

# Genesis 18:1-16 Is Anything Too Hard for the LORD?

Is there anything too hard for you?

- Lifting weights?
- Getting older, not the energy when you were a kid...

*Plugging Jake into the wall*

Are there things you just think are too hard for you?

Procrastination? Low-self worth?

**Rom 12:3-8 NKJV - For I say, through the grace given to me, to everyone who is among you, not to think [of himself] more highly than he ought to think, but to think soberly, as God has dealt to each one a measure of faith. For as we have many members in one body, but all the members do not have the same function, so we, [being] many, are one body in Christ, and individually members of one another. Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, [let us use them]: if prophecy, [let us prophesy] in proportion to our faith; or ministry, [let us use it] in [our] ministering; he who teaches, in teaching; he who exhorts, in exhortation; he who gives, with liberality; he who leads, with diligence; he who shows mercy, with cheerfulness.**

**1Co 12:4-11 NKJV - There are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit. There are differences of ministries, but the same Lord. And there are diversities of activities, but it is the same God who works all in all. But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to each one for the profit [of all]: for to one is given the word of wisdom through the Spirit, to another the word of knowledge through the same Spirit, to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healings by the same Spirit, to another the working of miracles, to another prophecy, to another discerning of spirits, to another [different] kinds of tongues, to another the interpretation of tongues. But one and the same Spirit works all these things, distributing to each one individually as He wills.**

**God has given you talents. The Spirit has given you gifts (Himself!)**

*Every gift we have is from him. It is Him in us, working.*

*Usually comes naturally, a natural desire. Maybe you don't know you have it, but as you begin to exercise it...BAM. Just try it!*

*Things that pique our interest do so for a reason*

*Learning to do new things*

**Yet, there are still plenty of things that are just too hard for us  
Physically, mentally, emotionally**

## **There is plenty more spiritually that God wants you to live out!**

(before the foundations of the earth...)

*(update on the church here)*

*Gather my saints together unto me; those that have made a covenant with me by sacrifice.*

*Psalms 50:5 KJV*

*Jer 3:15 NKJV - "And I will give you shepherds according to My heart, who will feed you with knowledge and understanding.*

**Life is not meant to be lived alone.**

### **IT'S SHORT**

*From dust we come and dust we go.*

*A vapor*

**But there is One who doesn't get old**

**Who doesn't wear out**

*...neither sleeps or slumbers*

**Jehovah/YHVH = "the existing One"**

...i can do all things through Christ who strengthens me

**But we must let HIM strengthen us**

It's ok to be weak. We're not designed to be strong without him

Our batteries run out Our bodies wear out

1Ti 4:8 NKJV - For bodily exercise profits a little, but godliness is profitable for all things, having promise of the life that now is and of that which is to come.

## **18:1-8**

**Last time, God talked with Abram**

**Abram** - exalted father **Abraham** father of a multitude" or "chief of multitude

**Sarai** - princess **Sarah** - noblewoman

**Now He APPEARS to him**

See, to present oneself, shown

*So often we think of it being us that need to present ourselves to God  
But a lot of times, it is God who wants to present himself to us! (A gift!)*

### **Sitting in the tent door, in the heat of the day**

*Bahamas mission...walking around in the heat of the day...silly foreigners*

**God will show up when no one else will**

When you least expect it

**Mat 24:43-44 NKJV - "But know this, that if the master of the house had known what hour the thief would come, he would have watched and not allowed his house to be broken into. "Therefore you also be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect.**

When everyone else says it's too hard, impossible, not going to happen

**Luk 18:27 NKJV - But He said, "The things which are impossible with men are possible with God."**

### **Three men**

Not an apparition

Jesus eating after the resurrection to prove it...

Learn later these other guys are angels

Moses and Elijah not born yet...

Transfiguration

End times

### **Abraham knew who this was.**

He calls him Lord. He says Your servant.

