



Talmid תלמיד a Hebrew word that means "a true disciple who desires to be what the Rabbi Jesus is."

Whoever claims to live in Him must walk as Jesus did. 1 John 2:6 (NIV)

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STUDY TO SHEW THYSELF APPROVED UNTO GOD, A WORKMAN THAT NEEDETH NOT TO BE ASHAMED, RIGHTLY
DIVIDING THE WORD OF TRUTH. 2 TIMOTHY 2:15



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How to Obtain Eternal Life

Matthew 19:16-22 (NASB)

¹⁶ And someone came to Him and said, "Teacher, what good thing shall I do that I may obtain eternal life?"

¹⁷ And He said to him, "Why are you asking Me about what is good? There is *only* One who is good; but if you wish to enter into life, keep the commandments."

¹⁸ *Then* he *said to Him, Which ones?" And Jesus said, "YOU SHALL NOT COMMIT MURDER; YOU SHALL NOT COMMIT ADULTERY; YOU SHALL NOT STEAL; YOU SHALL NOT BEAR FALSE WITNESS;

¹⁹ HONOR YOUR FATHER AND MOTHER; and YOU SHALL LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOUR-

SELF."

²⁰ The young man *said to Him, "All these things I have kept; what am I still lacking?"

²¹ Jesus said to him, "If you wish to be complete, go *and* sell your possessions and give to *the* poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow Me."

²² But when the young man heard this statement, he went away grieving; for he was one who owned much property.

At first one might wonder what kind of message Jesus was trying to give this man who came to Him. The truth is summarized in Jesus' statement on another occasion:

Luke 14:33 (NASB)

³³ "So then, none of you can be My disciple who does not give up all his own possessions.

Some years ago a young man asked me, "Sir, you wouldn't know how I could have a personal relationship with Jesus Christ, would you?" Taken somewhat by surprise by his openness and seeming readiness for salvation, I told him that he needed to receive Jesus Christ as his Lord and Savior. He said, "I'd like to do that," and we prayed together and rejoiced in his decision. So he was baptized and began attending services. But some months later I was extremely disappointed to discover that he had developed no interest at all in the things of the Lord and was living in such a way that it was apparent he had not been trans-

formed. He soon disappeared from the church and has never returned.

Anyone who has done much personal witnessing has encountered persons who make a profession of faith in Christ but whose subsequent lives show no change in attitudes or behavior. And when they indicate no love for God and Christ, no interest in the Bible, in prayer, or in the fellowship of God's people, there is no good reason to believe they were ever saved.

Our Lord gave this young man a test. He had to make a choice between Christ and his possessions and sin, and he failed the test. No matter what he may have believed, because he was unwilling to forsake all, he could not be a disciple of Christ. Salvation is for those who are willing to forsake everything.

The incident recorded in [Matthew 19:16-22](#) gives insight into how some people who show great interest in the gospel never come to a saving relationship with Jesus Christ. This young man went away from Christ not because he heard the wrong message or because he did not believe but because he was unwilling to admit his sin, forsake all that he had, and obey Christ as Lord.

The Request to Jesus

Matthew 19:16 (NASB)

¹⁶ And someone came to Him and said, "Teacher, what good thing shall I do that I may obtain eternal life?"

From [verse 20 \(Mateo 19:20\)](#) we learn that the **one** who **came to Him** was a young man, and from [verse 22 \(Mateo 19:22\)](#) that he was wealthy.

Luke informs us that he was also a ruler ([Luke 18:18](#)), probably a ruler in the synagogue, an especially honored position for a young man.

Luke 18:18 (NASB)

¹⁸ A ruler questioned Him, saying, "Good Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?"

He was a religious leader—devout, honest, wealthy, prominent, and influential. He had it all.

Matthew 19:16 (NASB)

¹⁶ And someone came to Him and said, "Teacher, what good thing shall I do that I may obtain eternal life?"

Behold (KJV, NKJV) and (NASB) suggests how unusual and unexpected it was that he would admit he lacked eternal life and come to Jesus to find it.

Several factors are clear as we analyze this unique encounter. First, He came genuinely seeking **eternal life**, motivated by his sense of need for a true spiritual hope. The term **eternal life** is used some **50 times** in Scripture, and always refers primarily to quality rather than quantity. Although **eternal life** obviously carries the idea of being an everlasting reality it does not refer simply to unending existence. Even ancient pagans knew that mere unending existence would not necessarily be desirable. According to Greek mythology, Aurora, goddess of the dawn, fell in love with a young mortal named Tithonus. When Zeus offered to provide anything she wished for her human lover, she asked that he might never die. The wish was granted, but because she had not asked that Tithonus remain forever young, he continued to grow older and more decrepit. Instead of being blessed, he was cursed to perpetual degeneration.

