

The example of how I do it, or whoever is discipling you, is for you not only to learn the Bible but to learn the procedure by which we take people and help them with the Word of God in their life, because that is what it needs to be. Then we saw David as the king. What a great study that was, and I wish we could have spent weeks on it, but we couldn't. We could have, but we just didn't have the time to look at David as the king. We saw in that aspect, the second aspect, how that it is a picture of you and I that when we are on top of life, we really have a handle on the Word of God, the power of God in our life. Basically, there is the theme for the song that we sang this morning, "Victory in Jesus." You are always in victory because of Christ as the King of your life.

Then we saw David as God's man, and I think that was the most tender aspect of the whole thing and really shows you how it all pulls together. I hope you know after last week that you now too have begun to go into the book of Psalms and begin to break down your own prayer to ask God to make you everything that God wants you to be.

I. Abraham's Righteousness by Faith

Today I want to begin reading in Romans chapter 4 and verse 9, and we will finish out the chapter. We will be here for a couple of weeks, but I want to read the rest of the chapter, then we will break it down as we go through the next couple of weeks.

9 Cometh this blessedness then upon the circumcision only, or upon the uncircumcision also? for we say that faith was reckoned to Abraham for righteousness.

10 How was it then reckoned? when he was in circumcision, or in uncircumcision? Not in circumcision, but in uncircumcision.

11 And he received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith which he had yet being uncircumcised: that he might be the father of all them that believe, though they be not circumcised; that righteousness might be imputed unto them also:

12 And the father of circumcision to them who are not of the circumcision only, but who also walk in the steps of that faith of our father Abraham, which he had being yet uncircumcised.

Now let me help you with this. Here again, we are into Romans where it looks like you are reading a law firm's dialogue on some kind of ex parte or something. But what you have here is, and he is talking about the fact that the righteousness just was not to somebody under the law. Abraham, when he got the righteousness of God in Genesis 12, he had no sign of the covenant. He had nothing. He is still a Gentile in the sense of the fact that God has called him out, but he has nothing that God has given him yet as far as the sign and the seal of circumcision. That comes a little bit later in his life, and that is what he is saying.

There is a great picture, and some of you will not get this, but if you are a little bit down the line, there is a great picture of spiritual circumcision in the Old Testament, even though we are still fallen from the New Testament if you understand the concept of spiritual circumcision.

13 For the promise, that he should be the heir of the world, was not to Abraham, or to his seed, through the law, but through the righteousness of faith.

14 For if they which are of the law be heirs, faith is made void, and the promise made of none effect:

15 Because the law worketh wrath: for where no law is, there is no transgression.

16 Therefore it is of faith, that it might be by grace; to the end the promise might be sure to all the seed; not to that only which is of the law, but to that also which is of the faith of Abraham; who is the father of us all,

17 (As it is written, I have made thee a father of many nations,) before him whom he believed, even God, who quickeneth the dead, and calleth those things which be not as though they were.

18 Who against hope believed in hope, that he might become the father of many nations, according to that which was spoken, So shall thy seed be.

19 And being not weak in faith, he considered not his own body now dead, when he was about an hundred years old, neither yet the deadness of Sara's womb:

20 He staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief; but was strong in faith, giving glory to God;

21 And being fully persuaded that, what he had promised, he was able also to perform.

22 And therefore it was imputed to him for righteousness.

23 Now it was not written for his sake alone, that it was imputed to him;

24 But for us also, to whom it shall be imputed, if we believe on him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead;

25 Who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification.

Father, we thank You and praise You for the Lord Jesus. We pray, Father, You will give us today what we need in here. Help me to begin to lay this out, to set a context, and then to come back and break these things down that they might be able to grasp the great truths that we might also understand what You have done in our lives. Thank You for today, for Your blessed. Now let every word that comes out of my mouth be ordained of God to touch the hearts of Your people, and we will thank You and praise You in Jesus' name. For His sake, we ask it. Amen.

You can see at a glance, or out of reading, I should say, how that Romans is such a technically technical book in the way it is written. What we are going to do over the next couple of weeks is we are going to take these passages, why I read it, and we are going to break it down that you might understand how this thing lays out in relation to Abraham.

Now, David, we now know we have this worked out. He represents the child of God who gets God's righteousness imputed to him in the face of a law that demands death. We talked about this last week. When David committed his sin, there was no law, there was no sacrifice for the law. The law in the book says that you had to die. Capital punishment was the only law. Then we saw how that God gave him the sure mercies of David. We defined those mercies, and we showed you how that David in the Old Testament represents exactly what you and I have in the New Testament on a picture of your eternal security.

