

## Genesis 17 - Abram Fell on his Face, and God Talked with Him

Have you ever had a humbling experience?

Either a failure or when someone blesses you?

*Fail videos - glad we didn't have video cameras everywhere when I was growing up*

**How we read the Bible**...how do we see and perceive the people and stories in it?

Genesis...God and man...looking at the reality of people and how God really wants to have a relationship with them...despite their failures...

**Being a Christian is not about being perfect. It is about being holy,**

but God is the one who does the perfecting work

**Jas 1:4 NKJV - But let patience have [its] perfect work, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing.**

Patience has its perfect work. Our work is to wait for God to work. (waiting to hear back...)

**Eph 2:8-10 NKJV - For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; [it is] the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast. For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.**

God prepared the work beforehand...he already did the work, we just get to live it out.

**Legalism, fitting into someone else's mold (or even one of our own making).** It's hard, it hurts, it never works out, we're left broken, ashamed, alone

**Sanctification** - being trimmed for God's original mold for us (not tainted by sin). It's hard at times, it hurts at times, but it always works out

**2Co 5:17 NKJV - Therefore, if anyone [is] in Christ, [he is] a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new.**

***You and I are a new creation. We are not the same old person at the core. There are only vestiges of that old person in us that need to go away so the new person can grow.***

### Previously on...

- God calls and promises...Abram leaving a homeland, but waiting and taking family and possessions
- God speaks at the tree...Abram keeps passing through the promiseland to get back to a prosperous land
- Abram lies, Sarai given away, God intervenes and gets them back on track and even has Pharaoh bless them
- God promises again, Abram's heart turns and calls on God
- Abram risks his life and rescues Lot - the guy he wasn't supposed to bring, blesses God instead of the world
- Abram looks to god for blessing, God reminds him of the promise of an heir
- Sarai and Abram wait, but give up on waiting and get themselves and those around them in a mess...God rescues and blesses the mess

**Obviously Abram and Sarai were following God.**

**But obviously there was still some of their old nature hanging on.** Their old ways of doing things.

**It's hard to shake old habits.** Things you've been doing for your entire life. Not as easy as dropping a habit you've only had for a little while.

An old saying, possibly having origin in a sermon of yesteryear:

***“Watch your thoughts, they become words;  
watch your words, they become actions;  
watch your actions, they become habits;  
watch your habits, they become character;  
watch your character, for it becomes your destiny.”***

**God can overwrite our wrong choices. But it depends on whose words we're thinking on: His or ours.**

**Jos 1:8 NKJV - "This Book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate in it day and night, that you may observe to do according to all that is written in it. For then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have good success.**

**Psa 1:1-2 NKJV - Blessed [is] the man Who walks not in the counsel of the ungodly, Nor stands in the path of sinners, Nor sits in the seat of the scornful; But his delight [is] in the law of the LORD, And in His law he meditates day and night.**

**Luk 6:45 NKJV - "A good man out of the good treasure of his heart brings forth good; and an evil man out of the evil treasure of his heart brings forth evil. For out of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaks.**

God has given us a new heart, it will begin to overflow in our lives. But we must let him do it. We cannot fake fruit for long.

**Eze 36:24-28 NKJV - "For I will take you from among the nations, gather you out of all countries, and bring you into your own land. "Then I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you shall be clean; I will cleanse you from all your filthiness and from all your idols. "I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; I will take the heart of stone out of your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. "I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes, and you will keep My judgments and do [them]. "Then you shall dwell in the land that I gave to your fathers; you shall be My people, and I will be your God.**

**You can't fake it til you make it in Christianity.**

You've got to realize that you're faking it until He makes it.

And when he makes it, he makes it last.

**Isa 43:18-19 NKJV - "Do not remember the former things, Nor consider the things of old. Behold, I will do a new thing, Now it shall spring forth; Shall you not know it? I will even make a road in the wilderness [And] rivers in the desert.**

## **17:1-8**

**99!** That mid-life/end-of-life crisis has long passed. 13 years since Ishmael was born, 10 years before that when they started living in the land. 23 years since Abram was worried about an heir.

God's timing is best. God knew there was still plenty of time left. And you know, maybe it wouldn't have been 13 more years if they didn't take it into their own hands...(israelites wandering)

We're going to look at names today, Abram and Sarai...let's also look at God's name he calls himself here:

**Shaddai, the Almighty (of God)** almighty, most powerful

Like looking up at the stars and realizing how big God is, and how small we and our problems are. God is almighty. Is anything too hard for him?

