

True Security

Genesis 22:1-14

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"Walking by Faith" Series on the Life of Abraham - Lesson 19 of 20

God desires to bring us to the place where we so grasp His nature, that we never again doubt His integrity; His faithfulness; or His character. We need to come to the place in our walk with God where we are so anchored in His Word, that any issues surrounding the absolute surety of His promises are forever settled. The greatest pain we can inflict on God is to doubt Him and to doubt His Word. Conversely, the greatest pleasure we can give God is to believe Him and obey His Word.

God desires for us to walk obediently, by faith, into His will even though we do not understand His ways. We must come to the place where we answer the demands of our circumstances with the bold declaration ... "My God is faithful! I know that My God does not change!"

The Test

Abraham's experiences with God had spanned over fifty or sixty years since he had first met Him. Then we read in Genesis 22:1, *Now it came to pass after these things that God tested Abraham, and said to him, "Abraham!" And he said, "Here I am"* (Genesis 22:1). Notice who was testing Abraham; it was God giving the test. We usually think any tests that come our way, are from Satan; but that conclusion will not always satisfy the record of Scripture. There is a vast difference between a temptation of Satan and a test from God. James 1:13 tells us that God will not tempt us to sin; *Let no one say when he is tempted, "I am tempted by God"; for God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does He Himself tempt anyone.*

However, the Scriptures are replete with instances where the Lord tested the hearts of men. Consider the words of Moses to the Israelites; *And you shall remember that the LORD your God led you all the way these forty years in the wilderness, to humble you and test you, to know what was in your heart, whether you would keep His commandments or not* (Deuteronomy 8:2). Consider the words of Jesus to Philip in John 6:5-6, *Then Jesus lifted up His eyes, and seeing a great multitude coming toward Him, He said to Philip, "Where shall we buy bread, that these may eat?" But this He said to test him, for He Himself knew what He would do.*

God called out to Abraham and he answered; *"Here I am"* (Genesis 22:1). Abraham wasn't doing anything holy that would warrant God speaking to him. God called out to him in the middle of his daily routine. This is often the case with us as well ... in the middle of our daily routine God calls for our attention. Please don't make the mistake of thinking that God only talks at church on Sundays. We would be wise to live everyday with our spiritual ears tuned to hear the sound of His voice.

He 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" (Genesis 22:2). Even though Abraham heard and responded to the Lord's voice, he was stunned at what the Lord was saying to him ... "Sacrifice a child?" This directive was completely counter to what Abraham knew about God. By all appearances, God had changed His nature and character. Human sacrifice was a part of the blood thirsty lust of the demon gods of the Canaanites. God had never allowed this form of worship and had condemned it throughout time.

Despite all of the challenges that this directive from God presented to him, Abraham immediately moved towards obeying the Lord's command. In Genesis 22:3 we read, *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.*

Abraham did not try to negotiate with God for more time to sort things out. However, it is a common practice among Christians today to negotiate with God over His directives. Many people are often reluctant to obey the Lord's command for a wide variety of reasons. They want to know how their obedience will impact their lives. They want to know what it will cost them if they say "yes" to what the Lord is asking of them. However, if we are to validate our claim of loving Jesus, then we must come to the place where we live our lives in instant obedience to His every command.

Abraham prepared the wood for his sacrifice and started his journey of faith with his son, Isaac. *Then on the **third** day Abraham lifted his eyes and saw the place afar off* (Genesis 22:4). Three very long days will come and go before Abraham will reach his appointed destination. This verse of Scripture paints a graphic picture of a grieving father. Most likely Abraham is walking with his head down, and searching his mind and heart. He was probably trying to reconcile what he was being asked to do by his God ... this wasn't like Him. Abraham's mind must have asked the questions a thousand times ... "What is God doing? Why is He asking such a sacrifice of me? Why Isaac? Why now?"

Even though his mind and heart were being assaulted with his questions and doubts, Abraham never stopped moving forward to obey the Lord's instruction. There are times when we will miss the will of God if we insist on waiting until we understand the instruction given to us before we obey.

One Belief and Two Promises

Every time we read of this amazing story in the Bible, we ask ourselves, "How could Abraham continue to obey God in light of this demanding instruction to sacrifice his son, Isaac? What was it that enabled Abraham to move forward to obedience?"

I believe that every step Abraham took towards obedience was powered by ...

One Belief

"It is not God's nature or His character to change."

Two Promises

God had promised ... *"In Isaac your seed shall be called."*

God had promised ... *"Your descendants shall be as numerous as the sands of the sea and the stars of the heavens."*

The devil constantly assaults the integrity and character of God to us. He tries to convince us that God is cheating us out of pleasures in life if we adhere to the fun-prohibiting restrictions of His Word. This is not a new tactic of the devil ... he launched this lying character assault against God to Eve in the Garden of Eden.

Remember that God's instructions are always rooted in our best interests. They are lovingly given to us to maximize our potential to know His blessings. Remember Jeremiah's words in Jeremiah 29:11, *For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, says the LORD, thoughts of peace and not of evil, to give you a future and a hope.*

To be successful, lock the following truth in your heart:

God Does Not Change!

I am the Lord, I do not change.
(Malachi 3:10)

Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today and forever.
(Hebrews 13:8)

Remember His covenant forever, the word which He commanded for a thousand generations.
(I Chronicles 1:15)

True Security

The world defines true security as the accumulation of material possessions. We will never find security as the world defines it. As Christian's, our security is found in "Someone," not "something." Our security rests in the person of Jesus Christ. His changeless nature is committed to us. Jesus is committed to support and sustain us in the same love and grace that saved us and forgave us.