If, as **William Hendriksen** insightfully observes, "'life' means active response to one's environment," then **eternal life** must mean active response to that which is eternal, namely God's heavenly realm. Just as physical life is the ability to live and move and respond in the physical world, **eternal life** is the ability to live and move and respond in the heavenly world.

Eternal life is first of all a quality of existence, the divinely-endowed ability to be alive to God and the things of God. The Jews saw it as that which fills the heart with hope of life after death. The unsaved person is spiritually alive only to sin. But when he receives Christ as Lord and Savior, he becomes alive to God and to righteousness ([Romans 6:1-13](#)). That is the essence of **eternal life**, the **life** of God's own Son dwelling within.

Romans 6:1-13 (NASB)

¹ What shall we say then? Are we to continue in sin so that grace may increase?

² May it never be! How shall we who died to sin still live in it?

³ Or do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus have been baptized into His death?

⁴ Therefore we have been buried with Him through baptism into death, so that as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life.

⁵ For if we have become united with *Him* in the likeness of His death, certainly we shall also be *in the likeness* of His resurrection,

⁶ knowing this, that our old self was crucified with *Him*, in order that our body of sin might be done away with, so that we would no longer be slaves to sin;

⁷ for he who has died is freed from sin.

⁸ Now if we have died with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with Him,

⁹ knowing that Christ, having been raised from the dead, is never to die again; death no longer is master over Him.

¹⁰ For the death that He died, He died to sin once for all; but the life that He lives, He lives to God.

¹¹ Even so consider yourselves to be dead to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus.

¹² Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body so that you obey its lusts,

¹³ and do not go on presenting the members of your body to sin as instruments of unrighteousness; but present yourselves to God as those alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness to God.

The young ruler could not have understood the full meaning of what he asked for, but he realized there was an important dimension to his present life, religious and prestigious as it was, that was missing. Despite his high standing in men's eyes, he knew he did not have the God-given peace, rest, hope, assurance, and joy of which the psalmists and the prophets spoke. He may have sensed that he needed a closer relationship to God than he had. Simply by asking that question of Jesus he showed himself to be beyond the hypocritical religiosity of the scribes and Pharisees. He recognized a deep spiritual need that, for all his religious efforts, was unfulfilled. He knew he did not possess the life of God that satisfies here and now and gives hope for the life to come.

The fact that he came to Jesus publicly and asked such a personal and revealing question shows the man's sincerity. He was not haughty or presumptuous, but was humbly determined to find satisfaction for the overwhelming need he felt in his life, and he was oblivious to what people around him may have thought.

The young ruler not only knew his need but deeply felt that need, and he was desperate. Many people who admit they do not have **eternal life** nevertheless feel no need for it. They know they are not alive to God and do not care. They know there is no divine dimension to their lives but consider that fact irrelevant and unimportant. They have no hope for the life to come but are perfectly content to remain as they are.

The young ruler felt his need so keenly that, when he heard Jesus was in the vicinity, he **“ran up to Him and knelt before Him”** ([Mark 10:17](#)).

Mark 10:17 (NASB)

¹⁷ As He was setting out on a journey, a man ran up to Him and knelt before Him, and asked Him, "Good Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?"

He could not wait to ask this great Teacher how to find the answer to his deep longing. He was not embarrassed by the fact that he was known and respected by most of the people who crowded around Jesus. He did not mind the risk of losing face with those who probably considered him already to be religiously fulfilled and specially favored by God.

Although he was probably in the midst of the multitude of parents who had brought their young children to be blessed, this man was not ashamed to request a blessing for himself. He was saying to Jesus, in effect, **“I need your help just as much as these little children.”** Just as the children submitted to Jesus by being taken in His arms, the rich young ruler submitted by kneeling down before Him. He prostrated himself before the Lord in a position of humility. He appeared serious, sincere, highly motivated, and anxious.

This young ruler came seeking for the right thing—eternal life—and he came to the only One who could give it. **Him**, of course, refers to Jesus, who not only is the way to **eternal life** but is Himself that life.