**Jer 32:27 NKJV - "Behold, I [am] the LORD, the God of all flesh. Is there anything too hard for Me?"**

**walk before Me and be blameless.**

Walk...walk, walk about, go forth, etc.

**Before me** - in the presence of, face

**Be thou perfect (KJV)**

That's a tough one

complete, whole, wholesome, entire, sound, healthful, complete, entire (of time), unimpaired, innocent, **having integrity**, what is complete or entirely in accord with truth and fact

Who here has lived a perfect life before God in its entirety, or even for a minute?

Not one of us.

So how can god expect Abram to do that? Through believing in the promise of an heir. A messiah.

We will never be perfect in the flesh...but we can walk blameless by his blood

**Integrity** - the quality of being honest and having strong moral principles; moral uprightness. the state of being whole and undivided

As Christians, we need to have **integrity**. It comes from spending time before God's face. To truly stand up for what is right and good.

The world stands up for what it believes is right and good...but if they'd stand before God for even a second, they would see that it is the farthest from it

**To stand up for good, we first must bow down to the One who is good.**

**"And I will make my covenant between Me and you..."**

God is the one doing the covenant. I make, My covenant, between ME and you

**Jos 24:14-15 NKJV - "Now therefore, fear the LORD, serve Him in sincerity and in truth, and put away the gods which your fathers served on the other side of the River and in Egypt. Serve the LORD! "And if it seems evil to you to serve the LORD, choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve, whether the gods which your fathers served that [were] on the other side of the River, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land you dwell. But as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD."**

God has covenanted with us. That alone is our motivation to do good.

### **V3 - this humbled Abram**

Great news, blessings, honor can humble us

Also the request to live a holy life before God should make us fall on our face before him

We cannot do it by ourselves. We cannot live our best life now, we cannot speak his will into being, we cannot name it and claim it.

We can only name and claim our failures for what they are...sin. And in due time, he will lift us up.

**I like what it says next...** and God **TALKED** with him

Not God spoke at him

Not God scolded him

But gently, had a conversation with Abram

Isn't that the Lord? To come and minister in a still, small voice

Why don't we hear God? Why haven't you heard a word from him in your situation? In 10 years? In 23 years? Have you fallen on your face before him.

**Literally. Have you?**

There's times in worship that I stand, I sit, I kneel, I sit on the floor...and there's also times where being before the face of God I can only do one thing, and that is lay down, face to the ground -

**Ecc 3:20 NKJV - All go to one place: all are from the dust, and all return to dust.**

**Psa 103:13-14 NKJV - As a father pities [his] children, [So] the LORD pities those who fear Him. For He knows our frame; He remembers that we [are] dust.**

Lay down before him. Get on your face before the Almighty God and see what he might speak to you.

I don't know that he's ever had a harsh word for me *there*. Even if I've been walking horribly before him, his word there is always one that forgives me, builds me up again.

Father of many nations...not just one. Everyone strives to be a ruler of one nation, God promises Abram that his line will rule many and over and over

## HERE IT IS! ABRAM TO ABRAHAM

**Abram** exalted father (remember his dad being so rich and powerful, abram's name is about being an exalted father...and he only has one kid...not even from his real wife).

Abram couldn't even live up to his own name. His being a father was not through an exalted situation.

**Abraham** father of a multitude" or "chief of multitude

**Through God's covenant, God's design, GOD'S DOING**, Abram becomes not just a father of one, but of many. (Talk about a fertility treatment!)

### El Shaddai says, I will...

- I **have** made you a father of many nations (past tense? Pre-planned, and even taking Ishmael into account)
- Make you **exceedingly** fruitful (more than you can imagine...the stars...)
- I will make **nations** and **kings** come from you (who else can guarantee that?)
- **Establish my covenant** with you (only God can make a covenant with God - we cannot make deals with him. No one is that talented of a lawyer)
- **Everlasting covenant** - who sticks around that long? To generations after (everyone wants to be remembered...)
- Given the **land**
- **God will be their God** (this is the **best promise** to his descendants...all I want for mine)

*I want to give my heirs an inheritance...a house, a good childhood, talents, impart the little wisdom i have, but most of all, I want God to be their God. I know if i get that right, everything else will be fine. I don't want the best educated kids, or talented kids, if God isn't their God...they'll turn towards destruction with a haughty mind or a life seeking glory*

**Leave a godly heritage to those around you.** Spouse if you pass first. Kids, no matter how old, grandkids (no matter how little), coworkers, friends...leave that legacy. It's the only thing that will truly bless them and will truly last (won't ever be obsolete or out of style)

## :9-14

**You shall keep My covenant.** How shall WE keep God's covenant to us? By walking blamelessly before him.

**What do Abram and his descendants have to do to keep God's covenant coming in?  
How do they get that check every month?**

**A personal, intimate, painful, private , purifying sacrifice**

Circumcision (to cut around)

One and done.