Now we have come through verses 9 through 25, and it brings us to the second man we are going to look at, and this man is Abraham. Abraham is a great picture of how again we get God's righteousness by faith. You want to keep this in mind: where David represents you and I getting God's righteousness imputed to us when we do not deserve it under the penalty of death because of our sin, Abraham will represent for us us getting God's righteousness by doing absolutely nothing, the gift of God through the grace of God. It is a tremendous concept.

II. David and Abraham: Heart and Friendship

Here is another difference you want to put down. When we studied David last time and the three aspects of David's life, the great thing that came out of David's life that we really focused on was the fact that the Bible says that David was a man after God's own heart. We developed that to the point where last week we saw and we deep inside and saw how David built that relationship to get God's heart. So David represents for us the heart of God.

Now we come to Abraham, and it is in these two men not only do we see the two definitions of imputed righteousness, but we begin to see the two concepts that really make your life and my life what it needs to be. Where in David we see God's heart, in Abraham we see the friend of God as to his relationship with God. It is probably the greatest study in all of the Bible that I know of, and certainly the most complete study of how to work through the trials of life, how to overcome the mistakes that we make in life, and through the process of falling down and getting up and falling down and getting up, becoming God's friend in spite of ourselves. I do not know of any man in the Bible in a more complete form represents that.

You want to remember David is going to be the picture of how you and I get God's heart. Abraham is going to be the picture of how you and I become God's friend. When you blend the two of them together, you have a tremendous study that unlocks some incredible things that we are going to look at over the next couple of weeks. As I said, we will break these things down in Abraham's life in context of Romans chapter 4 to see the great parallels.

III. The Number Three: Completion

Most of you who have been around for a while, you know what I am about to say, but in your Bible, every number, not every number, but there are certain numbers in the Bible that stand for certain things. We call those Bible numerology. In the Bible, the number three stands for the completion of something. It is the order of God's structure in everything that He does.

The Bible, when God wrote the Bible, the Bible has three applications for you to get the complete understanding of the Bible. You have to get the doctrinal, the historical, and the inspirational. God's Son, when He came down to this earth, God gave Him three distinct names. Every one of those names go together, yet every one of those names represents something in an individual aspect that you study His life to understand the completeness of Him. The Lord Jesus Christ, each one of those parts of His name means something different in the Bible, and you will never understand totally who He is until you understand the definitions of those three names because three in your Bible is the order of completion.

When you went to school, no math problem is complete until you get the third part. You can have two plus two, but until you get the answer, it is not complete. You can have a husband and wife, but they are not called a family until the little bambino shows up, and then it is a fact because it is complete as far as the structure is concerned. We live on planet Earth. Planet Earth is made up of three things: the air, the land, and the sea. Just three things. When you look at all the things that are made of, it is called matter, and matter is made on source, generation, and position. Time only has three aspects: past, present, and future. Everything that is complete, that when God made it in its completeness. Now seven is the number of perfection, but three is the number of completion.

The Old Testament books, for those of you that just flunked out of institute, you know it is historical, and it is doctrinal, and it is prophetic. It deals with the three aspects. Everything breaks down. That is why when we studied David, we studied David as a shepherd and a king and a man after God's own heart. That really shows you the completeness of David.

But when we come to Abraham, we find that Abraham's life is a similar study, and we are going to break Abraham down into three aspects, and that is how we are going to study his life to get the complete picture.

1. Abram
2. Abraham
3. Abraham as the Friend of God

I am just going to say this now, and we will come back in time and look at it, but every time God changes a man or a woman's name in the Bible, it is very, very, very significant. It always means something, and it means something in your life too that you need to learn the parallel. Then we are going to look at not only Abram and then we are going to look at him as Abraham and what that represents between the two. Then we are going to look at Abraham as the friend of God, and we are going to put all that together just like we looked at David as shepherd, king, and a man after God's own heart. That is what we are going to get out of chapter 4, verse 9 through 25, over the next couple of weeks.

IV. God's Plan vs. God's Will

Today, I want to set a context. I am a big context guy. I learned years and years ago that if you are ever going to get the reality of something, you have to see the context that it sets in, and that is certainly true of the Bible. I do not like to study anything in the Bible or look at anything in

life without really getting the context. I think it is absolutely crucial to be able to do that. I want to set today a context in the life of Abraham, and then we can better learn and apply the great lessons and the great parallels of his life.

Now turn over to 1 Corinthians chapter 10 and pick it up in verse 1. I know most of you know this, maybe not all of you, but there are enough new people here that I want you to understand how this slides. Of course, if you already know, the price of learning is repetition, so that is how you get it.