Even though Abraham could not reconcile what he was being asked to do he openly declared his faith in his belief that God had not changed; *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."* So Abraham took the wood of the burnt offering and laid it on Isaac his son; and he took the fire in his hand, and a knife, and the two of them went together (Genesis 22:5-6). Even though Abraham didn't understand, he boldly declared his faith in what he believed to be true of God; *"We will come back to you."*

Whatever happened at the altar of sacrifice, Abraham believed that God would be faithful to keep his promises to him. Abraham must have believed that even if God had to raise his son Isaac up out of the ashes of the burnt offering, He would not fail to keep his covenant promise. Abraham didn't know how the Lord would work it out. However, he told his men, by the declaration of his faith that both he, and his son Isaac, would return after they had worshiped God together!

Most likely, up to this point, Isaac is unaware that he is the intended sacrifice. However, it doesn't take Isaac too long to figure out that his father did not bring an animal to offer as a sacrifice. Still not realizing that he was to be the sacrifice, Isaac asked his father the obvious question; *But Isaac spoke to Abraham his father and said, "My father!" And he said, "Here I am, my son." Then he said, "Look, the fire and the wood, but where is the lamb for a burnt offering"* (Genesis 22:7)?

It must have taken every ounce of Abraham's strength to give his son his answer. The moment has arrived for the sacrifice to take place ... time has run out for Isaac as far as Abraham understood. Yet, Abraham's answer to Isaac was laced with his faith in God; *And Abraham said, "My son, God will provide for Himself the lamb for a burnt offering," So the two of them went together* (Genesis 22:8).

The Scripture continues; *They came to the place of which God had told him. And Abraham built an altar there and placed the wood in order; and he bound Isaac his son and laid him on the altar, upon the wood* (Genesis 22:9). Who among us can fathom the pain in Abraham's heart as he built the altar of stone; laid the wood on the altar; and ordered his son, Isaac, to lie down on the wood so he could bind him to the altar? What must have raced through Isaac's mind as his father ordered him to willingly lie on the altar? Make no mistake; Isaac had worshiped with his father many times before. Isaac knew full well what was about to take place. I can't even begin to imagine the look of utter disbelief mingled with horror that must have etched itself into Isaac's face. Don't you know that Isaac's eyes searched the weeping eyes of his father, Abraham, for a reason as to why this was happening?

God is faithful! Just as Abraham drew his knife to slay his son, the Lord stopped him and provided a ram for him to sacrifice; *And Abraham stretched out his hand and took the knife to slay his son. But the Angel of the LORD called to him from heaven and said, "Abraham, Abraham!" So he said, "Here I am." And He said, "Do not lay your hand on the lad, or do anything to him; for now I know that you fear God, since you have not withheld your son, your only son, from Me."* Then Abraham lifted his eyes and looked, and there behind him was a ram caught in a thicket by its horns. So Abraham went and took the ram, and offered it up for a burnt offering instead of his son (Genesis 22:10-13).

The Reward of Obedience

Abraham had passed the Lord's test. We read in Genesis 22:12, *He said, "Do not lay your hand on the lad, or do anything to him; for now I know that you fear God, since you have not withheld your son, your only son, from Me"*. God rewarded Abraham's faith by revealing one of His redemptive names, "Jehovah Jireh," to him in Genesis 22:14, *And Abraham called the name of the place, The-LORD-WILL-PROVIDE; as it is said to this day, "In the Mount of The LORD it shall be provided"*.

We get a complete picture of God's ultimate plan of salvation for all of mankind in this story. God began to progressively unfold His plan of salvation in the Garden of Eden. He took the life of innocent animals in order to provide, through their blood, atonement for Adam and Eve's sins. We can see, yet again, that God's redemptive plan encompasses the innocent dying for the guilty.

This is a perfect picture of what Jesus ultimately did for us on Calvary's Cross. The day came when another Father and Son walked up Mount Moriah to make a sacrifice. God the Father presented His only begotten Son, Jesus, to be bound to a wooden Cross with a Roman spike. This time, however, there was not a ram caught in the thicket to step in as the innocent substitute. This time there was no stay of execution to reverse the pain of a grieving Father's heart. This time, Jesus became our innocent substitute. Jesus died on the Cross to pay in full our sin penalty.

Unlocking the Secrets of God

Our trust in the changeless nature and character of God will unlock the secrets of God to our hearts. Consider the words of the Psalmist David in Psalm 25:14, *The secret of the LORD is with those who fear Him, and He will show them His covenant*. The Living Bible renders this verse as; *Friendship with God is reserved for those who reverence him. With them alone He shares the secrets of His promises*.

Whenever we sin by willfully stepping over the line of God's Word, we do so because we do not reverence the Lord in that area of our lives. Our lives will be so much fuller when we come to the place where we totally surrender our wills in submissive obedience to all of the Lord's commands. Our obedience will give evidence to our reverence of God.

Could it be that what you don't understand about God is rooted in the fact that you don't believe in His changeless nature and character enough to place your full trust in Him? Could it be that His Word is *simply not enough* for you to walk in faithful obedience before Him?

Let the Word of God be the Final Authority in all Matters of Your Life!

Place Your Trust in the Lord and Obey His Every Instruction!

Believe in the Changeless Nature and Character of God!

Hold Fast by Your Faith to the Promises of God!