidst the chaos of uncertainty and daring to trust in God's divine guidance, even when the path ahead is shrouded in mystery.

God's word emphasizes that faith and obedience are interconnected and essential aspects of a Christian life. Faith is not just a belief but a commitment to trust and obey God, and obedience is the natural fruit of a faith that is alive and genuine.

Read the following scriptures. What does God's Words say about Faith and obedience?


- Hebrews 4:1-2
- Hebrews 3:12
- James 2:20-24
- Hebrews 5:9
- Hebrews 11:6-8
- Romans 2:13
- 2 Corinthians 5:7
- Ephesians 2:8-10

Key Biblical Concepts:

- **Faith as Obedience:** The Bible teaches that faith is an act of obedience, specifically obedience to the command to believe in Jesus Christ for salvation.
- **Obedience as a Sign of Faith:** Genuine faith manifests itself in obedience to God's commands and principles, demonstrating a trust and confidence in His guidance and promises.
- **Faith and Obedience are Inseparable:** They are two sides of the same coin, inseparable aspects of a relationship with God. A true believer will not only profess faith but also strive to live a life that reflects that faith through obedience.
- **The Obedience of Faith:** This phrase, found in Romans 1:5 and 16:26, highlights the importance of believing and acting on the good news of the gospel.

Examples in Scripture:

- **Abraham's Obedience:** Abraham's journey to the promised land, his willingness to sacrifice Isaac, and his obedience to God's commands are prime examples of faith in action.
- **Jesus' Obedience:** Jesus, the Son of God, demonstrated perfect obedience to His Father, even to the point of death on the cross, which is the ultimate example of faith in action.
- **The Importance of Loving and Obeying God:** Jesus taught that love for Him is demonstrated through obedience to His commandments.



In essence, God's word encourages believers to:



- Trust and believe in Him: Faith is the foundation of a relationship with God.
- Obey His commands and principles: Obedience is the evidence of a living faith.
- Live a life that reflects their faith: Faith and obedience should be visible in every aspect of a Christian's life.
- By understanding the interconnectedness of faith and obedience, believers can cultivate a deeper and more fulfilling relationship with God

Dive deep into your faith and obedience to God by asking yourself profound questions. Consider your relationship with Him and your grasp of His teachings. Think about the ways you passionately apply those teachings in your everyday life. Reflect intensely on your spiritual journey. Acknowledge your struggles. Discover vibrant ways to strengthen your connection with God. Wholeheartedly demonstrate obedience through your actions.

Here are some specific questions to ponder:


About Your Relationship with God:

- What are some of the most meaningful or impactful moments you've had in your relationship with God?
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- How would you describe your current relationship with God?
 - What are some things you find enjoyable or comforting about your relationship with God?
 - What are some areas where you feel like you could grow closer to God?
 - How does your relationship with God impact your daily life and decisions?
 - How do you feel about the Bible as a source of truth and guidance?
 - What are your thoughts on prayer and its role in your faith?
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About Obedience and Actions:

- What does obedience to God look like in your daily life?
 - Are there any areas where you find it difficult to be obedient?
 - How do you reconcile potential conflicts between your faith and other aspects of your life?
 - How do you stay motivated to be obedient to God's teachings, especially when facing challenges?
 - What steps can you take to better align your actions with your faith?
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About Spiritual Growth and Challenges:

- What have you learned about God and yourself through your faith journey?
 - Are there any specific areas where you feel like you need to grow spiritually?
 - What are some of the biggest challenges you face in your faith journey?
 - How do you respond to times when you struggle with doubt or discouragement?
 - How do you seek guidance and support from others in your faith journey?
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About Applying Faith in Daily Life:

- How do you ensure that your actions are consistent with your beliefs and values?
 - How do you show your love for God in your daily interactions with others?
 - How do you handle difficult situations or disagreements in a way that reflects your faith?
 - How do you balance your personal needs and desires with your commitment to God's will?
 - How do you respond to temptations and challenges that come your way?
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TRUSTING GOD'S PROMISES

Read Genesis 12:1-3. Highlight and record all the promises God gave to Abraham.

12 The Lord said to Abram:

Go from your land,
your relatives,
and your father's house
to the land that I will show you.

2 I will make you into a great nation,


I will bless you,
I will make your name great,
and you will be a blessing.

3 I will bless those who bless you,

I will curse anyone who treats you with contempt,
and all the peoples on earth
will be blessed through you.

Genesis 12:1-3

When God first reached out to Abram, whose name would soon be transformed to Abraham, He set the stage. It was a breathtaking journey filled with purpose and promise. The divine command was powerful: "Get out of your country, from your family and from your father's house, to a land that I will show you" (Genesis 12:1). God outlined the astounding promise that awaited Abraham in return for his unwavering obedience. He promised, "I will make you a great nation. I will bless you



and make your name great. You shall be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and I will curse him who curses you; and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed” (verses 2-3). This incredible promise unfolded with rich layers. It encompassed an abundance of descendants. It also included fame and divine protection. Through Abraham’s lineage, all humanity would find a source of blessing. Abraham’s son Isaac and grandson Jacob were “heirs with him of the same promise” (Hebrews 11:9). They were entwined in the magnificent legacy that God had orchestrated.


Let us take a journey to uncover the profound components of God’s magnificent promises to Abraham! As we delve deeper, we will find several captivating passages within the book of Genesis. These passages illuminate the incredible gifts God was bestowing upon Abraham and his descendants. Beyond Genesis 12:2-3, which we've already celebrated, get ready to be inspired by a few more passages. These passages in this first book of the Bible beautifully unveil the boundless blessings God intended for Abraham!

Promises to Abraham’s descendants (Genesis 12:7)

7 The Lord appeared to Abram and said, “To your offspring I will give this land.” So he built an altar there to the Lord who had appeared to him.

Genesis 12:7

Abraham courageously ventured away from his homeland. He stepped into the unknown, following a divine call with unwavering faith. As described in Hebrews 11:8, “he went out, not knowing where he was going.” When Abraham arrived in



the promised land, God shared His magnificent plans. He promised this sacred territory to Abraham's descendants. As Abraham embraced his journey of obedience, he witnessed his faith blossom. God unveiled a tapestry of blessings destined for him and his lineage. This illuminated their future with hope and promise.

Expanding the promises (Genesis 13:2, 14-17)

2 Abram was very rich in livestock, silver, and gold.

14 After Lot had separated from him, the Lord said to Abram, "Look from the place where you are. Look north and south, east and west, 15 for I will give you and your offspring [c] forever all the land that you see. 16 I will make your offspring like the dust of the earth, so that if anyone could count the dust of the earth, then your offspring could be counted. 17 Get up and walk around the land, through its length and width, for I will give it to you."

Genesis 13:2,14-17

God had made a magnificent promise to bless Abraham. This divine assurance soon became evident in the overflowing wealth Abraham acquired. God spoke passionately to this great patriarch. He revealed that Abraham's descendants would be countless. God also declared that He was bequeathing this incredible land to Abraham and his heirs for all eternity. With fervor, God urged Abraham to traverse the expanse of this land. He wanted Abraham to truly experience the breathtaking gift. This gift was being bestowed upon him.