1 Corinthians chapter 10. I want to show you a real key passage in learning your Bible and learning about yourself and learning why I do what I do. You hear me talk a lot about, you hear me use the word "types." You hear me talk a lot about types. You hear me talk a lot about parallels. A parallel is something that goes side by side with something. In the Olympics, if you are watching the Olympics, they have the sport on the parallel bars. That is two bars side by side. Well, in the Bible, parallels and types are things that go together, and the two of them are matched to show you something.

You have heard me say many, many times that the stories in the Old Testament will always lay out and show you what the New Testament principles are at work. That is a parallel. You see the Old Testament story, and then you find the New Testament passages that run parallel to it, and the one reveals what is going on, and you get a complete picture of what is happening.

Now the definitive passage for this that you need to know is found in 1 Corinthians chapter 10, verses 1 through 12. I want to read it for you, and then we will make a few comments before we move on. Remember, today we are just going to kind of set the context.

1 Moreover, brethren, I would not that ye should be ignorant, how that all our fathers were under the cloud, and all passed through the sea;

2 And were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea;

3 And did all eat the same spiritual meat;

4 And did all drink the same spiritual drink: for they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them: and that Rock was Christ.

5 But with many of them God was not well pleased: for they were overthrown in the wilderness.

6 Now these things were our examples, to the intent we should not lust after evil things, as they also lusted.

7 Neither be ye idolaters, as were some of them; as it is written, The people sat down to eat and drink, and rose up to play.

8 Neither let us commit fornication, as some of them committed, and fell in one day three and twenty thousand.

9 Neither let us tempt Christ, as some of them also tempted, and were destroyed of serpents.

10 Neither murmur ye, as some of them also murmured, and were destroyed of the destroyer.

11 Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples: and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come.

12 Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall.

Now what he has basically done here is walked you all the way back to the nation of Israel, starting with Moses, and he has brought you all the way up through the book of Numbers. What he has done here is he has laid out some things that the nation of Israel got into. He has laid out some things that the nation of Israel got into.

Now look what he says in verse 11: "Now all these things," and things that we just read, the murmuring, the fornication, the idolatry, all of these things happened unto them for ensamples, and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come. Wherefore, let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall. That is one of the greatest passages in the Bible that connects the stories in the Old Testament and shows you that what happened to them is likely going to happen to us. Human nature on both sides of the cross, Old Testament and New Testament, is exactly the same, and you are going to find the same problems that they have are the same problems that we have.

God wrote the Bible, as my old grandmother used to say, "This Bible will keep you from sin, or sin will keep you from this Bible." That was a great piece of wisdom. When you look at that, you realize that the reason why God wrote the Bible is so that you and I do not have to make the same mistakes and go through the same heartaches and the same tragedies that befell the nation of Israel.

Ensamples are something that you are. So we look at David's life, Abraham's life, and we see their character. We see their flaws, their good points, their bad points. Examples are something that you do. We see the man do what he does, and we watch through the examples. The Bible says that these things are for our admonition, admonishment, learning through a process that you and I do not make the same mistakes in life. It is a great passage on that. This is where I am coming from when I tell you that the Bible, I tell you that you have got to live your life by the examples and the principles of the Bible. This is what I mean when I talk about parallels. This is what I mean when I read the Old Testament. Somebody will ask a question on Thursday night, and they will say, "Read me a question out of the Old Testament," and I will immediately take it and bring it into a New Testament context that applies to you. Even though it is written in the Old Testament, the way because those stories, even though they are men that were in the Old Testament and they are not part of the church, they are God's people in the Old Testament scenario. The things that they do, the examples that they are, the examples that they get into are for you and I to learn those lessons because human nature is the same on both sides of the cross.

In our discipleship lessons, and we have a set of lessons that I think there are 10 lessons in there that we bring people through when they really want to begin the foundation of their life with God. It is a situation where you begin to get the basics, the fundamentals, so to speak. We do it all different ways, but each lesson is designed to do a specific thing in your life as far as helping you understand how the Bible goes together and how it applies to you. I think it is lesson six that we talk about a very important study, and it is probably one of the most misunderstood things

anywhere in all of the Bible. In lesson six, we talk about the difference between God's plan for your life and God's will for your life. I do not know of anything, and there are so many things that people are screwed up on today, saved people. I do not know of anything that throws more people off the track than missing this point right here. When you miss this fundamental concept here that is biblically based and laid out in the Bible very clearly, you are off someplace where God is not, and you are going to get into some trouble someplace down the line.