Mark 10:17 (NASB)

¹⁷ As He was setting out on a journey, a man ran up to Him and knelt before Him, and asked Him, "Good Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?"

"God has given us eternal life," John declares, "and this life is in His Son," who "is the true God and eternal life" ([1 John 5:11](#), [20](#)).

1 John 5:11 (NASB)

¹¹ And the testimony is this, that God has given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son.

1 John 5:20 (NASB)

²⁰ And we know that the Son of God has come, and has given us understanding so that we may know Him who is true; and we are in Him who is true, in His Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God and eternal life.

There was nothing wrong with his motivation, because it certainly is good to desire eternal life.

By addressing Jesus as **Teacher** (*didaskalos*), the young man acknowledged Him to be a respected rabbi, an authority on the Old Testament, a teacher of divine truth. Although the two other synoptic gospels report that the man also called Jesus "good" ([Mark 10:17](#); [Luke 18:18](#)), there is no reason to believe he considered Him to be the promised Messiah and Son of God.

Mark 10:17 (NASB)

¹⁷ As He was setting out on a journey, a man ran up to Him and knelt before Him, and asked Him, "Good Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?"

Luke 18:18 (NASB)

¹⁸ A ruler questioned Him, saying, "Good Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?"

But he obviously considered Jesus to have a stature of righteous character above the typical rabbi. The authority of Jesus' teaching and the power of His miracles surely qualified Him as someone who knew the way to **eternal life**.

Even though he did not acknowledge that Jesus was Messiah and God in the flesh, he had come to the right person (cf. [Acts 4:12](#)).

Acts 4:12 (NASB)

¹² "And there is salvation in no one else; for there is no other name under heaven that has been given among men by which we must be saved."

Not only did the young man come to the right source but he asked the right question: "What good thing shall I do that I may obtain eternal life?"

Matthew 19:16 (NASB)

¹⁶ And someone came to Him and said, "Teacher, what good thing shall I do that I may obtain eternal life?"

Many interpreters have criticized the man for asking about what he must **do**, suggesting that his question was works oriented. Doubtlessly he was steeped in the Pharisaic legal system that had come to dominate Judaism and was trained to think that doing religious things was the way to gain divine favor. But taken at face value, his question was legitimate. There is something one must do in order to come to God. When the multitude near Capernaum asked Jesus, "What shall we do, that we may work the works of God?" He replied, "This is the work of God, that you believe in Him whom He has sent" ([John 6:28-29](#)).

John 6:28-29 (NASB)

²⁸ Therefore they said to Him, "What shall we do, so that we may work the works of God?"

²⁹ Jesus answered and said to them, "This is the work of God, that you believe in Him whom He has sent."

The main point of the question was to discover how to **obtain eternal life**, and that is the most crucial question a person can ask. The entire purpose of evangelism is to bring lost people to Jesus Christ in order that they may **obtain eternal life**.

The very purpose and meaning of salvation is to bring **eternal life** to those who, because of sin, face eternal death ([Romans 6:23](#)).

Romans 6:23 (NASB)

²³ For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of

God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

The issue on this occasion was the man's salvation, not some higher level of discipleship subsequent to salvation. Most of the work of evangelism is to bring people to the point where they sense their need for salvation, but this young man was already there. He was ready to sign the card, raise his hand, walk the aisle, or whatever. He was ripe and eager—what many modern evangelists would consider a “hot prospect.”

CORAM DEO (Before the face of God)

THE BIBLE

Listening to God

Read [2 Timothy 3:16-17](#)

What is the Bible, this book that has far and away been the bestseller of all history and has been translated into more languages than any other book?

Bible means “book.” But what kind of book is the Bible? Some suggest it is a record of man’s religious striving toward and encounters with God—an essentially human book. Traditionally, the historic Christian church has seen the Bible as far more than this—namely, as the written Word of God. The first words of the book show that God is the leading character of this divine auto biography: “*In the beginning God . . .*” Its pages show us God taking the initiative, giving us information about Himself, and showing His purposes for us—*His creation*.

How we view the Bible is crucial because it holds the key to knowing for certain that God exists. And how can we know about Him, if He *does* exist? Clearly, our finite minds cannot penetrate God’s infinity. Job’s friend asked him, “**Can you fathom the mysteries of God? Can you probe the limits of the Almighty?**” ([Job 11:7](#)) The answers come with a resounding “yes”—through God’s self-revelation, the Bible.