### **Abraham recognized RIGHT AWAY when God showed up. Do we?**

When you have that interesting thought that you thought was out of place (not sinful thought)

When there's a coincidence that you just can't ignore

When the check actually DOES come in the mail

When God gives you a word and it actually does come to pass

When there's an opportunity to share or for god to work right in front of you

**It's obvious.** (friend sharing about all of scripture and it being obvious what he's to do)

**But only if we've spent that time with God, like Abraham did in Ch 17**

**We won't see God if we're not meeting Him**

**We won't recognize him if we're not familiar with Him**

## The Discipline of Dismay

By Oswald Chambers

*As they followed they were afraid. —Mark 10:32*

**At the beginning of our life with Jesus Christ, we were sure we knew all there was to know about following Him. It was a delight to forsake everything else and to throw ourselves before Him in a fearless statement of love. But now we are not quite so sure. Jesus is far ahead of us and is beginning to seem different and unfamiliar— “Jesus was going before them; and they were amazed” (Mark 10:32).**

**There is an aspect of Jesus that chills even a disciple’s heart to its depth and makes his entire spiritual life gasp for air. This unusual Person with His face set “like a flint” (Isaiah 50:7) is walking with great determination ahead of me, and He strikes terror right through me. He no longer seems to be my Counselor and Friend and has a point of view about which I know nothing. All I can do is stand and stare at Him in amazement. At first I was confident that I understood Him, but now I am not so sure. I begin to realize that there is a distance between Jesus and me and I can no longer be intimate with Him. I have no idea where He is going, and the goal has become strangely distant.**

Jesus Christ had to understand fully every sin and sorrow that human beings could experience, and that is what makes Him seem unfamiliar. When we see this aspect of Him, we realize we really don’t know Him. We don’t recognize even one characteristic of His life, and we don’t know how to begin to follow Him. He is far ahead of us, a Leader who seems totally unfamiliar, and we have no friendship with Him.

The discipline of dismay is an essential lesson which a disciple must learn. The danger is that we tend to look back on our times of obedience and on our past sacrifices to God in an effort to keep our enthusiasm for Him strong (see Isaiah 50:10-11). **But when the darkness of dismay comes, endure until it is over, because out of it will come the ability to follow Jesus truly, which brings inexpressibly wonderful joy.**

### **If I have now found favor in your sight**

Abraham thought he hadn't found favor in God's sight...

That because the child of promise hadn't come he didn't have God's favor in his life

Favor - Grace, acceptance

I don't think the "delay" in Abraham's mind/perspective of God's promise not yet being fulfilled was a matter of not having God's favor

### **It wasn't based on Abraham's performance, but instead, God's providence**

God met with him. Cut covenant with him. Changed his name. Called him out. I think Abraham had God's favor on him *his entire life - and it didn't matter what Abraham thought, what others thought, where he came from or where he was going...God was looking on him with love.*

**Jer 31:3 NKJV - The LORD has appeared of old to me, [saying]: "Yes, I have loved you with an everlasting love; Therefore with lovingkindness I have drawn you.**

**Like Noah, Abel and even Cain, God loved them and was kind to them, no matter their disposition or actions.**

*The only thing that varied was their receiving of it.*

**I really think we Christians miss out so much on what God has for us, what God wants to do, and in fact, IS ALREADY DOING, because we're so afraid it depends on our performance.**

Either we haven't been perfect, holy, righteous enough, even to our own standards

Or we're afraid to carry things out because we're not going to do them perfectly

*Being a perfectionist..."procrastinationist"*

***But God doesn't ever expect perfection from us***

Like we saw last week about letting patience have its perfect work

**God will do the perfecting. We just need to do the seeking.**

*Esther being prepared for such a time as this...*

*So are we*

*Adult realization moment*

- You are here for a reason. You are wherever you are for a reason.
- Do the walking and let God sort it out.
- *Not an excuse to fail or make mistakes purposely or even sin or transgress*
- *But don't let it hang you up, sideline you unnecessarily*

***Be busy about YOUR father's business***

*He's not just my father. He's your father.*

***I think we MISS that!*** *So we just come, we just go. But we never, truly really LIVE.*

Jhn 10:10 NKJV - "The thief does not come except to steal, and to kill, and to destroy. I have come that they may have life, and that they may have [it] more abundantly."