Promise of countless descendants (Genesis 15:4-6, 18)

4 Now the word of the Lord came to him: "This one will not be your heir; instead, one who comes from your own body[c] will be your heir." 5 He took him outside and said, "Look at the sky and count the stars, if you are able to count them." Then he said to him, "Your offspring will be that numerous."

6 Abram believed the Lord, and he credited it to him as righteousness.

18 On that day the Lord made a covenant with Abram, saying, "I give this land to your offspring, from the Brook of Egypt to the great river, the Euphrates River:

Genesis 15:4-6, 18

In response to Abraham's heartfelt lament of childlessness, he declared a servant as his heir. God fervently assured him that his very own child would be the promised heir. This assurance ignited a spark of hope that would resonate through the ages. This child would thrive and multiply. Future generations would also do the same. They would become as numerous as the stars that blanket the night sky. What's truly remarkable is that Abraham embraced this divine promise with unwavering faith, believing wholeheartedly in its fulfillment. Once more, God reiterates His pledge of land for Abraham's descendants. This time, He shows profound commitment. He establishes a sacred covenant. The promise is immortalized through explicitly defined geographical boundaries. This action forever links Abraham's lineage to a divine inheritance.

God's promises to Abraham and Sarah, father and mother of many nations (Genesis 17:1-8, 15-16)


17 When Abram was ninety-nine years old, the Lord appeared to him, saying, "I am God Almighty. Live in my presence and be blameless. 2 I will set up my covenant between me and you, and I will multiply you greatly."

3 Then Abram fell facedown and God spoke with him: 4 "As for me, here is my covenant with you: You will become the father of many nations. 5 Your name will no longer be Abram; your name will be Abraham, for I will make you the father of many nations. 6 I will make you extremely fruitful and will make nations and kings come from you. 7 I will confirm my covenant that is between me and you and your future offspring throughout their generations. It is a permanent covenant to be your God and the God of your offspring after you. 8 And to you and your future offspring I will give the land where you are residing – all the land of Canaan – as a permanent possession, and I will be their God."

15 God said to Abraham, "As for your wife Sarai, do not call her Sarai, for Sarah[f] will be her name. 16 I will bless her; indeed, I will give you a son by her. I will bless her, and she will produce nations; kings of peoples will come from her."

Genesis 17:1-8, 15-16

Many years had passed since God first ignited the promise in Abraham's heart. It was a promise. His descendants would be as countless as the dust of the earth. They would be as numerous as the stars in the vast, shimmering sky. Yet, despite the weight of time, Abraham and his beloved wife remained childless. Their hopes seemed to dim as they grew older. In this moment of uncertainty, God seized the



chance to rekindle Abraham's faith. He declared with fervor that He would multiply him “exceedingly.” This reignited the flame of hope within him.


At this time, God changed Abram’s name to Abraham. He said Abraham would become a “father of many nations.” He also changed the name of his wife from Sarai to Sarah. God said she would be a “mother of nations” (Genesis 17:5, 16). It seemed impossible that Abraham and Sarah would ever have a child. However, God continued to repeat His original promise to Abraham. He also added new details.

God decides to share His plans with Abraham (Genesis 18:17-18)

“And the LORD said, ‘Shall I hide from Abraham what I am doing, since Abraham shall surely become a great and mighty nation, and all the nations of the earth shall be blessed in him?’”

The setting for this passage is an intense moment. It occurs just before the Divine decision to obliterate Sodom and Gomorrah. This decision is driven by the atrocious deeds of their inhabitants. In a profound and stirring verse, we witness the turmoil within God. He considers whether to reveal His imminent plans to Abraham. God is compelled to share this monumental secret with Abraham because of the staggering destiny awaiting him. Abraham would father a mighty nation. Through this extraordinary man, every nation on earth would be showered with blessings.

What this verse passionately reveals is the profound significance of God's promise to Abraham. This promise was not just a fleeting thought; it held monumental weight in God's heart. Time and again, God revisited this promise in His profound conversations with the patriarch, highlighting its importance. In this moment, it is



pivotal. It influences God's decision to entrust Abraham with the unveiling of His plans for those cities.

The birth of Isaac (Genesis 21:1-3)


“And the LORD visited Sarah as He had said, and the LORD did for Sarah as He had spoken. For Sarah conceived and bore Abraham a son in his old age, at the set time of which God had spoken to him. And Abraham called the name of his son who was born to him – whom Sarah bore to him – Isaac.”

Even though Sarah had long been deemed “past the age” for having children, God, in His boundless mercy and power, performed a miracle that defied all odds – she conceived and bore a son! This incredible passage boldly illustrates that God remains faithful to His promises. Despite her situation, Sarah experienced a divine intervention that brought forth life (Hebrews 11:11). “Therefore from one man, and him as good as dead, were born as many as the stars of the sky in multitude – innumerable as the sand which is by the seashore” (verse 12).

Promise of “the gate of their enemies” (Genesis 22:16-18)

“By Myself I have sworn, says the LORD, because you have done this thing, and have not withheld your son, your only son – blessing I will bless you, and multiplying I will multiply your descendants as the stars of the heaven and as the sand which is on the seashore; and your descendants shall possess the gate of their enemies. In your seed all the nations of the earth shall be blessed, because you have obeyed My voice.”

Abraham boldly demonstrated his readiness to sacrifice his beloved son. This was the very child through whom he anticipated the fulfillment of God’s magnificent




promise of countless descendants. After this act, God once again poured forth His formidable blessing upon Abraham. He affirmed that Abraham's lineage would thrive with abundant progeny. He also proclaimed, "Your descendants shall possess the gate of their enemies." This proclamation infused the promise with an electrifying sense of destiny and triumph.

While the interpretations of the phrase "gate of their enemies" may vary, the concepts encompass having power and dominion over others. Vital legal transactions unfolded at the city gate. Additionally, it refers to the commanding control of critical land and sea passages. Both of these concepts resonate deeply. God reiterates this blessing frequently. This repetition highlights the importance of His promise to Abraham. He said, "I will make you a great nation" (Genesis 12:2). Indeed, great nations do not just exist. They wield unparalleled authority. They command essential strategic gateways that shape the very course of history.

God's promise to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob (Genesis 26:3-5; 27:26-29; 28:13-14; 35:11-12)

After Abraham's death, God fervently reiterated the promises. He fortified these promises for his beloved son Isaac. He also did this for his cherished grandson Jacob. Let us delve into the profound significance of these prophecies!

3 stay in this land as an alien, and I will be with you and bless you. For I will give all these lands to you and your offspring, and I will confirm the oath that I swore to your father Abraham. 4 I will make your offspring as numerous as the stars of the sky, I will give your offspring all these lands, and all the nations of the earth will be blessed by your off-



spring, 5 because Abraham listened to me and kept my mandate, my commands, my statutes, and my instructions."

