

When Life Gets Tough, Simply Do This

A strong-weathered hand tightly gripped the razor sharp knife raised over the body of a young boy lying loosely bound on a crude, makeshift altar. An altar covered with dry wood that the same boy had carried to the top of this mountain.

The wood was soon to be set aflame.

This was not just any young boy—this was the son of the century-old patriarch clutching the knife. His son. It was his *only* son. It was the son of promise. It was the son that the father's God—Jehovah—now demanded as a sacrifice simply to test his loyalty.

Nearby was the vessel containing fire with which he would complete the slaughter and burnt offering. It would be a heartbreaking act of total and complete obedience.

The son's wide-open eyes and quivering lips were more than his father could bear. The old man closed his eyes—brimming with salty grief—and raised the instrument of death higher. Muscles tensed as he began the downward thrust into the heart of the son he loved more than anything.

More than anything, *except his God*.

"But the angel of the Lord called to him out of heaven and said, 'Abraham, Abraham!' And he said, 'Here I am.' Then He said, 'Do not lay your hands on the boy or do anything to him, because now I know that you fear God, seeing you have not withheld your only son from Me'" (Gen. 22:11-12, MEV).

Abraham turned and looked. There was a ram caught in the thicket. A substitution—an offering to be sacrificed in the place of the son he loved. The great apostle Paul tells us in

Romans 4 that righteousness was counted to Abraham. What's interesting is the "why."

It was because "*Abraham believed God.*" Not believed *in* God ... or *about* God. ... He simply believed God—and that what God had promised, God was able to complete.

Isaac was the child of those very promises, and Abraham believed in his heart of hearts that God was perfectly capable of raising the boy from the dead if necessary (see Heb. 11:17-19). Abraham's responsibility was to trust—to believe God.

Life has a way of making *believing God* very difficult to do. When things aren't going the way we think they are supposed to—when God is asking us to walk through the valley of deep darkness—it is easy to believe *in* God, but much more difficult to simply *believe* God.

During the challenges of life, when believing God seems arduous and nearly impossible, meditate on some of these promises.

When the future is bleak and unsure: "*For I know the plans that I have for you, says the Lord, plans for peace and not for evil, to give you a future and a hope*" (Jer. 29:11).

Believe God ...

When you are exhausted from the pressures of life: "*Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavily burdened, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you, and learn from Me. For I am meek and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls*" (Matt. 11:28-29).

Believe God ...

When making ends meet physically ... emotionally ... financially ... seems difficult at best: "But my God shall supply your every need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus" (Phil.

4:19).

Believe God ...

When God's never-ending love for you seems distant and unattainable: *"For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, neither angels nor principalities nor powers, neither things present nor things to come, neither height nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Rom. 8:38-39).*

Believe God ...

When fear and anxiety consume your world, and the lack of peace creates a vacuum in your heart and life: *"I have told you these things so that in Me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation. But be of good cheer. I have overcome the world" (John 16:33).*

Believe God ...

As He was with Abraham ... so He will be with you.

Believe ... God.

Prayer Power for the Week of January 24, 2016

This week meditate on scriptures that emphasize believing God and note the outcome in the lives and circumstances of those who placed their trust in Him. Begin to declare God's promises over your life and thank Him that He is faithful to watch over His Word to perform it. Continue to pray that He send more laborers into His harvest fields. Pray that God's people would unite in prayer and purpose for worldwide revival. Remember to lift up our nation, its leaders, and our allies. Pray that Israel would fulfill God's purposes in this hour and remember our military and families as they serve the nation. (Romans 8:38-39; Phil. 4:19; John 16:33) {eo}