But in the same thing, I do not know of a better study in a man's life in the Bible that shows how this process works. I can stand up here and take lesson six, as many of you have done and are doing, discipling people, and I can lay out the story and tell you doctrinally how it lays out, take it to the verses in Romans and all those places, and define all those things. But let me tell you, if you want to understand God's will versus God's plan, and you want a viable, visible story in a man's life who in every aspect that I know of lays out what your life and my life should be from the moment he got saved right up to the fact when he dies, if you want a viable working picture of the process of a man like you and me fulfilling God's plan and God's will in his life, I do not know of a better study than the life of Abraham. Abraham meets all the requirements. Abraham meets all the requirements of God fulfilling His plan in his life.

Now let me just say this to you, and I want you to keep this in your mind as we come through this today. If you are saved this morning, God has a plan for you. Now His plan will be different for everybody. Robert, you got saved this week, and I want to tell you something. Look over here, I can see you. The moment you got saved, God said, "I can use that guy. I got a plan for him." Now your job from this point on is to let God develop that plan. You are young, you are good-looking, you look like you are looking a lot like me when I was your age. You got everything going for you right now in your life, everything. You got people around you. God had dumped you into a church. You got Matt as your friend. You got everything you need right around you now to help you fulfill God's plan in your life, and that is your, this is the greatest time in your life, Robert. That is the greatest time in your life because God wants to build that plan in your life.

Now the thing you have got to understand is this: God has something that He wants you and me to do, someplace He wants us to go, or something specific He wants out of your life and my life. The thing that you have got to understand, there is a difference between God's plan and there is a difference between God's will. Now God's plan for everybody in here is different. God may have something different for you than He has for me next to you. He will probably have something different for them than He does for you. God's plan is what He wants to accomplish in your life that you do for Him in the time you have allotted on planet Earth. But God's will, ladies and gentlemen, is the same for everybody, and God's will for Robert is the same as it is for me. Though God's plan for Robert may be different than mine, God's will for him is the same as mine and is the same as yours. That simply means God's will is that you and I work every day at becoming more like Jesus Christ. Every day of your life, every day of your life, you cease to be a little more less Bob Alexander and a little bit more like the Lord Jesus Christ. The process of coming to church, the process of Thursday night Bible study, your discipleship, our one-on-one, our institute, all the different aspects and the roads that we have around here, it really exists for

one purpose and one reason: it meets you at whatever level you are on and it helps you develop God's will for your life that in time you can fulfill God's plan for your life.

When you look at the life of Abraham and study his life, what you find in its basic form, and it is a great model, it is something that every child of God ought to sit down and study out and lay out and get it where we need to get it. You find God fulfilling His plan in Abraham's life as Abraham fulfilled God's will in his life. I do not know what to tell you, ladies and gentlemen, I do not know what to tell you. This study, as we set the context today, and that is all I want to do, I want to show you the background that brings this thing that you go out of here today recognizing that God has something He wants you to do for Him. It is literal, it is physical, it requires your hands and your feet, your abilities, your job, your talents, whatever. But you only fulfill that as you focus on fulfilling God's will for your life, which is becoming more like the Lord Jesus Christ.

V. Abraham's Calling and Disobedience

Now I want you to see something today, and I wish, I am going to tell you right now, I will not do this message justice. I need about 28 hours to do it, but I am going to give it the best shot I can. Turn back to Genesis chapter 12. Our big screen here is not working today that we normally put the verses up for you, but it was stolen last night in a drunken party here, and we will just have to get along without it and just use the Bible.

Genesis chapter 12. Let us get our context. Let us see the parallels here of Abraham's life as an ensample, as an example, and certainly as an admonition.

Genesis chapter 12. Here is where it starts. Here is where it starts, God's first contact with Abraham. In this case, it is Abram. We will get into that next week.

1 Now the Lord had said unto Abram, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will shew thee:

2 And I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing:

3 And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee: and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed.

4 So Abram departed, as the Lord had spoken unto him; and Lot went with him: and Abram was seventy and five years old when he departed out of Haran.

5 And Abram took Sarai his wife, and Lot his brother's son, and all their substance that they had gathered, and the souls that they had gotten in Haran; and they went forth to go into the land of Canaan; and into the land of Canaan they came.

Now the first thing I want you to see is this, point number one in my message, and you can see it very clearly: God has a plan for Abraham. He called him out. He even gives us an insight into the plan. He said, "I am going to make you a father of many nations. In you, Abraham, all the families of the earth, all the nations of the earth are going to be blessed." This plan, Abraham, will affect the course of the history of the entire world. This plan, Abraham, will affect

everything that goes on and where it goes down through life on planet Earth. I am sure that Abraham could not have grasped the significance at that point any more than you sitting here this morning, wherever you are struggling through in life. I know that everybody struggles. It is not about do we struggle or do we not. It is not about Joe over here does not struggle and everybody over here does struggle. It is not about that. Everybody struggles. It is just a matter of on what level you struggle and what are you going to do with your struggle. That is all that really matters.