Genesis 26:3-5

Abraham's faithful obedience led to these unconditional promises for his descendants. Isaac passed on these promises through a blessing to Jacob in Genesis 27:26-29. God also repeated the promises to Jacob in a dream in Genesis 28:13-14:

13 The Lord was standing there beside him, saying, "I am the Lord, the God of your father Abraham and the God of Isaac. I will give you and your offspring the land on which you are lying. 14 Your offspring will be like the dust of the earth, and you will spread out toward the west, the east, the north, and the south. All the peoples on earth will be blessed through you and your offspring.

Genesis 28:13-14

God also gave added details to Jacob, whose name God later changed to Israel:

11 God also said to him, "I am God Almighty. Be fruitful and multiply. A nation, indeed an assembly of nations, will come from you, and kings will descend from you. 12 I will give to you the land that I gave to Abraham and Isaac. And I will give the land to your future descendants."

Genesis 35:11-12


Do the promises to Abraham still apply?

Today, it is fervently acknowledged that Jesus Christ is the ultimate fulfillment of God's promise. This promise is to bless all families of the earth through Abraham. Abraham's descendants embarked on a remarkable journey. They multiplied and evolved into the ancient nations of Israel and Judah. This journey stands as a testament to this divine commitment. Yet, the question lingers – does God's promise to Abraham resonate with significance in our lives today?

Many people passionately recognize that the extraordinary blessings of Jesus Christ extend to all nations even today. However, there remains uncertainty about the relevance of the physical promises made to Abraham's descendants. Some argue that these blessings have been fulfilled. They believe there is no ongoing significance to the physical promises. However, the Bible powerfully affirms that these blessings will endure both until and beyond Christ's triumphant return. Genesis 49:1 vividly anticipates that the twelve sons of Jacob will evolve into mighty nations, destined to thrive "in the last days."

During His incredible New Testament ministry, Jesus revealed to His disciples a glorious promise. In the future Kingdom of God, they would be honored to sit on thrones, "judging the twelve tribes of Israel" (Matthew 19:28; Luke 22:30). Imagine the breathtaking beauty of the New Jerusalem, boasting 12 magnificent gates, each bearing the proud name of one of "the twelve tribes of the children of Israel" (Revelation 21:12)!

The answer is that both the spiritual and physical components of Abraham's promise still apply. The opportunity to receive salvation comes through the



spiritual part of God's promise to Abraham – the coming of Jesus Christ. Understanding who the nations are today is important. Many of them are largely comprised of Abraham's descendants. This enhances making sense of end-time prophecies.


19 God is not a man, that he should lie; neither the son of man, that he should repent: hath he said, and shall he not do it? or hath he spoken, and shall he not make it good?


Numbers 23:19

God is not a liar! What He promises, He intends on following through with!

To truly immerse yourself in the magnificent promises of God, explore transformative questions about their profound application. Consider your vital role in them. Reflect on the extraordinary impact of embracing such powerful truths. Reflect wholeheartedly on these specific promises, your dynamic relationship with God, and how they fervently inspire your actions and choices. Explore the profound connection between God's promises and your unwavering faith. Envision how these divine assurances can shape a brilliant future filled with hope. Discover the purpose they provide.


Questions about Specific Promises:

- What specific promises of God am I holding onto?
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- Where do I find those promises in the Bible?
 - Are these promises conditional or unconditional?
 - How do these promises relate to my specific circumstances?
 - What do I expect God to do based on this promise?
 - How can I better understand the meaning and scope of this promise?


Questions about Your Role and Relationship with God:

- Am I actively seeking God's guidance in my life?
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- Am I living a life that is pleasing to God?
 - Am I willing to trust God even when things don't go as I expect?
 - Am I learning from the promises I have experienced?
 - How can I better demonstrate my faith through my actions?
 - How can I better understand God's character and intentions?

Questions about the Impact of Believing God's Promises:

- How can I live in anticipation of God's promises being fulfilled?
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- How will believing God's promises shape my future decisions?
 - How will believing God's promises strengthen my relationship with God?
 - How can I share the promises of God with others?
 - How can I use God's promises as a source of comfort and hope in difficult times?
 - How can I find joy and peace in God's promises?

By passionately engaging with these questions, you can profoundly enrich your understanding of God's promises. Their transformative impact on your life guides you toward a an exhilarating and deeply fulfilling faith journey.



TAKING ACTION BASED IN FAITH

There is a profound difference between placing our trust in our own “works”. It is transformative to surrender that trust to God. Similarly, a stark contrast exists between the mere reliance on the law, as the Jews did, and the heartfelt good works. These works demonstrate our unwavering obedience. They also show our vibrant, living faith.

Abraham is our object lesson in this regard.


James explained:

20 Senseless person! Are you willing to learn that faith without works is useless? 21 Wasn't Abraham our father justified by works in offering Isaac his son on the altar? 22 You see that faith was active together with his works, and by works, faith was made complete, 23 and the Scripture was fulfilled that says, Abraham believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness, and he was called God's friend. 24 You see that a person is justified by works and not by faith alone.

James 2:2-24

Our faith is perfected as we do good works. We should do good works in faith, as our Abraham did. As John 8:39 says: “...“If you were Abraham's children,” Jesus told them, “you would do what Abraham did.”

Abraham did many works that demonstrated his strong faith in God. Jesus Christ told the Jewish leaders of His day, “But now you seek to kill Me, a man who has told you the truth which I heard from God. Abraham did not do this” (John 8:40). Abraham believed the truth from the mouths of God's messengers and from the mouth of the Lord. The faith of Abraham is living faith.




We must embrace the audacity of Abraham. We must believe wholeheartedly that our God can achieve the impossible. Nothing stands too daunting for Him. Our faith in God's unmatched power and unwavering promises should be resolute and unshakeable. We must dedicate ourselves to following God obediently. We should step boldly away from the temptations of this world. We must reject sin.

Additionally, we must wholeheartedly trust in God's divine guidance as He leads us into the uncharted territories of our lives. As we traverse this world as mere pilgrims and strangers, we should gaze forward in expectation. We should look toward the glorious Kingdom of God. We should anticipate the magnificent New Jerusalem. Our fervent belief in the future inheritance awaiting us must ignite our spirits, compelling us to live passionately by faith.


Finally, through Abraham's example, we see that we must demonstrate our faith by being obedient to God. We need to do good works that demonstrate our faith. Our faith is perfected by doing good works. Having faith and doing good works is a living faith. *"I will show you my faith by my works"* (James 2:18).

Abraham certainly showed us all his faith by his works. Are you going to follow Abraham's example? This is the most important step you can take. May God help you make these critical changes in your life so you can inherit the same reward as Abraham when Jesus returns and establishes the Kingdom of God here on earth!





I believe we can ponder and evaluate our own faith by asking ourselves three questions:

- What are you hoping, believing and waiting for?
 - Is your faith draining you or giving you energy?
 - Does faith feel like effort or are you at peace?
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WILLINGNESS TO SACRIFICE

Read Genesis 22.