In the Bible, His chosen instrument, God unfolds

for us His true character. Through everyday human histories He tells us where we came from, what our ultimate destiny is, and the purpose of our lives. He gives practical instructions, heart-thumping encouragements, warnings, and divine wisdom. All from our Creator. Here God’s unrivaled power and integrity are also unveiled.

The people God used to record His words were themselves uncommonly moved by them. They said the Word of God is:

- honey in my mouth
 - Spiritual food for the hungry
 - dwelling in me richly
 - a lamp for my feet
 - a joy and delight to my heart
 - renewing my mind
 - a fire that burns in my heart
 - more precious than gold
 - Sharper than a two-edged sword
 - a great reward
 - true and righteous
 - penetrating my thoughts and attitudes
- perfect and trustworthy

Unlike these reactions, a student once told me, “When I read the Bible, I fall asleep.” Perhaps he overlooked the fact that it was *the God of the universe* who spoke these words. When this gets into the marrow of our bones, the words fly off the pages to us and are nothing short of life-changing.

Today, our need for the Bible, God’s Word, is more important than ever. Our world is bombarded with ideas, however well-intentioned, that challenge the time-honored concepts of the God of the Bible. Ideas such as “All roads lead to Rome” and “There is no One Way” come from every corner of the globe. Relativism has taken over, disavowing all possibility of one truth source; postmodernism has arrived, bringing its elastic morality; secularism joins in exalting existential experience.





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Hebrews 11:6 – Overview

Part 6

In this continuing study we want to look at the life of Abraham as described in [Hebrews 11](#). Obviously, [Hebrews 11](#) does not contain the same level of doctrinal content of the previous ten chapters, and because the majority of the chapter is dedicated primarily to giving testimonies of biblical characters it should be gleaned that most of this chapter is exhortational. So, before leaving the chapter overview, it would be beneficial to look at one of the individuals mentioned and simply try to examine some of what should be obvious lessons or principles relative to biblical faith. Of the 18 specific people mentioned by name in [Hebrews 11](#), nearly one-third of all of the verses are dedicated to Abraham and Sarah – one third. Twelve verses out of forty are dedicated to Abraham and Sarah, so they are an obvious emphasis within the chapter. It is interesting that in a very doctrinal book like Romans that Paul spent an entire chapter, [Romans 4](#), commending the faith of Abraham.

[LESSONS FROM THE LIFE OF ABRAHAM](#)

LESSON 1: The first lesson that seems to stand out about Abraham and what it means to walk “**by faith**” is that walking by faith does not mean or ensure that the believer will know exactly where they are going. [Hebrews 11:8](#) says,

8By faith Abraham obeyed when he was called to go out to the place which he would receive as an inheritance. And he went out, not knowing where he was going.

Most people when they go somewhere want to know exactly how to get there. Today we have GPS’s in our vehicles that allow us to know exactly how to get to where we are going – every road, every turn, where the restaurants are located, where the rest stops are located, and exactly how long it will take us to get to our destination. We can choose the shortest route or the fastest route. However, none of that was true for Abraham and Sarah. To the very contrary, God called him to leave that place where he was secure, but God did not tell Abraham where he was actually going. God simply wanted Abraham to be obedient to what He had asked him to do. Just because a believer reads a command or a promise in the Scriptures does not mean that they understand all of the outworkings and implications of those Scriptures within their life. In fact, it would be safe to state that very rarely will believers understand what all of the commands and promises actually mean for their life. [Acts 7:2-3](#) provides the New Testament representation of how God actually called Abraham in [Genesis 12:1ff](#),

2And he said, "Brethren and fathers, listen: The God of glory appeared to our father Abraham when he was in Mesopotamia, before he dwelt in Haran, ³ and said to him, 'Get out of your country and from your relatives, and come to a land that I will show you.'

No matter what someone may read into those verses, what God was asking Abraham to do was not something that was easy. God simply “**appeared**” and “**said**” – and it certainly was not some kind of full revelation with a spiritual road map as to what God’s command to him actually meant. Now, a very important principle is simply that a believer will rarely hear God speak to their life if they are not prepared for Him to actually speak to them. This is a spiritual mindset – this issue of having a frame of mind and outlook that is looking and expecting

God to provide meaningful direction in our life. Normally, God's direction comes from God's Word. At times He could speak through your marriage partner, through a close friend, or maybe through a message that you hear at church. It could be through a book that you may be reading or through some counsel that you have received from someone. Obviously, God's leading in a believer's life may vary, but if the believer does not have a spiritual mindset that both desires and expects God to speak to them, chances are that they will not be prepared for God to speak to them. At the end of the Parable of the Soils, it says it this way in [Matthew 13:9](#),

⁹He who has ears to hear, let him hear!