Abraham did not have a clue that most of you do not today, that God wants to change the course of the world through you. He wants to make a difference that goes on and on. I know what comes into your mind. You say to yourself, "Well, I am not like Abraham. Through Abraham came all the nation of Israel. What is God going to do through me?" Just wait and see this parallel. There is more in here this morning than I can even begin to lay out for you. But what an incredible thing. From Abraham, his seed is going to come, his family. From his family is going to come Isaac. From Isaac is going to come Jacob. From Jacob is going to come the twelve tribes. From the twelve tribes are going to come the nation of Israel, and in time, the Lord Jesus Christ Himself is going to come through his loins. The salvation of the world was in the plan that God had for him, and Abraham did not even know it. If God would have told Abraham right there, "You know what, someday out of your loins, out of your seed is going to come the Lord Jesus Christ. He is going to be the Savior of the world," Abraham, he could not even grasp the fact that God was going to give him his seed when he was 99 years old. How in the world would he have grasped that?

Same way, it is hard for some of you to sit here this morning looking at life through your troubles, looking at life through your issues, looking at life through your problems, and not seeing the hand of God in your life wants to take you and literally by you, yes you, change the course of this world if you will let Him, if you will let Him. I think every Christian ought to be like, when I was back in Ohio, we had this guy, he was kind of a goofy guy, went to high school, and he built a little radio station. I mean, not a ham radio, like an FM radio station. It only had one watt. I think he got out of a nine-block radius. All he did was when you drove through the section, listened to another radio program, it interfered with you. He had one little watt. He had an FCC license. I went downstairs one time, and he had things on the wall, WSA 6643, whatever it was, you know. He was on there. He had a great radio voice, and he had all these things down there, a one-watt radio station. Every time he opened up his broadcast, he said, "Hello, world! Hello, world from a one-watt radio station!" I thought of that years and years. That ought to be the thing in everybody's heart today. Right now, you just think you are a one-watt radio station. You have the ability, if you will do what God tells you to do, someday to say, "Hello, world," and reach the world. You will, you will, you will. There are so many ways to do it. There are so many things that God wants you to do.

But the thing I want you to see is this, and I want to speak to you young parents for a moment. I want you to see this. I want you to speak to, if you are a young mom or dad in here and you have got young kids, I want you to listen to what I have got to say. I want you to understand this great truth, and I see this, I see this messed up, I do not know how many times in life, but I want you to listen to me. If you are a parent here and you have got little children, your kids are 16, 17, 18

years old, you can learn it, but you cannot change it now. But if you are coming up and you have got some little kids, little guys, little gals in your life, you better see this great principle.

You realize that God, when all the things that He just said, you realize that He never intended to do that through Abraham by himself? Did you grasp that? That it said, "Abraham, you are going to do this and you are going to do that," but Abraham did not do that. You realize in your life the reason why God gives you children, why God gives you girls and boys, and why God gives you children, because God maybe will not get it all done through you. The Bible says we only got three score and ten, that is 70 years. God recognized the great concept that He was not going to get it all done through Abraham, and it was going to be Abraham's family that carried on what God began in the heart of Abraham. Oh, you missed this, ladies and gentlemen, and you missed it all. You missed this, you missed it all.

Hey, when God looked for Abraham, when He looked for a man, when He looked for a man that was going to do and He was going to develop His plan through, God knew it was going to take longer than the life of Abraham. Look what He said. Look what He said in Genesis chapter 18, verse 18 and 19.

18 Seeing that Abraham shall surely become a great and mighty nation, and all the nations of the earth shall be blessed in him?

19 For I know him, that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the Lord, to do justice and judgment; that the Lord may bring upon Abraham that which he hath spoken of him.

You know what is missing today? Missing that parallel, the inability of parents to command their children. Notice it did not say that he is going to suggest to his children what to do. Notice it did not say he is going to parley with them and work it out. No, it says, "command his children."

Now let me offer you the great parallel. When God brought out the nation of Israel in Exodus chapter 12, they are called the children of Israel. In Exodus chapter 4, they are called God's son. You know what God the Father did before He gave that Jew one concept of the law? You know what God did as a heavenly Father to His children, the Jews, before He issued one concept of the law? You know what He did? He commanded them in ten things they are not going to do. They said, "Ten Commandments." No, no, no, the ten non-negotiables. In every family, mom and dad, listen to me, you have got those little kids growing up in your family. Before you try to enforce anything out here, you better set down some things that you command your children to, and when it comes to these things, it is non-negotiable. When it comes to these commandments, they are non-negotiable. As long as they live in your house, they go by these rules. They do not want to go by these rules, let them move out and go someplace else.