Genesis 22 records the greatest test that Abraham ever faced. It also helps us see the progressive unfolding of God's rescue mission for planet earth. For it contains a beautiful prefiguring of our Lord Jesus Christ's sacrifice at Calvary. In both, the lesson from this passage is this: obedient faith overcomes in the trials of life. I want us to consider five lessons we can draw from the sacrifice of Abraham. We can learn them the hard way or the easy way. Blindly on our own, or with insight and wisdom from God's Word.

1. Expect Tests from Almighty God (Genesis 22:1-2)

22 After these things God tested Abraham and said to him, "Abraham!" "Here I am," he answered. 2 "Take your son," he said, "your only son Isaac, whom you love, go to the land of Moriah, and offer him there as a burnt offering on one of the mountains I will tell you about."

Genesis 22:1-2

In the "School of Faith," we are bound to encounter profound tests that shape our very essence. This is the sole pathway to our growth and transformation.

Remember how your non-Christian friends began to keenly observe your every word and action when they learned about your new Sunday commitments? They might have laughed, but deep down, they were watching with intent. They may have even thrown challenges your way to gauge the authenticity of your faith. Would you still inflate your mileage claims? Were you arriving late to work? Did you occasionally let a swear slip? Could they still entice you into a tipsy state? Were you still partaking in gossip? These tests were subtle yet significant. They were

often unnoticed. Yet, they played a crucial role in revealing the strength of your convictions.

Life is filled with little tests that reveal one of two profound truths. You may realize you've become religious. You might become a self-righteous burden to those around you. Or you might encounter a life-altering moment with Jesus Christ that leaves others yearning for what you have. We do not face every challenge as a direct test from God. However, every experience can transform into a test or a temptation. It can even turn into both based on our response.

12 Blessed is the one who endures trials, because when he has stood the test he will receive the crown of life that God has promised to those who love him. 13 No one undergoing a trial should say, "I am being tempted by God," since God is not tempted by evil, and he himself doesn't tempt anyone. 14 But each person is tempted when he is drawn away and enticed by his own evil desire. 15 Then after desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin, and when sin is fully grown, it gives birth to death. 16 Don't be deceived, my dear brothers and sisters.

James 1:12-16

Often, the pain we endure springs from our own disobedience. However, some heartaches are simply woven into the very fabric of our human journey. As time marches on, friends and loved ones may drift away or depart. Life inevitably shifts beneath our feet. We find ourselves grappling with the heart-wrenching adjustments that follow. To stay intimately connected to God, we must passionately learn to differentiate between trials and temptations. Temptations arise from our inner desires (James 1:12-16). They are seductive and enticing. Trials are divinely orchestrated by the Lord. They are infused with profound and special purpose. The devil cunningly uses temptations to coax out our darkest selves. God uses trials to

cultivate our highest potential (1:1-6). Temptations may seem irresistibly alluring and oh-so-sensible, while trials can feel utterly, bewilderingly incomprehensible.

Why would God grant Abraham the miracle of a son, only to demand the ultimate act of sacrifice? Perhaps it was because Abraham had forged ahead on his own. He did not wait for God's divine timing to bless him with an heir. Now, having fulfilled that long-awaited promise, God yearned to test the very depths of Abraham's faith. He wanted to see if Abraham would place his trust in Him utterly and without hesitation. Abraham needed to embrace the challenge with a heart aflame for the divine will.

We all encounter temptations to sin (1 Cor. 10:13), yet not everyone faces the same trials of faith. These challenges are custom-crafted for each beloved child of God, making every journey profoundly unique. God's tests are remarkable. They serve as a testament to His desire for us to deepen our faith. They may also reveal new purposes for us. This is the vital lesson we must embrace. Anticipate trials from God. The Christian life is not meant to be a stroll in the park. Instead, it's a grand adventure of trust in Him through every storm we face. Following Christ was never intended to be easy. Striving to embody His likeness is undeniably worth every struggle.

2. Focus on Promises not Explanations (Genesis 22:3-5)

3 So Abraham got up early in the morning, saddled his donkey, and took with him two of his young men and his son Isaac. He split wood for a burnt offering and set out to go to the place God had told him about. 4 On the third day Abraham looked up and saw the place in the distance. 5 Then Abraham said to his young men, "Stay here with the donkey. The boy

and I will go over there to worship; then we'll come back to you."

Genesis 22:3-5

Like Abraham, our faith is truly forged only when God challenges us to face the unbearable. We are called to act upon the unreasonable and to anticipate the impossible! Whether we gaze upon Moses at the Red Sea, we see David in his dark cave. Peter warms himself by the fire. Jesus endures agony at Calvary. The resounding message remains: We thrive on promises, not mere explanations!

Consider the truly audacious nature of God's request! Isaac was not just Abraham's only son. He was the very embodiment of hope. He was the promise of a future that had been meticulously woven into the fabric of their lives. A miraculous gift from God, he was the cherished answer to the fervent prayers of Abraham and Sarah. Their love for Isaac knew no bounds, as he represented the aspirations and dreams they held dear. Yet, when God called upon Abraham to make the unimaginable sacrifice of offering his beloved son, it felt as if the ground beneath them was crumbling. Their existence, their very purpose, was being laid to waste in that heart-stopping moment.

When God sends a trial our way, our immediate response often bursts forth as, "Why, Lord?" followed swiftly by, "Why me?" In that moment, we crave answers from the Almighty! We yearn for insight into the depths of our challenges. Yet, deep down, we recognize that God has profound reasons for these tests. These tests may be to refine and elevate our faith (1 Peter 1:6-9). They might shape and perfect our character (James 1:1-4), or even guard us against the snares of sin (2 Cor. 12:7-10) — but initially, we struggle to grasp how these truths resonate within our own lives. It's entirely human to seek explanations from our Father. This search hints at

a deeper truth. We may not fully understand ourselves. We may not fully understand the immense wisdom of God. Faith is a powerful force that does not crave explanations; it thrives on unwavering promises.

21 because he was fully convinced that what God had promised, he was also able to do. 22 Therefore, it was credited to him for righteousness.

Romans 4:21-22

As we reflect on Romans 4:20-21, we see Abraham, a true exemplar of trust. He believed God and responded to His calling even when the path was shrouded in uncertainty —

- when he couldn't discern *where* to go (Heb. 11:8)
- *when* the timing would unfold (Heb 11:9-10, 13-16),
- *how* the promises would materialize (Heb 11:11-12),
- *why* he faced such immense trials (Heb 11:17-19).

Two powerful lessons resonate deeply within us. Embrace the unwavering trials set forth by the Almighty. Fiercely anchor your heart to His magnificent promises instead of chasing after mere explanations.