**It's a sign. It's a cutting of the heart of the flesh for men to show that their inner heart has also been cut**

Medical/health benefits, constant reminder when getting changed, bathing, in a marriage relationship. Nothing covered, hidden.

**Baby boys 8 days old...**proof that God knows...time for blood to clot

The hospital does it earlier now...

Born in house, bought with money who is not descendant...descendants should have all had this done

Other culture's signs are very outward and visible. Tattoos, piercings, head dresses, styles of clothes. The sign of god's people was not one that would be seen by everyone or known of right away.

A real Christian you'll know over time. Just because someone goes to church, has a bible, wears a Christian t-shirt, bumper sticker, or listens to the music...it will come out of their heart.

Their lifestyle, their words, their character will all begin to show whether their heart has been circumcised...cut off from the world and life of the flesh...or not

Again, we're not perfect, but is your life more circumcised today than yesterday?

**Eph 5:14-20 NKJV - Therefore He says: "Awake, you who sleep, Arise from the dead, And Christ will give you light." See then that you walk circumspectly, not as fools but as wise, redeeming the time, because the days are evil. Therefore do not be unwise, but understand what the will of the Lord [is]. And do not be drunk with wine, in which is dissipation; but be filled with the Spirit, speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord, giving thanks always for all things to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ,**

That's a circumcised life. Mia (and kids) always signing. But Mia is quite the worship leader of our home. Or Ashlee will be signing something upstairs and it'll get on my heart or the kids

hearts. Or I'll have some music on down in the basement and later on I'll hear Mia or Ashlee or Jake singing it...

it passes on. It comes out. Over time, it's evident.

**The more intimate our relationships are with others, the more they'll see our circumcised (or lack thereof) life and the more we'll notice theirs.**

**Maybe that's why we don't let other people in...we aren't being the church as much as we should be...because we're not being the church in our own private time...**

**Getting on our faces before the Lord...**

**2Ch 7:12-16 NKJV - Then the LORD appeared to Solomon by night, and said to him: "I have heard your prayer, and have chosen this place for Myself as a house of sacrifice. "When I shut up heaven and there is no rain, or command the locusts to devour the land, or send pestilence among My people, "if My people who are called by My name will humble themselves, and pray and seek My face, and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin and heal their land. "Now My eyes will be open and My ears attentive to prayer [made] in this place. "For now I have chosen and sanctified this house, that My name may be there forever; and My eyes and My heart will be there perpetually.**

**To not do it has broken the covenant.  
What is the result? Being cut off.**

**Guys, we'll either cut off our sinful lifestyles, habits, character...or we'll end up cut off**

**1Co 6:9-11 NKJV - Do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived. Neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor homosexuals, nor sodomites, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners will inherit the kingdom of God. And such were some of you. But you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of our God.**

**Gal 5:19-25 NKJV - Now the works of the flesh are evident, which are: adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lewdness, idolatry, sorcery, hatred, contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, dissensions, heresies, envy, murders, drunkenness, revelries, and the like; of which I tell you beforehand, just as I also told [you] in time past, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God. But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law. And those [who are]**

**Christ's have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit.**

**We must continue to walk in the spirit...it's the only way to be blameless. To maintain the covenant.**

**Not once saved always saved...or lose your salvation if you fail...**

But sincerely, if you are saved, you will continue to walk like it...no matter how many times you fail

If you aren't truly saved...in time, it will be evident

**:15-22**

**God said to Abraham...**God's second word for him as Abraham was for his wife  
God speaking to Sarai through her husband (again, how important the marriage relationship is when hearing from God)

I need to share with my wife and my wife needs to share with me. And we both need to listen and be humble.

**Sarai - princess**

**Sarah - noblewoman**

A princess who hadn't become queen and born a prince.