You see the mistakes that parents make is this: they cannot make the hard decision. They have no commands in their family. They do not see the great concept that God will not get it all done in your life. Now I have the distinct advantage as a pastor that I become many of your spiritual fathers, so I have a great advantage because I can invest myself into all of you because I know God will not get it all done through me, and I am counting not on my immediate family but this

family that God has given me as your spiritual leader. You are my spiritual sons and daughters, if you so choose to be, that I can. But see, you know what I have in this church that some people do not like? Some commands that have to be done. This is a non-negotiable concept. What happens in families is parents will not set down the rules. They will not have some things that are absolutely non-negotiable. When they do not do that, when the kid grows up, or she grows up to be 15 or 16 or 17, they say, "I do not want to go to church anymore," or they want to live with the world, or they want to do what they want to do, and now you are powerless to stop that. What happens is, hey, God has a plan for your life, and the devil wants to short-circuit that plan. God knows through the Holy Spirit of God that you and your life as a mom and a dad, you never will fulfill all that God has for you. God wants you to do it through your family, but before, the thing that God looked for was, "He will command his children after him." Command his children after him.

"Abraham, get in there." And the boy said, "I do not think I am going to church today." Abraham says, "Yes, you are." "No, I do not think I am." "Yeah, I think you are." "Well, Dad, you know what, I am 20 some years old now, you cannot tell me what to do." "Yeah, you are right, but you are still under my house, and this is God's house. We live by God's rules, and there are some things that are absolute here that are non-negotiable, son." "Well, I am not going to go by and find." You know what, I one time in my life, only one time, did I ever see a father deal with this thing in a total way, in a concept, and I am sure there is another, but this was one I was privy to. He sat down there, and he had a rebellious boy who lived in his house, lived like the world, ran like hell with all the unsaved people, got all the things, never came to church, never had any spiritual link in his home, and yet wanted to come home at night, flopping in the house, wanted Dad to feed him, wanted Dad to clothe him, wanted Dad to keep him warm out of the rain, all those things. Dad says, "It ain't going to happen. This is God's house." The kid obviously went ballistic, you know, and they pulled the same old stuff that they all pulled, you know, and this is where most parents cannot hold the line. This is where most parents cave in. Most parents at this point fall under the delusion, "Oh, if my little girl or my little guy runs out there and goes into the world, I will lose them forever." Hey, dingbat, you already lost them. You got your body, you do not have them. They are in charge, not you. You are telling them, and then they are telling you. They are setting down the commandments, not you. You got the whole process backwards.

He said, "Son, you are going to church. You are going to Bible study as long as you are under my roof. That is the way it is going to be. This is God's house." Kid says, "I ain't going." Dad says, "All right, you got two weeks to find you someplace out. Hey, you want to live like the world? You want to be a big man and understand the world, or a big gal and figure it all out? Then go support yourself and figure it all out." You know what I call that in the Bible? It is in the book of Luke. It is probably the prodigal son's sermon. This guy said to his son, "Son, you see this house? God gave me this house. You see the food that we eat in that refrigerator? God provided that. You see the clothes that we have, the car in the garage, and all the stuff that is around here? God gave us this because we love Him and worship Him. Son, I love you, I care for you, but it is against the Bible, and it is wrong for me to take what God has given to us and let you live like hell, run with the devil's crowd, and then come back and find solitude here. If you like serving the devil and he is such a great guy, then let him feed you, let him clothe you." The kid left. Eight

weeks, nine weeks, ten weeks. Oh, the great prodigal. You know that prodigal son, when he left over there, when he is on his own out there, you know where he got? He had a good house. He had a good time with the father. His father obviously is rich. He has a lot of things that he has, and he has great things, but he did not like that. You know what his problem was? He did not want to follow the father's commandment. So father said, "Okay, son, you are on your own." Off he went. Wow, what a great, great change from the nice servant room with the bed being made, with the laundry being done, to the pig sty when he is eating the husk of the swine.

