

GROWING FAITH THROUGH OBEDIENCE

HEBREWS 11:17-19

There is a difference between TEMPTATIONS and TRIALS.

- Temptations come from the Enemy on the outside to make us weaker
- Trials come from the Father to make us stronger by showing us ourselves and Him

There is a difference between TEMPTATIONS and TRIALS.

- Scripture reminds us of three truths we must remember when we face trials:
 - Trials come to every believer because true faith must be tested (**Gen. 22:1** - Abraham)
 - Trials work FOR US, not against us (**Romans 8:28, II Cor. 4:17; I Peter 1:7**)

There is a difference between TEMPTATIONS and TRIALS.

- Scripture reminds us of three truths we must remember when we face a trial:
 - Trials help us to mature in patience (**Romans 5:4, James 1:3-4**).
- God will test our faith throughout our Christian life
- A proper attitude will help us deal with times of testing

There is a difference between TEMPTATIONS and TRIALS.

- **1st Peter 1:6-7 NLT** 6 So be truly glad. There is wonderful joy ahead, even though you must endure many trials for a little while. 7 These trials will show that your faith is genuine. It is being tested as fire tests and purifies gold—though your faith is far more precious than mere gold.

There is a difference between TEMPTATIONS and TRIALS.

- **1st Peter 1:6-7 NLT** So when your faith remains strong through many trials, it will bring you much praise and glory and honor on the day when Jesus Christ is revealed to the whole world.

Abraham, a man of great faith, was not always successful in his testing

- Test 1, **Genesis 12:1-4a NLT** The Lord had said to Abram, “Leave your native country, your relatives, and your father’s family, and go to the land that I will show you. 2 I will make you into a great nation. I will bless you and make you famous, and you will be a blessing to others.

Abraham, a man of great faith, was not always successful in his testing

- Test 1, **Genesis 12:1-4a NLT** 3 I will bless those who bless you and curse those who treat you with contempt. All the families on earth will be blessed through you.” 4 So Abram departed as the Lord had instructed
 - Success

Abraham, a man of great faith, was not always successful in his testing

- Test 2, **Genesis 12:10-13 NLT** 10 At that time a severe famine struck the land of Canaan, forcing Abram to go down to Egypt, where he lived as a foreigner. 11 As he was approaching the border of Egypt, Abram said to his wife, Sarai, “Look, you are a very beautiful woman.

Abraham, a man of great faith, was not always successful in his testing

- Test 2, **Genesis 12:10-13 NLT** 12 When the Egyptians see you, they will say, ‘This is his wife. Let’s kill him; then we can have her!’ 13 So please tell them you are my sister. Then they will spare my life and treat me well because of their interest in you.”
 - Stumble

Abraham, a man of great faith, was not always successful in his testing

- There was roughly 22 years between Genesis 12 and Genesis 22 as Abraham tried to help God out and God continued to show himself to Abraham

Abraham, a man of great faith, was not always successful in his testing

- Test 3, **Genesis 20:1-2 NLT** Abraham moved south to the Negev and lived for a while between Kadesh and Shur, and then he moved on to Gerar. While living there as a foreigner, 2 Abraham introduced his wife, Sarah, by saying, “She is my sister.” So King Abimelech of Gerar sent for Sarah and had her brought to him at his palace.
 - Stumble

Abraham learned some things about God

- He learned that God is completely good and never commands evil
- He learned that God is completely wise and must have a plan
- He learned that God is completely just and would not treat one unfairly

Abraham learned some things about God

- He learned that God is completely powerful and would keep His promises
- All of this was learned through Abraham's obedience and stumbling

- **Hebrews 11:17-19 NIV** 17 By faith Abraham, when God tested him, offered Isaac as a sacrifice. He who had embraced the promises was about to sacrifice his one and only son, 18 even though God had said to him, “It is through Isaac that your offspring will be reckoned.” 19 Abraham reasoned that God could even raise the dead, and so in a manner of speaking he did receive Isaac back from death.

The original readers of Hebrews needed to live by faith during a dark time, much as we do today

- They were in danger of ostracization from their Jewish communities
 - Ostracization = to exclude or banish (a person) from a particular group, society, etc. (in ancient Greece) to punish by temporary exile
- They believed in Jesus as the Christ-Messiah and were beginning to pay the price

The original readers of Hebrews needed to live by faith during a dark time, much as we do today

- Their Jewish society has started to reject them
- The result was they started to drift away from their commitment to Jesus and neglect their great salvation
- They needed reminded that faith and obedience to God is always at the heart of our relationship to Him, even when things look very confusing

There will be times when our present circumstances will seem contrary to God's promises

- Isn't it great when our life and God's promises seem to run parallel to each other?
 - We have advice to everyone that is struggling because our life is so well lived, and our faith is strong
 - Third child, red haired, strong-willed daughter

There will be times when our present circumstances will seem contrary to God's promises

- **Isaiah 48:10 NLT** I have refined you, but not as silver is refined. Rather, I have refined you in the furnace of suffering.
- It is in those times we cling to the promises of God and wonder where they are and where God went
- God's silence at times can be deafening
- Jesus in Garden of Gethsemane

There will be times when our present circumstances will seem contrary to God's promises

- Dwight Pentecost, "Our faith is often tested most when our present circumstances seem completely contrary to what God has revealed to us through His Word."