3. Depend on God's Provision (Genesis 22:6-14)

7 Then Isaac spoke to his father Abraham and said, "My father." And he replied, "Here I am, my son." Isaac said, "The fire and the wood are here, but where is the lamb for the burnt offering?" 8 Abraham answered, "God himself will provide the lamb for the burnt offering, my son." Then the two of them walked on together. "Isaac spoke up and said to his father Abraham, "Father?" "Yes, my son?" Abraham replied. "The fire and wood are here," Isaac

said, "but where is the lamb for the burnt offering?" Abraham answered, "God himself will provide the lamb for the burnt offering, my son." And the two of them went on together."

Genesis 22:7-8

How can we be certain that Abraham placed his complete trust in God's promise?

Just picture this moment: when Isaac, his beloved son, asked about the animal for the sacrifice. Abraham, with unwavering faith, responded, "God will provide the lamb". As he ascended Mount Moriah alongside his son, a profound confidence surged within him. He firmly believed that God would meet every need. What could Abraham lean on in such a harrowing hour? Certainly not his emotions, as he must have grappled with overwhelming turmoil at the thought of fulfilling God's command. He adored his only son, yet his love for God was even greater. He had no one else to turn to. Sarah remained at home. The two servants who accompanied them were far behind at the camp.

While we cherish friends and family who lighten our burdens, there are trials in life that we must navigate alone. It is only then that we can truly see what our Heavenly Father is capable of doing for us! Abraham had already tasted the extraordinary resurrection power of God in his own life (Rom. 4:19-21), instilling within him the firm belief that God could raise Isaac from the dead if that was to be His will. Our hope, too, is anchored in the glorious resurrection of Jesus. We understand "the power of His resurrection" (Phil. 3:10) as we confront life's challenges. When circumstances seem utterly hopeless, proclaim to yourself, "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me" (Phil. 4:13). Indeed, God provided the sacrifice that was necessary, allowing a ram to take Isaac's place on

the altar (Gen. 22:13). Abraham embarked on a transformative journey. In this journey, he unveiled a new name for God – “Jehovah-jireh.” This name resonates with powerful meanings: “The Lord will see to it” or “The Lord will be seen.”

- **Where** does the Lord provide our needs? In the sacred realm of His divine assignment! Abraham stood firm in the right place, allowing God to fulfill his every need. We are in no position to anticipate God's provision if we wander outside the will of God!
- **When** does God meet our needs? Just when we have the need and not a moment too soon! When you passionately bring your requests to the throne of grace, God responds with overflowing mercy and grace. He acts in your “time of need” (Heb. 4:16). At times, it may seem like God waits until the very last second. However, that's merely our limited human perspective. God is never late!
- **How** does God provide for us? In ways that are remarkably organic and profound! God didn't dispatch an angel with a grand sacrifice. Instead, He orchestrated a ram's entrapment in a bush at the moment Abraham needed it. It was right where he could reach out and take hold of it. Abraham needed just one animal. God, in His infinite wisdom, ensured he wasn't overwhelmed with a multitude of sheep.
- **To whom** does God bestow His abundant provision? To those who wholeheartedly trust Him and faithfully obey His divine instructions. When we align ourselves with the will of God, we have every right to anticipate His generous provision. “When God’s work is accomplished in God’s way, it will never lack God’s unwavering support.” God is not beholden to bless my own

ideas. He is not bound to favor my personal projects. However, He will unequivocally provide for His work when I commit to doing it His way. Three powerful lessons thus far... Expect trials from Almighty God. Focus on promises, not mere explanations. Depend on God's Provision, and let this ignite your spirit!

4. Glorify God in all you do!


If ever two suffering souls unveiled the radiant glory of God the Father, it was undoubtedly Abraham and Isaac. This revelation occurred on the sacred heights of Mount Moriah. Their experience stands as a profound illustration of the Father, the Son, and the cross. It is among the most breathtaking depictions found throughout the vast narratives of the Old Testament. Jesus proclaimed to the Jews:

56 Your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day; he saw it and was glad."

John 8:56

Let us deeply ponder the significance of Jesus's words.

- **The Father and Son acted together.** The heart-stirring phrase "*and the two of them went on together*" resonates powerfully in this deeply moving narrative (Genesis 22:6, 8). In our passionate evangelism, we fervently emphasize the Father's infinite love for the lost (John 3:16). We also fervently speak about the incredible sacrifice of Jesus to redeem us (1 John 3:16). Yet, how often do we overlook the breathtaking truth? Within the gospel, the Father and the Son deeply and dearly love each other. Jesus Christ stands as the Father's "beloved Son" (Matt. 3:17), and the Son passionately proclaims, "But that the world may know that I love the Father" (John 14:31). Abraham, in a profound act of faith, did not with-



hold his beloved son (Gen. 22:16), just as the Father did not spare His cherished Son (Rom. 8:32).

- **The Son had to die.** Abraham wielded a knife and a torch, both potent instruments of death. The knife was poised to sever Isaac's physical life. The fire awaited to consume the wood on the altar, where his precious body would rest. In Isaac's poignant story, a substitute suffered in his stead. However, nobody could ever take the place of Jesus on that cross. He was the singular, ultimate sacrifice that could shatter the chains of sin and liberate the world. The question that echoed from Isaac's lips, "*Where is the lamb?*" found its profound answer in the voice of John the Baptist. He said, "*Behold the Lamb of God.*" This Lamb takes away the sin of the world (John 1:29). The cross stood as the brutal instrument of death; yet at Calvary, Jesus confronted much more than mere death. He bore the weighty judgment of God for the sins of humanity. Isaac felt neither the searing knife nor the purging fire, but Jesus experienced the agony of them both. Isaac had a loving father right beside him. However, when Jesus became sin for us, He was forsaken by His Father. He was in the depths of despair.
- **The Son bore the burden of sin.** It is profoundly significant that the wood, a symbol of sacrifice, is referenced five times throughout this powerful narrative. Remarkably, Isaac did not begin to carry the wood until he reached the sacred Mount Moriah. In a striking parallel, at the foot of Mount Moriah, Jesus bore His own cross. It was the very wood upon which He would lay down His life. Picture this: Abraham took that wood and gently "*placed it on his son Isaac*" (Gen. 22:6), and yet, centuries later, "*the Lord has laid on Him the iniquity of us all*" (Isa.

53:6). It's a heart-wrenching testament to the ultimate sacrifice made for humanity.

- **The Son was raised from the dead!** Isaac, though spared from death, experienced a profound resurrection in a figurative sense (Heb. 11:19) as he was returned to his father, Abraham. But Jesus – oh, He truly tasted death! He was buried in darkness and then burst forth into the light of life, triumphantly resurrected! Abraham offered Isaac in deep trust. He received him back from the brink. This was a symbol of God's mighty power over death. Amid the trials that test our faith, the most wondrous outcome is the deepening of our bond with our Heavenly Father. It molds us into the likeness of Jesus Himself!


So, expect tests from Almighty God. Focus on promises not explanations. Depend on God's Provision, and Glorify God in all you do.

