

Finishing Well

Lesson #15

Journey To Absolute Surrender

April 28, 2021

Heb. 11:8 By faith Abraham, when he was called to go out into a place which he should after receive for an inheritance, obeyed; and he went out, not knowing whither he went. [70 yrs.]

Heb. 11:17 By faith Abraham, when he was tried, offered up Isaac: and he that had received the promises offered up his only begotten son, [~135-137 yrs. old] [~65-67 years have passed]

Consider: If you did not know the account of Abraham in Genesis, you might come to the conclusion: He was a man of giant faith who trusted God implicitly and obeyed Him immediately. The Genesis account describes the years from his starting point until his test of absolute surrender as a "Journey of Faith." God took time [~65-67 years] to build Abraham's faith.

John Darby: It is God's way to set people aside after their first start, that self-confidence may die down. We must get to know ourselves and KNOW: We have no strength.

God's Testing of A Believer's Faith:

- Our faith will always be tried and tested. Heb. 12:5-11; I Peter 1:7
- God is developing a Rock Solid Faith in us.

Abraham's Journey of Faith

- Gen. 12 God calls him to leave his homeland to a land He will show him.
 - ❖ Abram obeyed even though there was a 5 year delay.
- Gen. 12 God tested his obedience with a famine.
 - ❖ Abraham failed in his obedience by going down to Egypt.
- Gen. 12 In Egypt, Abraham lied and deceit before the Pharaoh.
 - ❖ His faith failed; weak, cowardly, hypocrite
- Gen. 13 Abram separates from Lot. He allows Lot to choose. Peaceful settlement
 - ❖ His faith passed. Trust God when it seems he was treated unfairly
- Gen. 14 Abraham faces incredible odds in the rescue of Lot.
 - ❖ God gives Abraham an amazing victory.
- Gen. 16 God tested his faith when the birth of the promised son was delayed.
 - ❖ Abraham failed in his faith by having a son by Hagar.
- Gen. 17 God tested Abram at age 99. Circumcise yourself.
 - ❖ Abraham circumcised himself and every male in his household that day.
- Gen. 20 God tested his fear of God when Abimelech took Sarah.
 - ❖ Abraham failed in his fear of God by lying that Sarah was his sister.
- Gen. 21 God required Abraham to send Hagar and Ishmael away.
 - ❖ Abraham obeyed. Model of humility and obedience to God.

Abraham enrolled in "The School of Faith" at age 70. [left Haran @ 75]

At age 100 -136 or so, he is still going through soul-stretching experiences.

Gen. 22:1 And it came to pass after these things [events from Gen. 12-21], that God tested Abraham, and said unto him, Abraham: and he said, Behold, here I am.

- ~20 years have elapsed between Gen. 21 & 22.
- Abraham, dwelling in a tent by the well of Beer-sheba in the wilderness with his son Isaac, built an altar, worshiped and called on the name of the Eternal God.
- Isaac, growing into young man, has been the delight of his parents' hearts.
- Suddenly like a thunderbolt from the sky comes this word from God.

Gen. 22:1-2 God tested Abraham, and said unto him, Abraham: and he said, Behold, here I am. Then He [God] said, "Take now your son, Your Only Son Isaac, whom you love, and go to the land of Moriah, and offer him there as a burnt offering on one of the mountains of which I shall tell you."

Mark 12:30 And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength: this is the first commandment.

God's Goal: Bring Us To The Point Of Absolute Surrender To Him

A. Absolute Surrender Involves A Process.

When we trust Christ, we begin a lifelong process of surrendering to Him.

- Christian character is developed via a series of tests.

Previous tests serve to prepare us for future, often, supreme tests.

Nancy DeMoss: Brokenness is the shattering of my self-will - - the absolute surrender of my will to the will of God. It is saying, "Yes Lord!" No resistance, no chafing, no stubbornness - - simply submitting myself to His direction and will in my life.

Note: While this new trial of faith hit Abraham suddenly, it also was the culmination of years of God's dealings with him. Abraham's life was a process of God stripping him of all that he clung to, until finally he held to God alone.

Abraham's journey of faith was marked by four great crises, each of which involved the surrender of something which was naturally dear to him.

1. He was called on to separate himself from his native land and kindred *Genesis 12:1*
2. He was called on to give up Lot *Genesis 13:1-18*
3. He had to abandon his cherished plan about Ishmael [16-20 yrs. old] *Genesis 17:17, 18*

Over the years, God stripped Abraham of his schemes and efforts to help bring about God's promises. This reached an apex when Abraham painfully sent away Hagar and Ishmael.