Greatest verse in that story, and a verse for every parent that finds yourself in that cessation, and you cannot make the hard decision, when you cave in, when you give in, when you allow them to live under your roof not doing what the Bible says because you have not commanded your children after you. The Bible says down there with the pigs. You ever see pigs? They are the dirtiest animals in the world. They live in squalor. They eat anything, including you. You get too close. Filthy as animals in the world. No wonder God says you cannot eat pork. Well, then after the author Bryant was born, God said, "I am going to change that, and now you can." Hey, but in that great story, you know what it says? When he is down with the pigs, when he is out and Dad is not putting gas in his car, Mom is not fixing his meals, he does not have the nice comfort of his bedroom and the servants he can order around like he does his parents. Oh no, now he is down with the pigs, and the greatest part of that story says this: "And when he came to himself." Nothing like a prodigal pig experience to get that wayward kid to come to himself.

A woman said to me one time, "Well, I do not know what to do. If I do this, he will leave." And I said, "Let him leave." "But he has no place to go." Hey, let me tell you something, a cardboard box under I-435 in November is a great wake-up call. It is a great wake-up call. If you are lucky, maybe you can find two big washing machine boxes, and you can put a bathroom in. Hey, hey, hey, you do not get it all done in your life, folks. You better have some young ones, young people coming up, your little kids, your little ones that you have got right now. You better get it in your brain. You are either going to command them after the way you walk with God, and then you are going to be able to tell them what they need to do based on establishing some non-negotiable term. You live in my house, under my roof, with God paying the bills, God doing this, this is what you are going to do. Cannot happen, will not happen, will not happen. God's people today are absolutely oblivious to this, and this is why, this is why I am telling you young parents, you better grasp this concept.

You know the key word in associating with the Bible is one word for you and for me, one word, one word. It is the word "structure" because we need structure. We are structureless people. We are people that are prone to all kinds of problems. We are people that are dysfunctional. We have the ability and inability to be able to follow through with anything. Today, in the days we live in, I have never seen a more dysfunctional Christianity in all my life, and I say it, I have seen the Christians that are absolutely totally inept when it comes to dealing with their children. It does not matter how much you know about the Bible. It does not matter. It matters when the hard line has to fall, when the hammer hits the anvil, that hammer better be made of iron instead of rubber. I am telling you, structure is the key. The kids demand it. When they are little, they grow up with a structure. God, the first thing He did when He got the nation of Israel out in Exodus chapter 20,

they come out in chapter 12, He gave them a 10-point structure of command. It was not the 10 suggestions. It was not the 10 good ideas. It was not the 10, "Well, I hope you will not be offended by these." It was the 10 Commandments that formed the structure. That is what a church is. Church is structure, and many people when they come to church, they do not like structure because we live in a structureless society. Normally, when it happens at a place, they will, many times, they blame it on you if you are discipling them. You try to keep them accountable. Many times, they will blame it on me. That is how many times I hear this, "Well, Bob, he tries to control everybody's life." Okay, let me translate that for you. This church is a structure that you do not want to be in.

Steve Raki, how long have you known me? How old were you the first time I whipped your butt in camp? 13? Do you know me any different now than I was then as far as what I hold, what I stand, where I am at? He is probably the oldest one. Johnny, how long have you known me? I married you and Jan when you did not even have a mustache, 35 years ago. Have you known me to change ever? Am I the same now as I am? I am better looking, obviously, and I am a lot smarter, but in my basic approach to people in life, have I changed? Jimmy, where are you at? He is with a kid. Pam, where are you at? How long have you known me? Do not too long. What does that mean? How long have you known me? Have I changed? Have I the same way? Anyways, now am I great? Well, bless your heart, I am, am I not? Yes, I am. My point is this: I have not changed. I believe the exact same thing right now that I believed 25, 35 years ago. I do not put anybody in or any more accountability now than I did then. I just simply believe this book. You know what this book is? You know why you do not like it? Not you guys, but you know why some people do not like it? Because this book represents a structure, and you do not want to be structured, and you are not man enough or woman enough to stand up and say, "Bob, I am an idiot. I do not want to be structured." No, you will stand up and say, "Bob is the problem," or "You are the problem," or "This person discipling is the problem." When the truth is, this book is about structure. It is all it is. We need structure. The church is God's structure, but within the church, there are some hard, fast concepts that are non-negotiable, non-negotiable, and that is just the way it is. He commanded his family. Oh, it is one of the most incredible concepts.

The thing that I want you to understand, ladies and gentlemen, simply this: you are not, mom and dad, you little tikes down there, you are not going to fulfill all that God has for you in your life. The plan of God for you does not begin, it may begin with you, but it does not end with you. It goes on through your children. You train them, you give them your vision, you give them your concept, and you allow them to carry on for you what you get old cannot fulfill. That is exactly what God told Abraham, but it starts with you understanding and commanding your children.