5. Look forward to all Christ has for you (Genesis 22:14-18)

14 And Abraham named that place The Lord Will Provide, so today it is said, "It will be provided on the Lord's mountain." 15 Then the angel of the Lord called to Abraham a second time from heaven 16 and said, "By myself I have sworn," this is the Lord's declaration: "Because you have done this thing and have not withheld your only son, 17 I will indeed bless you and make your offspring as numerous as the stars of the sky and the sand on the seashore. Your offspring will possess the city gates of their enemies. 18 And all the nations of the earth will be blessed by your offspring because you have obeyed my command."

Genesis 22:14-18

There is always a powerful "afterward" to the trials of life (Heb. 12:11; 1 Peter 5:10), because God never wastes a moment of suffering! God profoundly blessed




Abraham for his unwavering, obedient faith. To begin with, he received a glorious new approval from God (Gen. 22:12). By faithfully obeying God's will and fervently desiring to please God's heart, Abraham was deeply commended. God bestowed upon Abraham exhilarating new assurances (Gen. 22:15-18). Though he had previously heard these promises about the future, they now resonated with fresh and vibrant meaning. Furthermore, Abraham discovered an awe-inspiring new name for God (22:14). *Jehovah-jireh* means “*the Lord will provide.*” It can also mean “*the Lord will see to it.*” This name stands as a profound reminder of God’s unwavering faithfulness.

To truly reflect on the sacrifices demanded by the Lord, dive deep into your priorities and passionately examine how your choices resonate with your faith. What are you fervently willing to forgo to forge a richer, more profound relationship with Him? Contemplate how your time, resources, and energy are being unleashed – are they fervently directed towards fulfilling God's divine will?


Here are some questions to ponder:


Examining your priorities:

- What are your current priorities, and how do they align with your faith? Are there areas where your priorities seem to clash with your beliefs?


- 
- How do you spend your time, and how much of it is dedicated to serving the Lord? Are you prioritizing spiritual growth and service over other activities?
 - What resources (money, talents, etc.) do you possess, and how are you using them to benefit others or the kingdom of God?

Evaluating your choices and actions:

- Are your choices and actions reflecting a commitment to living for the Lord? Do they honor His teachings and values?
 - What aspects of your life are you most comfortable with, and what aspects are you most hesitant to change or relinquish?
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- 
- In what areas of your life do you feel like you are compromising your faith or falling short of God's expectations?

Considering sacrifices and their impact:

- What are you willing to sacrifice to deepen your relationship with the Lord and grow in your faith?
 - How do you feel when you choose to sacrifice something for the Lord, and how does that affect your spiritual well-being?
 - What would it look like to offer your whole life as a living sacrifice to the Lord?
- 



Additional questions to consider:

- Are you willing to be uncomfortable or inconvenience yourself for the sake of God's will?
- How do you respond to challenges or trials that may test your faith and willingness to sacrifice?
- What examples of sacrifice have you observed in the lives of others, and what have you learned from them?


LEARNING FROM MISTAKES

Satan knows that if he can bring us to the point in life where we feel: that we've run out of options, that we are between a rock and a hard place, then he can have his way with us. You see... It is amazing what we are willing to make the mistakes and the bad choices when we are desperate.

- ◇ A wife has been faithful to God and to her husband for years. She is aware of her aging body and fading physical attraction. She throws discretion to the wind and has an affair.
- ◇ A Christian man is tired of searching unsuccessfully for a Christian mate. He gives in and marries a nonbeliever with questionable morals.
- ◇ A Christian teenager, exasperated by the apparent inconsistencies of his parents and the establishment, rebels against authority and gets into drugs or sexual encounters.

We can see the world around us considers these as acceptable ways of coping when we are desperate... but are they?

There are countless individuals who proudly declare themselves Christians. Yet, their actions often mirror those who wander without the guidance of God. Time and again, we see them making the same devastating choices. These choices wreak havoc on their lives and the lives of those they love. Sometimes, these choices leave scars that may never heal. Take a look around: the divorce rate is alarmingly similar within the church as it is outside its walls. For far too many, our conduct from Monday to Saturday is not much different from the world's conduct. Our moral compass strikingly resembles that of the world. Isn't that the truth? What I want to do is explore some choices. Abraham and Sarah made these choices when they felt



that they were at the end of their rope. When they were desperate.

From the depths of their hearts, we uncover the struggle that Abraham and Sarah endure. God has made a profound promise to Abraham: he will be the father of a monumental nation. Yet, as the sands of time slip through their fingers, both Abraham and Sarah find themselves aging. Still, the longed-for son has not arrived. Their dreams wane, and despair looms ever closer. In a moment of desperation, they feel the influence of time's cruelty. They choose to take matters into their own hands. With heavy hearts, they decide Abraham must take Sarah's housemaid, Hagar, as his partner. They hope to achieve the child that fate seems to withhold. To truly understand the anguish of Abraham and Sarah, we need to immerse ourselves in their profound sorrow. We must feel the weight of their longing.

Perhaps for us it is:

- Childlessness.
- An unhappy marriage.
- The loss of a loved one.
- Disappointment in our children.
- Betrayal by a close friend.
- The loss of a job.
- Or a financial collapse.

These burdens have pushed us to the edge of our endurance. They test the limits of our emotional stability. Sarah's anguish over her inability to bear children has been a profound sorrow she has carried for far too long. At 75 years old, the flicker of

hope for conception has sadly extinguished. Amidst this heartbreaking reality, we acknowledge the desperate schemes. Some of these schemes we conjure can inflict more harm than the very issues we face. We stand on the precipice of realizing how DESPERATE MISTAKES can unravel the fabric of our lives.

Let's see what we can learn from Abraham & Sarah about desperate mistakes.

1. We Must Not Allow Fleshly Desires To Overtake God's Will

What Sarah passionately proposed was that Abraham embrace the idea of taking a second wife. This may sound strange to us in modern times. However, in their era, it was a deeply rooted aspect of Canaanite culture. A barren woman could fulfill her desire for children through what we now recognize as a surrogate mother. They lacked the impersonal technology we possess today. Instead, the woman was drawn into a profound relationship. She literally became Abraham's wife. This intent is unmistakably clear in verse 3. Sarah took her Egyptian maid, Hagar. She gave Hagar to her husband, Abraham, as his wife.

Polygamy was an affront to God, a blatant violation of the sacred teachings of Genesis 2:24! Yet, shockingly, it was embraced and practiced by the surrounding nations of Canaan. The conniving schemes of Abraham and Sarah would barely have caused a stir among their neighbors! But let this resonate – Abraham and Sarah were abandoning their faith in God. They turned away from the unwavering promise that He had bestowed upon Abraham. A promise that had been reaffirmed with fervor time and time again!

Abraham & Sarah had given in to Satan. They had given into the flesh rather than faith. Any time we give up on a promise of God and resort to our own means, we

are doing exactly what they did. We're letting fleshly desire overrule good sense and overrule what we know as God's will. When we are desperate it's amazing what we're willing to do. And the world around us cheers us on because they don't know the will of God nor do they care. Let us listen to Paul's advice for such desperate thinking.

7 Don't be deceived: God is not mocked. For whatever a person sows he will also reap, 8 because the one who sows to his flesh will reap destruction from the flesh, but the one who sows to the Spirit will reap eternal life from the Spirit.