There will be times when our present circumstances will seem contrary to God's promises

- Here is Abraham with the son God promised him. The one that God will work through to bring His great salvation.
- Now God is commanding Abraham to sacrifice this promised son
- It makes no sense to Abraham and us only because we have the complete story

There will be times when our present circumstances will seem contrary to God's promises

- We see how God is showing us how He will accomplish our great salvation
- Abraham has two ends of a rope called truth, one end is the promise of God and the other is the command of God
- Abraham never releases either of them even if they seem contrary to him

There will be times when our present circumstances will seem contrary to God's promises

- **Vs. 19** Abraham reasoned that God could even raise the dead, and so in a manner of speaking he did receive Isaac back from death.
 - This was before there was ever recorded a resurrection or resuscitation
 - Abraham believed God could do the impossible to keep His promise to him and Isaac

There will be times when our present circumstances will seem contrary to God's promises

- You must remember during these times; we have finite understanding whereas God has infinite understanding
- So, rest in God's infinite understanding and don't let loose of either rope end

Abraham decided to take care of what only he could take care of (obedience), and let God take care of what only God could take care of (the fulfillment of the promise)

- Someone said, Abraham did not succumb to “doubting in the dark what God told him in the light.”
- Instead, he lived his life in accordance with what God had said
- There was one command and one promise pulling at each other in Abraham’s mind

Abraham decided to take care of what only he could take care of (obedience), and let God take care of what only God could take care of (the fulfillment of the promise)

- **Genesis 17:19 NLT** - Promise, But God replied, “Sarah, your wife, will give birth to a son for you. You will name him Isaac, and I will confirm my covenant with him and his descendants as an everlasting covenant.

Abraham decided to take care of what only he could take care of (obedience), and let God take care of what only God could take care of (the fulfillment of the promise)

- **Genesis 22:2 NLT** - Command, “Take your son, your only son—yes, Isaac, whom you love so much—and go to the land of Moriah. Go and sacrifice him as a burnt offering on one of the mountains, which I will show you.”

Abraham decided to take care of what only he could take care of (obedience), and let God take care of what only God could take care of (the fulfillment of the promise)

- Even in the midst of an apparent contradiction, Abraham could trust and obey – not because he knew exactly what was going on, but because he knew the One who did

Abraham decided to take care of what only he could take care of (obedience), and let God take care of what only God could take care of (the fulfillment of the promise)

- This faith freed Abraham to fully obey a command he didn't entirely understand
- Faith obeys God no matter what because it believes God no matter what
- You take care of the obedience and let God take care of the promises

How much energy have we expended to accomplish a promise, like peace or freedom, in our lives?

- Peace and freedom are something God brings into our lives
- Obedience is something we bring into our lives
- The combination of the two truths results in freedom and a peace that passes all understanding
- You want more faith then be obedient, more peace, stronger marriage.....

God went to a drastic measure to show Abraham just how different He is from the false gods polluting the world

- We must remember, Abraham did not have a complete revelation of God
- He was learning who God is as he walked his life

God went to a drastic measure to show Abraham just how different He is from the false gods polluting the world

- This command of God offends our sense of moral right and wrong
 - Just as slavery does
 - But in Abraham's day, the sacrifice of children to false deities was common to satisfy the demands of a false god

God went to a drastic measure to show Abraham just how different He is from the false gods polluting the world

- God never endorsed this form of sacrifice and instead denounced it for His people
- Though the culture of that day was comfortable with this, the true God was not

God went to a drastic measure to show Abraham just how different He is from the false gods polluting the world

- **Genesis 22:6-8 NLT** 6 So Abraham placed the wood for the burnt offering on Isaac's shoulders, while he himself carried the fire and the knife. As the two of them walked on together,
- Isaac would have been around 30 years old at this time

God went to a drastic measure to show Abraham just how different He is from the false gods polluting the world

- **Genesis 22:6-8 NLT** 7 Isaac turned to Abraham and said, “Father?” “Yes, my son?” Abraham replied. “We have the fire and the wood,” the boy said, “but where is the sheep for the burnt offering?” 8 “God will provide a sheep for the burnt offering, my son,” Abraham answered. And they both walked on together.

God went to a drastic measure to show Abraham just how different He is from the false gods polluting the world

- **Genesis 22:13-14 NLT** 13 Then Abraham looked up and saw a ram caught by its horns in a thicket. So he took the ram and sacrificed it as a burnt offering in place of his son.

God went to a drastic measure to show Abraham just how different He is from the false gods polluting the world

- **Genesis 22:13-14 NLT** 14 Abraham named the place Yahweh-Yireh (which means “the Lord will provide”). To this day, people still use that name as a proverb: “On the mountain of the Lord it will be provided.”