To each of the seven churches in [Revelation 2-3](#), John ended with these words to each church,

⁷He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.

In the story of Abraham in [Genesis 12-25](#) on a couple of occasions in [Genesis 15](#), the Scriptures use the phrase "**and the Word of the Lord came to Abraham.**" Every time that Abraham acted apart from the Word of God, he found himself in trouble. However, every time that he heard God's specific word to his life and obeyed, he was successful and God blessed him. The point is really very simple – if a believer will obey God's direction, they will experience God's blessing. There are spiritual realities that any believer will never know or learn apart from obedience. Obedience always precedes revelation. Think of it this way. Why would God want to show us things that we are not willing to obey? Faith always grows when it is nurtured on the Word, but it always dies when the Word of God is ignored.

The moment that a believer finally chooses that he is going to do what God wants him to do, it is then and only then that they will begin to know God. In the story of Jacob and Rebekah his mother, Jacob was a deceiver and a schemer for almost his entire life. In the story Rebekah had urged him to steal Esau's blessing, but in the process she lost the son that she dearly loved. She thought that he was only going away for a short period of time and then everyone would welcome him back home. However, that is not at all what happened. [Genesis 27:43-45](#) records

what Rebekah asked Jacob to do after he had deceived his father Isaac and stolen Esau's blessing.

⁴³Now therefore, my son, obey my voice: arise, flee to my brother Laban in Haran. ⁴⁴ And stay with him a few days, until your brother's fury turns away, ⁴⁵ until your brother's anger turns away from you, and he forgets what you have done to him; then I will send and bring you from there. Why should I be bereaved also of you both in one day?"

Rebekah never saw her son again. We can do things our way and forever suffer the consequences or we can do things God's way and reap a lifetime of blessing. [Proverbs 13:15](#) says that "**the way of the transgressor is hard.**" When we know God's will in a matter, we choose it by faith. We know it is always the right choice simply because it is God's will. Every believer must learn to choose God's will over their own.

LESSON 2: The second lesson that seems to stand out about Abraham is that he acted on the direction that God had given to him. [Hebrews 11:8](#) simply says – "**By faith Abraham obeyed...**" A committed believer listens by faith and obeys by faith. Abraham did not have any of the answers. God gave him very little information, but it was enough information to obey. [Genesis 12:1-3](#) says,

¹Now the LORD had said to Abram: "Get out of your country, From your family and from your father's house, to a land that I will show you. ²I will make you a great nation; I will bless you and make your name great; and you shall be a blessing. ³I 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."

This was a promise from God to Abraham, and even though it was not a lot of information, still it was enough information for Abraham to obey. God provides the believer with a promise, and then He expects them to walk in the light of that promise until additional light is provided. Walking by faith and living by faith cannot be explained any other way. We cannot be one of His disciples if our expectation is that He will first explain everything to us in detail that He wants us to do and why, and then leave us free to decide whether or not we like His demands and whether or not we are willing

to actually consent to them. If we really believe that “**God is**” ([Hebrews 11:6](#)), then we will do whatever He says whether we understand it or not and whether we like it or not.

The wonderful truth regarding faith is that it grows as the believer obeys. Faith is always strengthened by use. [Romans 4:20](#) says,

²⁰He did not waver at the promise of God through unbelief, but was strengthened in faith, giving glory to God,

If your expectation is that when you pray and ask for direction that God is going to give you every detail of every decision, then you will find yourself highly disappointed. No believer will ever “walk by faith” if they have to have all of the information before they can act. When Abraham and Sarah obeyed, they did not know where they were even going. Obviously, this is not a green light for making foolish subjective decisions – which many people do, and then blame God when things do not turn out as they wanted them to turn out.

LESSON 3: Where the believer is looking determines how the believer is living. I.e., if someone wants to live a godly life, then they have to focus their attention on godly things. **Outlook determines outcome.** Faith simply enables the believer to see that which he cannot see. It enables him to see what God can do that he could never do. [2 Corinthians 4:16-18](#) says,

¹⁶Therefore we do not lose heart. Even though our outward man is perishing, yet the inward man is being renewed day by day. ¹⁷For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, is working for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory, ¹⁸while we do not look at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen. For the things which are seen *are* temporary, but the things which are not seen *are* eternal.