Ishmael was the result of the flesh taking over. When Isaac is weaned, the Flesh must be "Cast out!" The spirit, Isaac, cannot mature when the flesh is present.

- We are to "reckon our flesh dead."

Perhaps Abraham thought that separating from Ishmael was the final test of his life. Peaceful years in Beersheba. He rejoiced as young Isaac, the son of the promise, grew to manhood.

Abraham Is Called To the Mountain Of Absolute Surrender

4. God called on him to offer up Isaac as a burnt offering.

Gen. 22

When we have responded to God's requirement, He lays His hand on something especially near and dear to us, to prove the genuineness of our response.

Gen. 22:2 "Take now your son, Your Only Son Isaac, whom you love, and go to the land of Moriah, and offer him there as a burnt offering on one of the mountains of which I shall tell you."

God requires truth in the inward parts and not merely on the lips. [Ps. 51:6]

B. Absolute Surrender Is Unflinching Obedience To The Difficult Commands Of God

Gen. 22:3 So Abraham rose early in the morning and saddled his donkey, and took two of his young men with him, and Isaac his son; and he split the wood for the burnt offering and arose and went to the place of which God had told him.

Key: Focus on Promises - Not Explanations

God's will NEVER Contradicts God's Promise.

He HELD ON to the promise "in Isaac shall thy seed be called." [Gen. 21:12]. [Heb. 10:23]

Heb. 11:19a Accounting that God was able to raise him up, even from the dead;

Abraham's Response: No doubt or delay, no reluctance or hesitation; instead, he "rose up early in the morning." There was no opposition either from natural affection or unbelief. He bowed in absolute submission to the will of God.

Gen. 22:4-5 Then on the third day Abraham lifted his eyes and saw the place afar off.

[Notice on the third day Abraham saw the place where he was to sacrifice His son? Coincidence]

⁵ And Abraham said to his young men, "Stay here with the donkey; the lad and I will go yonder and worship, and WE will come back to you."

Gen. 22:9-10 "Then they came to the place of which God had told him; and [1] Abraham built the altar there, [2] and arranged the wood, [3] and bound his son Isaac, [4] and laid him on the altar on top of the wood. [5] And Abraham stretched out his hand and took the knife to slay his son." Can you feel the tremendous spiritual, mental, and emotional pressure he must have experienced as he carried out in faith, trust and obedience, what God called him to do?

- He trusted God implicitly, was committed to the death versus giving in to his fear, disbelief and carnal compromises as in his earlier years as a believer.
- His Rock Solid Faith triumphed over natural affection, over reason and over self-will.

His Rock Solid Faith is a result of God's sanctifying discipline in his life for ~60-65 years.

It is the fruit of God's sanctifying work of brokenness and repentance in Abraham's life.

This was a most striking demonstration of the efficacy of Divine grace which can subdue every passion of the human heart and every imagination of the carnal mind, bringing all into "unrepining acquiescence to God."

Gen. 22:11-12 And the angel of the LORD called unto him out of heaven, and said, Abraham, Abraham: and he said, Here am I.

¹² And he said, Lay not thine hand upon the lad, neither do thou anything unto him: for now I know that thou fearest God, seeing thou hast not withheld thy son, thine only son from me.

This is the result of years of growth in the Lord through failure and subsequent brokenness and repentance, whereby God, through His loving discipline, brings us to a place where "we may share His holiness." [Heb. 12:10] One central and essential aspect of that "holiness" is believing and trusting in the Lord to the death, which is fully beyond our natural ability.

Truth: There is always an "afterward" to the tests of life.

Heb. 12:11 Now no chastening seems to be joyful for the present, but painful; nevertheless, afterward it yields the peaceable fruit of righteousness to those who have been Trained By It.
Gen. 22:13-14a And Abraham lifted up his eyes, and looked, and behold behind him a ram caught in a thicket by his horns: and Abraham went and took the ram and offered him up for a burnt offering in the stead of his son. And Abraham called the name of that place Jehovah-jireh:

Consider: Where does God provide my needs? In the place of His assignment!

I cannot expect God's provision in my life if I am not in His will.

When does God provide my need? Heb. 4:16 Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

Why does God provide my need? For the great glory of His Name!

What is the 1st petition in the Lord's Prayer in Matt. 6:9? Hallowed be Thy Name

Our God is the God of resurrection. When it looks as though we are throwing away every chance of blessing, God transforms in a moment the very thing we give up into the most richly rewarding and meaningful experience we have ever had.