God went to a drastic measure to show Abraham just how different He is from the false gods polluting the world

- Hear God say, “I am not like all of the other so-called gods mankind has dreamed up.”
- Every other religion has a form of earning that god’s attention or earning the right to be a part of that god’s kingdom

God went to a drastic measure to show Abraham just how different He is from the false gods polluting the world

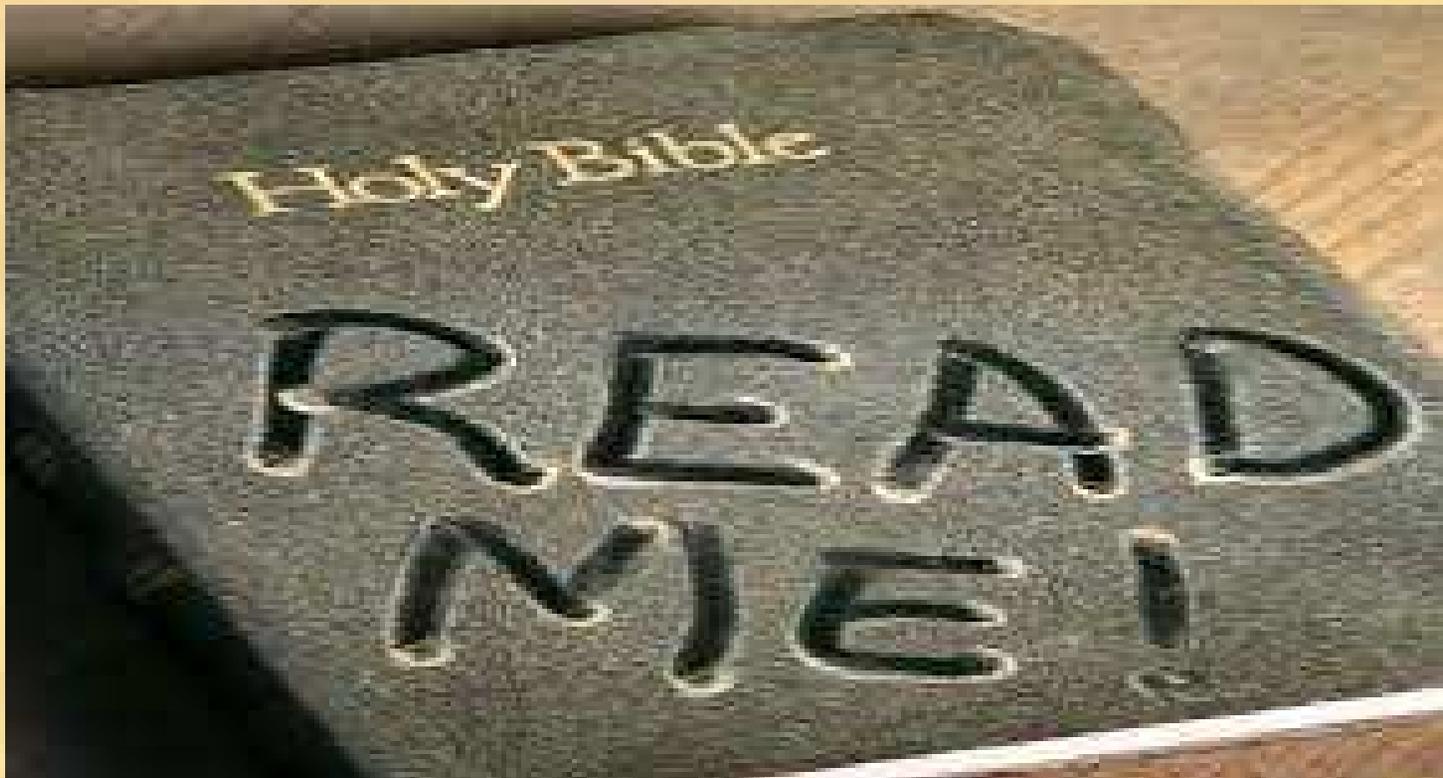
- Jehovah Jireh says, “There is no way for you to be made right in my sight. But my love for you exceeds the justice you deserve, and I will provide the needed sacrifice for you to be made right with Me.”
- Father God provided that at a place called Calvary where on a cross Jesus bore the penalty of all the sins of mankind

God went to a drastic measure to show Abraham just how different He is from the false gods polluting the world

- **Romans 6:23 NIV** For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.
- **Romans 10:13 NIV** “Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.”

- **Grace P. Cho**, “So many of us lack faith, and we genuinely want to grow in it but don’t know how. We become frustrated when we don’t see ourselves maturing, and it makes us want to throw up our arms in defeat. But I think the answer is always simpler than we expect it to be- *we grow in faith by obeying.* Actually, doing the thing that we’re supposed to do- whether it’s to love your family or to leave your comfort zone. Obeying will solidify and deepen our faith.

- **Grace P. Cho**, “If you want to grow in your faith, do the mundane things God’s called you to do. Take the big leaps He’s called you to take. Whatever it is, obey more, and your faith will grow more.”
- Jesus said, “Seek first His kingdom and all of this will be added to it.”



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Announcements

- Wednesday, 7:00, Bible Study