Biblical faith is what allows the believer to see God. Some Christians never see God in their circumstances, and so when some difficulty arises, immediately they begin to doubt God, doubt God’s goodness, and doubt God’s power – and they never see what God

really wants to do in them through their difficult and often perplexing circumstances. There are a lot of people who have a Plan A and a Plan B for their life. Plan A is that plan that tells them to obey God as long as everything works out like they want things to work out. Plan B, however, is when they go back to their old life and their old habits when things do not go as they wanted them to go. Unfortunately, neither plan ever succeeds. The people that God brought out of Egypt always wanted to go back to Egypt, but they all died in the wilderness. From a spiritual perspective, it is fatal for the Christian to return to making decisions like they use to make decisions.

There really are only two ways to live. One way is to live by sight and to base all of your decisions on what you can see and what you can figure out. You can live by your senses if you desire, but if you make that choice then you will miss both God and God’s will for your life. The other way is to live by faith and to base your life and your decisions on that which you cannot see. Reason and logic tell us that the first way is the best way to live simply because we can see and figure out everything – and we find a great deal of comfort in that approach. Real security, however, is basing your life on what is not seen. Abraham had no idea where he was headed and where he was going to eventually end, but he knew that he had a clear word from God and so he acted. In reality, he was the most secure individual on the planet with that decision.

Someone is going to ask “*Why is Abraham such a picture of faith? He never seemed to really accomplish much. All he really did was move from one place to another. What was so great about that?*” Well, the answer is pretty simple. When God spoke to Abraham, he was listening. When God promised Abraham something, He believed. When God commanded Abraham to do something, He obeyed.

LESSON 4: God’s power is released through God’s promises. There has to come a time in every believer’s life when they place their faith in what God has promised. Speaking of Abraham’s wife, Sarah, it says in [Hebrews 11:11](#),

¹¹By faith Sarah herself also received strength to conceive seed, and she bore a child when she was

past the age, because she judged Him faithful who had promised.

Romans 4:19-21 says,

¹⁹And not being weak in faith, he did not consider his own body, already dead (since he was about a hundred years old), and the deadness of Sarah's womb. ²⁰He did not waver at the promise of God through unbelief, but was strengthened in faith, giving glory to God, ²¹and being fully convinced that what He had promised He was also able to perform.

The power of God is resident in His promises to the believer.

LESSON 5: Faith will always be tested. Great faith is always revealed in very difficult circumstances. **Hebrews 11:17-19** provides one of the most graphic pictures of this reality. These have to be some of the most difficult words in all of Scripture.

¹⁷By faith Abraham, when he was tested, offered up Isaac, and he who had received the promises offered up his only begotten son, ¹⁸of whom it was said, "In Isaac your seed shall be called," ¹⁹concluding that God was able to raise him up, even from the dead, from which he also received him in a figurative sense.

There will come times in a believer's life when they may have to surrender previous blessings that God Himself has bestowed on them. Certainly this was the case with Abraham and Isaac. I may be reading too much into the story of Isaac, but it appears that everything that was important to Abraham was wrapped up in Isaac. If Isaac was to die, then what would become of God's promise? It just appeared that everything that God was doing was totally dependent on Isaac. He was the promised seed, and now God was asking Abraham to actually sacrifice his own son. Giving up your greatest blessing is never easy. What is amazing in this story, however, is that Abraham never asked for an explanation. He never looked for a way to escape God's testing. He simply obeyed. He concluded that God was able to raise Isaac up from the dead. The word "concluding" in v19 is the Greek word "*logizomai*"

which means to take into account and to calculate, to reason with the mind. The NIV and Amplified actually say that "**Abraham reasoned**". The ESV and NASB say that "**He considered**". We actually get the English word "logic" from this particular Greek word. **John 12:24** says,

²⁴Most assuredly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the ground and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it produces much grain.

I have some seeds that were left over when I planted my garden this year, but they are not doing me any good and certainly not producing any fruit in the package. It is only when they are placed in the ground and die that they actually produce fruit. In the case of Abraham, or any believer who God calls on with a test, the deeper they love someone or something, the more difficult will be the test. After the testing on Mount Moriah, Abraham named the place "Jehovah Jireh" which means "the Lord will provide".

Continued in next edition...

ENDNOTES

¹Lea, 201.

²Gooding, 222.

³MacArthur, 326.

⁴MacArthur, 328.

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