Galatians 6:7-8

In our desperation, we may say to ourselves:

- Surely God will understand my frustration and not hold me accountable.
- Well, I don't care what God thinks, I'm going to do it anyway.
- I don't care if I go to hell... it's hell to live in this condition anyway.

No matter how we approach it, straying from God's principles will inevitably lead to consequences that we'll have to face. Yielding to our fleshly desires brought ruin upon Abraham and Sarah, and it will do the same to us. You can bank on this truth: *Whatever we sow, we will undoubtedly reap.*

2. Don't Listen to Those Who Are Unfamiliar with the Word of God.

Read Genesis 16:2,4



2 Sarai said to Abram, "Since the Lord has prevented me from bearing children, go to my slave; perhaps through her I can build a family." And Abram agreed to what Sarai said.

4 He slept with Hagar, and she became pregnant. When she saw that she was pregnant, her mistress became contemptible to her.

Genesis 14:2,4

They did it. Their house would soon be filled with the sound of children.

- What could possibly be wrong with that?
- Didn't they deserve to be happy?
- Didn't God want them to be happy?
- Didn't He promise them this happiness?

But... Their euphoria, though intoxicating, was tragically fleeting. The shadows of their troubles loomed large even before their child took its first breath. The tension in their home became palpable. It was a thick fog of uncertainty. It was so dense it felt as if it could be sliced through. What was meant to ignite joy and hope instead led to a tumultuous storm. It was full of mistrust, misunderstandings, and heart-wrenching sorrow. These emotions affected the very corners of their lives they had thought would be untouched.

Abraham listened to the voice of Sarah. Is there something wrong with man listening to his wife? No... No.. Unless his wife doesn't understand the will of God. Let us consider the whole picture!

- God had appeared to Abraham... Not Sarah.
- He appeared to him in the land of Ur. Again when they left Haran.

- 
- And again in chapter 15 just before chapter 16. Each time the promise was made of a great land and a great nation from Abraham.

-

So... Who knows the will of God clearly... And who doesn't?

Abraham understands, and Sarah may know far less... RIGHT? But let me tell you, this in no way diminishes Sarah's worth compared to Abraham! There are moments when we, as God's beloved people, desperately need guidance. We must seek the wisdom of mature believers. They truly grasp God's Word deeply, not just on the surface. Abraham was entrusted with God's Word, a treasure beyond measure. Yet, we often seek spiritual advice from people who only echo what we want to hear. We should receive insights that challenge and guide us instead. They should boldly share the truths we truly need from His Word.

We must hold Abraham accountable just as much as Sarah! Abraham was fully aware of the right path. Still, he strayed into wrongness. He succumbed to poor advice that contradicted his understanding of truth. James warns us that such actions are sinful. David proclaimed: Blessed is the man who does not walk in the counsel of the wicked but instead finds joy in the law of the LORD, meditating on it day and night! Let us fervently seek God's guidance. We must ensure we turn away from the counsel of those who do not know Him. We should courageously walk in the righteousness we are called to follow.

3. Don't Blame Others For Things We Bring Upon Ourselves

You might expect that when trouble erupted, Abraham and Sarah would acknowledge their fault. They would then bravely own up to it. Right? Wrong! Suddenly, Hagar is cast aside and stripped of her previous honor. Perhaps she foolishly believes she has taken Sarah's place in Abraham's heart. From Sarah's perspective, this is not how the story was meant to unfold! Yet, when we trust in our own flawed schemes, it leads to disappointment. We choose them over the unwavering promises of God. The outcome is always a bitter surprise. So, in her frustration, Sarah turned on Abraham, exclaiming, "*You are responsible for the wrong I am suffering. I put my servant in your arms, and now that she knows she is pregnant, she despises me. May the LORD judge between you and me.*" This isn't anything new — Eve blamed Satan, and Adam pointed fingers at Eve and even God for his own failings.

A sure sign of spiritual immaturity is blaming others when we are at fault and responsible. When will we start taking responsibility for our own behavior?

- If we come to worship and don't like the songs or song leader... Whose fault is that?
- When we don't get anything from the Bible class or preaching lesson... Whose fault is it?
- When we are distracted by crying babies or sleeping old folk... who must ultimately take responsibility for our attitude?

When will we grow up spiritually and say I am guilty and I will stop blaming others?

Jesus said something about this in Matthew 7:5:

5 Hypocrite! First take the beam of wood out of your eye, and then you will see clearly to take the splinter out of your brother's eye.

Matthew 7:5

Then There Are Times We Shirk Responsibility For The Sake Of Keeping Peace

Read Genesis 16:6

6 Abram replied to Sarai, "Here, your slave is in your power; do whatever you want with her." Then Sarai mistreated her so much that she ran away from her.

Genesis 16:6

Isn't it about time for Abraham to seize control of this chaotic situation? Shouldn't he start sharing the divine wisdom with his quarreling family? After all, he is the patriarch! Abraham should have boldly declared: *"Listen, ladies, this turmoil unfolded because I allowed it to happen. I didn't have to yield to this earthly scheme, yet I did, and I was wrong. I beg for your forgiveness for my folly. Now, with that behind us, Sarah, let's not forget that it was you who initiated this mess. You brought this upon yourself, so it's time to stop casting blame. Have you considered how Hagar would feel about this sudden rise in status? And you, Hagar, it's crucial to dismount from your lofty pedestal and remember you are still a servant in this household. You must show Sarah the respect she deserves!"*

There are undeniable moments when Christian fathers must boldly step up and take charge of their households. There are instances when mothers assertively

proclaim, *"You will listen to me because I am your mother!"* There are critical times when Elders must courageously highlight the sin that plagues the lives of the flock. They must firmly say NO to the unruly and divisive members that threaten unity. There are moments when preachers must shed the comfortable mantle of smooth words. They must abandon the narratives that simply please the crowd. Instead, they must deliver the hard truths essential for the thriving of the church family. Abraham felt an intense desire to maintain harmony. *"Follow your heart, my love."* When we truly understand what is right for our families and our church, we embrace a sacred responsibility. We must ensure it comes to fruition.


We Must Understand That Our Choices & Behavior Will Impact Others

Abraham, Sarah, and Hagar must take responsibility for what is happening today in the Middle East. Hagar, like Sarah, would have many descendants, too.

11 The angel of the Lord said to her, "You have conceived and will have a son. You will name him Ishmael, for the Lord has heard your cry of affliction. 12 This man will be like a wild donkey. His hand will be against everyone, and everyone's hand will be against him; he will settle near all his relatives."

Genesis 16:11-12

Ishmael was the son she bore within her womb. He was destined to be a fierce and untamed spirit. He was a bold soul ready to confront the world with unwavering courage. He would rise defiantly against all adversities, as the world rallied in opposition. Ishmael emerged not just as a figure. He became the proud progenitor of the Arabs. His lineage is steeped in a rich tapestry of tension and conflict with



the Jews and the broader world. This powerful legacy continues to resonate through the ages, echoing loudly in the hearts and minds of many even today.