**God was here with Abraham to give LIFE**

***(which was the real meat of the promise - life where there was no humanly way)***

**We need to be disciples.** I think too many of us are just TRYING to be Christians, it's too hard, and we're failing and not wanting to try harder, because what's the point

**THROW THAT AWAY. STOP TRYING TO BE A CHRISTIAN...**

**And just live the life of a disciple. Always learning. Always spending time with your Master, who is Your Heavenly Father. And life will come. More abundantly than you can ask, think or imagine.**

**The order we see here:**

***The call, the promise, the covenant, the appearance, the assurance, the fulfillment***

*This is how it works in God's economy*

*In no way was it dependent on Abraham's input.*

*Every time Abraham tried to do his own input... Haran, Lot, Egypt, Sarai, hagar...it backfired*

**The only one who can truly bring life is Jesus**

Anyone or anything else that promises you life if you'll just go somewhere, do something, say something, believe something in effort...is not Jesus. He alone gives life. Physically or spiritually.

We can't make it happen through belief, but in belief it can happen in God's time.

*But then God says some interesting things in the scripture...faith the size of a mustard seed you could say to the mountain be cast into the sea...*

**Take a break, a rest, please...**

Long journey, wash up

*Siesta in the heat*

**Although it wasn't based on Abraham's performance, the waiting led Abraham to want to seek God's favor above all else. It changed his heart to be one of a servant.**

**Being humbled is a good thing, especially in the midst of a promise**

- Abraham got Sarah to bake some cakes
- Got the good calf and got the servants to cook it
- Brings refreshments to the guests like a head servant

Hospitality, as unto the Lord

**Abraham didn't eat, he stood by as they did.**

*As i understand it, a custom in some places*

*A friend's wife, a true servant, always was wanting to serve us and care for us, rather stand by and prepare for us than sit down at times*

**Abraham's meal wasn't a cheap meal. It wasn't leftovers.**

It was fresh. It was hot. It was well prepared. It spared no expense.

If we have guests over our house, we usually do the best for them

Although sometimes for old friends we let them get what they want and ask them to bring us some

I know this could be seen as maybe trying to butter up the Lord, but I don't think that's Abraham's heart. I think he was sincerely wanting to be well pleasing to the Lord.

**:9-16**

**So Abraham...where's your wife Sarah? ...why haven't I seen her yet?**

The promise involves you both. I gave you a word for her the last time we spoke. Why is she not with us?

Cultural, following from a distance...God already breaking down those walls. Showing interest in both parties of the promise

**I will certainly return to you, according to the time of life (9 months)**

Amazing that it only takes 9 months to go from one cell to an entire baby's body.

**They already knew the promise. It would be Sarah. It would be a son (an heir).  
But now there was a definite time frame given.**

**The rubber hits the road here.**

It's one thing to say something, it's another thing to put a time frame on it.

*False prophets*

**Real faith isn't afraid of how long it may take or even how fast the fulfillment may arrive.  
It's confident in God's timing.**

*All too often when things take time we want them faster.*

*But also when things happen quickly we want them to happen slower (or might tell someone to slow own)*

*And that could be good advice....but when it's clearly God's timing, it's not God's advice to slow it down or laugh it off as impossible*

**V11 - the facts: they're old!**

**Well advanced in age**

Sometimes that's the only thing we're well advanced in...not some skill, not some wisdom, but the only thing we've amassed in life is a lot of years

**It was not a small thing to say Sarah was past the years of childbearing. She was undoubtedly well past it, forty-fifty years past it even.**