Who hadn't grown up spiritually all the way yet

Would soon become those things and a mother of God's covenanted, chosen nation - and eventually the messiah (genesis 3...have children and eventually he will crush the offspring of the enemy)

**Mother of nations, kings of peoples from her** (same as from Abraham...talk about **EQUALITY**)

**V17 - ABRAHAM FELL ON HIS FACE (he had gotten up apparently) AND LAUGHED**

We think Sarah is the only one who laughs...Abraham laughed first

*Laughing with Ashlee...*

He's laughing at what God said though...he doesn't believe it. It's gotta be ishmael, right Lord?  
This is too impossible for even you.

We are a bit stunned, i think, thinking we'd never laugh at God.

But do we take his word seriously? Do we really believe it when he says

**Mat 10:7-8 NKJV - "And as you go, preach, saying, 'The kingdom of heaven is at hand.'  
"Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out demons. Freely you have  
received, freely give."**

*Here comes the fire...Do we scoff at the rapture? That genesis is a literal account? That the earth, in all probability, is only 6,000 years old? That marriage is for one man and one woman? That sex outside of marriage is sin, dangerous, and destructive? That life begins at conception?*

*Or that God loves you? Has a plan for you? That you are not a bump on a log or a pew.  
That he has foreordained great works for you to WALK IN?*

*What do our lives look like? Do they look like we believe God's word? Or do they look like we don't?*

*What does the church look like? Is it really his body? Or is it just an organization, a 501c3, a company, a club...*

*What's it built on? The foundation of the gospel? Or the foundation of a preacher?  
We laugh at the catholics interpretation of Peter being the rock the church was built on...  
But are we more concerned with how Chuck smith **did** things or how the Holy Spirit **DOES**  
things?*

**Jhn 3:8 NKJV - "The wind blows where it wishes, and you hear the sound of it, but cannot  
tell where it comes from and where it goes. So is everyone who is born of the Spirit."**

**Let the Spirit blow you where he will. Don't laugh. Don't scoff. Believe and walk before  
Him blamelessly. Even if others blame you.**

**V9 God said no...**how often do we not believe God and bring our own plan to him and he says  
No...

**2Co 1:20 NKJV - For all the promises of God in Him [are] Yes, and in Him Amen, to the  
glory of God through us.**

**Maybe we're hearing no because we're not believing in the promise...which is already,  
and has always been...a yes**

**Isaac - he laughs**

God knew they would laugh...in unbelief, and in joy of having a baby. They'd always remember how great the miracle was, because they laughed

**A year later...** she hadn't even conceived yet. A promise is true even if we haven't seen it start to come to pass yet.

**Keep expecting it to come to pass.**

**Phi 1:6 NKJV - being confident of this very thing, that He who has begun a good work in you will complete [it] until the day of Jesus Christ;**

**God finished talking with him.** That was it. It wasn't rude, but that was it. Abraham was to take it with that. It didn't need to be hashed out any further.

Sometimes we sit around talking too long, praying over and over about something, and we just need to stand up and get walking.

If God's gotten up. God has said something and he hasn't said anything new about it in a while. It's time to get up.

**:23-27**

Right away, Abraham takes everyone, Ishmael his son (doesn't say Hagar's son, he has a relationship with his boy)

No delay. Better to rip this band-aid off right away boys. Get it over with.

Sometimes that's true for what God says to us...just get up and do it right away before your heart hardens to it and you put it off and never do it.

**The same day.** Let's go quick, before they realize what's happening  
(Ash talking about kids at doctors, taking separately so they don't see what each other are about to go through and both start crying)

I think I'd rather go to Isaac's altar than this one...I don't know

**2Co 6:2 NKJV - For He says: "In an acceptable time I have heard you, And in the day of salvation I have helped you." Behold, now [is] the accepted time; behold, now [is] the day of salvation.**

**Heb 3:15 NKJV - while it is said: "Today, if you will hear His voice, Do not harden your hearts as in the rebellion."**

It's not rebellion if you haven't heard it and wilfully disobeyed  
Sin vs. transgression

**Everyone was circumcised.** I'm not sure they wanted Abraham to go back to church next week. What's he going to cut off next?!

Sometimes that's the way the world, or even our family or spouse will look at us when we come out from a time with the Lord and say **we need to make a change, today.**

**We cannot wait. We cannot delay. It will hurt. It will be sore for a while. But we must do this today.**

What has God promised you?

Have you fell on your face before him in humility or rolled around on the floor in laughter?

Let his yes be yes and amen for you. Let it be settled. Then get up and get rid of whatever is in the way of the promise coming to be.