Men cannot summon enough hatred, revenge, and violence in a single generation to rival what we witness today. They are haunted by the legacies of those who came before them. Abraham and these two women must grasp the magnitude of their disobedience and its lingering effects on our world today.

A striking illustration unfolds with a determined young man, fervently pursuing his dream of becoming a telegraph operator. Upon entering an expansive, bustling room, he encountered a symphony of sounds. The rhythmic tapping of telegraph keys resonated with electric energy. A sign commanded all hopeful candidates to take a seat and wait for their turn. Despite this, a fierce anticipation surged within him. He noted eight eager contenders ahead. Each one was vying for their shot in this frenzied arena. After just two or three tense minutes, the young man rose, resolutely stepping towards the door and walking in. Within moments, the manager appeared, announcing, *"You gentlemen may go now. The position has been filled."* Outrage ignited among the baffled candidates; they could not comprehend how the last to arrive had usurped their chance. *"It isn't fair!"* they protested. The manager coolly replied, *"While you sat here, the telegraph key was echoing a message — 'If you understand this message, come right in. The job is yours.' None of you heard it, but he did. That's why he has the job."*

Are we listening?

Paul said... These things were written for our learning. As a school master to bring us into the image of Jesus to help us become the people and person that God wants us to be. So, when we are desperate we don't make the mistakes that Abraham




made.

- Don't let fleshly desire overrule the Word of God.
- Don't take counsel from those who don't know the Word.
- Don't blame others for things we bring on ourselves.
- Don't shirk responsibility that God has given us.
- Remember our choices and behavior will impact future generations.

We all have a choice to make right now!


We can surrender to our base desires, allowing ourselves to be trapped by the weight of our shortcomings. We often point fingers at others. We refuse to acknowledge our own missteps. We miss out on the incredible gift of God's boundless forgiveness. We can shy away from our sacred responsibilities to our family. We can also neglect our duties to the church. In doing so, we let opportunities for growth slip through our fingers. Alternatively, we can rise up and claim our rightful place among them. We can wholeheartedly devote ourselves to the remarkable journey of becoming the individuals God truly calls us to be!


When grappling with the depth of desperation and the divine, immerse yourself in the profound questions of faith. Reflect on the transformative power of suffering and the rich tapestry of our relationship with God. Think fervently about why souls instinctively cry out to God in the throes of crisis. Explore the art of nurturing a life-enriching desperation. Confront the aching silence or perceived absence of God in our darkest hours with unwavering courage and hope.




Questions to Ponder:

The Nature of Faith:

- What does it mean to have faith in God, especially when you are desperate?
 - How does faith change or strengthen during times of suffering?
 - What are the limits of faith, and when does it feel like a burden rather than a comfort?
- 




Desperation and Suffering:

- Why do people often wait until a crisis to reach out to God?
 - How can we maintain a healthy desperation for God, rather than a knee-jerk reaction to problems?
 - Is suffering a test of faith, or a consequence of a flawed world?
 - How does suffering change our perspective on God's character and power?
 - How can we deal with the silence or perceived absence of God in times of hardship?
- 



Desperation and God's Presence:

- Does God suffer with us?
 - What is the role of prayer and other spiritual practices in a time of desperation?
 - How can we find hope and strength in God even when we feel hopeless?
 - What can we learn about ourselves and God through periods of desperation?
 - How can we cultivate a deeper relationship with God based on desperation and faith?
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LEAVING A LEGACY


God passionately reveals the essence of leaving a profound legacy through Abraham's extraordinary life. This revelation illuminates the incredible power of faith. It showcases unwavering obedience and deep trust in Him. Abraham's relentless faith demonstrated his courageous willingness to obey God in the face of immense challenges. His unshakeable trust in God's magnificent promises also forged a legacy that transcended generations. This legacy boldly illustrates that a truly lasting legacy is crafted through a vibrant and powerful relationship with God.

Here's a more detailed look at how God uses Abraham to teach us about leaving a legacy:

Faith: Abraham's unwavering faith is the very bedrock of his extraordinary legacy. He held tightly to God's promises with fierce determination. Even when they seemed utterly impossible, this profound faith was counted to him as righteousness. This powerful truth shows us that a vibrant legacy of faith is created through a bold belief in God's word. It is established by an unshakeable trust in His divine plan, even amidst uncertainty.

Obedience: Abraham's courageous leap of faith to obey God powerfully illustrates the profound significance of obedience in our lives. He left behind his cherished home, family, and familiar comforts. His unwavering commitment to follow divine guidance secured the inheritance of the promised land for his descendants. It also paved the way for God's extraordinary blessings to cascade through his lineage.

Trust: Abraham's trust in God was strong, even when he faced difficult situations. The request to sacrifice Isaac shows the power of trusting God's guidance and



timing. This trust allowed God to work in Abraham's life. It built a legacy of faith that would inspire generations to come.


Partnering with God: Abraham's life exemplifies partnering with God to see His promises fulfilled. God's promises to Abraham required him to step out in faith. He needed to obey and partner with God to fulfill those promises. This partnership resulted in a legacy of faith that continues to inspire believers today.


In essence, God uses Abraham to teach us that a legacy is not built on material wealth or worldly achievements. Instead, it is founded on a strong relationship with God. This relationship is characterized by faith, obedience, and trust. By following God's call, we can partner with Him. Together, we can leave a legacy that impacts generations and honors God's name.

Reflecting on legacy and God means diving deep into the essence of your being. It ignites fervent questions about your values and the immense impact you wish to leave behind. It also explores your intimate relationship with the divine. Embrace the vibrant mix of your strengths. Recognize your passions and envision how you long to be remembered in the hearts of others. Reflect boldly on your spiritual journey. Celebrate the powerful moments of God's presence that have shaped you. Appreciate your evolving understanding of faith.






Questions to Ponder about Legacy:

- What values do I want to embody in my life, and how can I reflect them in my actions?
 - If I could leave one message for future generations, what would it be?
 - What are my greatest strengths and how can I use them to make a positive impact on the world?
 - What are my passions, and how can I integrate them into my work and daily life?
 - How do I want to be remembered by my family, friends, and community?
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- What is the most important thing I want my children and grandchildren to learn from me?
 - How can I leave a legacy of kindness, compassion, and service to others?
 - What is the most significant contribution I can make to the world?

Questions to Ponder about God:

- How has God shown Himself to me in the past, and how do I continue to experience His presence?
 - What are my deepest questions about God and faith?
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- How does my faith impact my daily life and relationships?
 - How can I deepen my spiritual growth and understanding of God?
 - In what ways am I actively serving God and fulfilling His purpose for my life?
 - How can I better reflect God's love and compassion in my actions and words?
 - What does my relationship with God mean to me, and how can I nurture it?
 - How can I share my faith with others in a way that is authentic and meaningful?
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God uses
IMPERFECT
people in
IMPERFECT
situations to accomplish His
PERFECT
will.





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