*I really think God loves showing up when we all think it's beyond too late.*

*God you could have or should have showed up then...and then he waits even longer to show up just to prove a point.*

*Just to REVEAL himself in an even deeper way to us.*

*To make the miracle even more a miracle.*

*He's got a sense of humor in the most loving, endearing way, but it's not a joke to be laughed at*

***She laughed within herself and he heard...***



**Mat 9:2-8 NKJV - Then behold, they brought to Him a paralytic lying on a bed. When Jesus saw their faith, He said to the paralytic, "Son, be of good cheer; your sins are forgiven you." And at once some of the scribes said within themselves, "This Man blasphemes!" But Jesus, knowing their thoughts, said, "Why do you think evil in your hearts? "For which is easier, to say, '[Your] sins are forgiven you,' or to say, 'Arise and walk'? "But that you may know that the Son of Man has power on earth to forgive sins"--then He said to the paralytic, "Arise, take up your bed, and go to your house." And he arose and departed to his house. Now when the multitudes saw [it], they marveled and glorified God, who had given such power to men.**

*God knows what we're really thinking about Him. Stop and think about that one for a minute...*

**Sarah calls Abraham lord (lowercase l).**

Maybe that's why she laughed. She hadn't quite believed for herself yet.

There was still so much hurt and dismay and bitterness there because her desire hadn't been met and in her mind and heart, the time it could have happened was so long gone it was now never going to happen.

**But it was going to happen.**

## **Is anything too hard for the LORD?**

It wasn't lord Abraham who was going to get her pregnant (it was him physically)

**But it was the LORD who was going to spark the new little life in them and through them.**

**The LORD repeats the promise, timing and his coming to them again here.**

*"This is going to happen. There's no two ways about it."*

**V15 Sarah denies it...because she was afraid**

**I'd be pretty afraid, too if someone heard my thoughts!**

*Ever think something real loud in your head and you're not totally paying attention to what's going on around you and you get afraid that you just said it out loud...?*

*Maybe she's thinking that.*

**She doesn't have that close relationship with the LORD yet, and his words, his promise and his power scare her.**

*People are afraid of coming to church, afraid of the Bible, it scares them because they don't yet know him*

**God is gracious and repeats his promise to them. Perhaps sternly in rebuttal, but I think just strongly and directly to snap her out of unbelief**

1Pe 4:11 NKJV - If anyone speaks, [let him speak] as the oracles of God. If anyone ministers, [let him do it] as with the ability which God supplies, that in all things God may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom belong the glory and the dominion forever and ever. Amen.

Phl 1:27-28 NKJV - Only let your conduct be worthy of the gospel of Christ, so that whether I come and see you or am absent, I may hear of your affairs, that you stand fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel, and not in any way terrified by your adversaries, which is to them a proof of perdition, but to you of salvation, and that from God.

**V16 The men get up to go to sodom, Abraham shows them out on the way** (he didn't yet know what their trip to Sodom was all about...but I'll bet he was wondering, wouldn't you, especially if your nephew lived there?)

Their trip was to confirm the wickedness of Sodom and bring judgment, but on the way, God brought a message of his favor. Of the heir to come.

**The timing of the promise coincides with the timing of the judgment.**

*Jesus...fulfilled God's promise for a messiah  
Yet his promised life culminated in judgment*

*His return will be the same.  
The day he returns will be the day judgment begins*

We want **revival**...we want His appearance in our day and age and lives...then we have to let him have his judgment on us...and his judgment is always to grant life to those who want it, who are seeking it

**Say unto them, As I live, saith the Lord God , I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked; but that the wicked turn from his way and live: turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways; for why will ye die, O house of Israel?**

**Ezekiel 33:11**

**Did they finish the meal? Was the meal over at this point as they were talking? Did they get up mid-meal?**

*I don't think they were rude, but having the meal was for Abraham's and Sarah's sake...to bring them a time of fellowship as a package for the delivery of the final promise  
Not just a son...but the time for him to finally come.*