Now let me show you this. Let me show you this. Look at, go back to chapter 12, verses 1 through 5. Now let me show you what Abraham gets into. Let me show you, this is great. Look at chapter 12, verse 1. God says, "Get thee out of thy country." Look at verse 1 after that, "and from thy kindred." Look at verse 1 again, "and from thy father's house." Now you know what God told Abraham to completely separate himself from everything and everybody in his life. He says, "You separate yourself. You separate yourself from your country. You separate yourself from your kindred, and you separate yourself from your father's house." He was told to separate,

forsake all, and to separate himself from everything to get this plan accomplished. Look at verse 1, "and I will show thee, I will show thee, I will show thee, and I will make thee a great nation, and I will bless thee by thy name great, and thou shalt be a blessing." Notice, conditional. You have got to leave the things behind before you can get what I got for you. No plan of God without the will of God.

Let us see how this thing fits. Look at verse 5: "And Abram took Sarai his wife, and Lot his brother's son, and all their substance that they gathered, and the souls that they had gotten in Haran, and they went forth into the land of Canaan." Oh, they went to Haran. Okay, he just took everything with him that he had and did not forsake all that God told him to. Now you know what that is called? That is called latitude. You hear me talk about it all the time in dealing with people. It is part of your problem, my biggest problem versus one ladder. You know what latitude is? Latitude is the distance between what God tells you to do and then what you really do. In chapter 12, verses 1, 2, and 3, God told him what to do, and in verse 5, this is the latitude. He did not do anything. He brought everything in the world with him. He did not obey God. He did not forsake all. He brings everything he had in the world with him, everything that God told him to forsake. Abraham thinks he knows better, and he brings it with him, just like we do.

You better, if you are not, if you are not willing, if when you get saved, if you are not willing to separate yourself from the world, if you are not willing to put those things out of your life. I just, you know, and I need to ask you some of you to do me a favor. You know, I never had the internet for years because I am a caveman when it comes to modern technology. I have a cell phone, and I do one thing basically, I call people on it. It has got multimedia, it has got tasking, it has got all kinds, it has got things, and it has got a browser, and I am scared to death, but I am, you know, I hit something on there, you know, and it is going to connect me with the FBI or someplace, and they are, you know, I am scared to death of it. I just, you know, and my fingers, most phones, the buttons are so small, and our fingers are so big. I hit two buttons same time, and then I do not see very well without my glasses close up, and man, I am just calling everybody that does not need to be called. Well, I finally got up to speed, and now I am on the internet. I have got 400 and looked this morning because I was checking something on eBay, I got 430 emails, and I do not know how to get into figure out where they are. I will tell you, man, I will tell you, somebody likes me. I do not know who. I look at those things, and I say, but let me do me a favor. I, and this is what I mean, bless your hearts, will show me you out there. The thing that just drives me nuts, and I will tell you what, you know, some of you ought to go off and take your MySpace off the computer because what is on there is not conducive of what you say here. I got an email last week from somebody, I was kidding about the emails, I did not know how to figure them out. I got an email from last week, and somebody saw somebody's MySpace and sent me a thing, "This person's MySpace," and he says, "I thought this person was a member of your church." I went into MySpace. I mean, what are you stupid, or do you think when you put something on the internet that it is not going to make its way back to me someplace along the line? I mean, you come to church on Sunday morning, and maybe your mom and dad do not even know you got them, and you got all, but my goodness, I looked at this thing, and I thought to myself, and I emailed the guy back, and I said, "You know what, I am sorry, he must be a member of my church because he sure could not be a member of the Lord's." What am I going to

say? What am I going to say? You see, that is it. You will not separate yourself from the world. Some of you are saved and on your way to heaven. Some of you guys, and you still think you can have an unsaved girlfriend, and it will play out for you, or a girl, and do you think you can have an unsaved guy that will play out for you? You know what, when they are not saved, you know the next game we play, "Oh, they really are saved." Hey, bring them around to me. I will tell you in five minutes if they are saved or not. "Oh no, no, no, you will offend them." You bet I will, in Jesus' name. You just do not want to know if they are not because you are in love. Please take, and your most important people that you are influencing your life, please take my name off. Please, if I had a MySpace, and I do not even know what a MySpace is, do not know how to go on, do not know how to build one, but if I had a MySpace, you know what I would have on there? I would have some great pictures of people dying and burning and going to hell, and I said, then I would say this, pointing at the picture, "Is not MySpace. How about yours now? How about that one instead of your favorite pinups or the garbars that you put on there?" Incredible, incredible.

Now, if you are not willing to separate, if you are not willing to leave the world over here, you are never going to fulfill God's plan, and I will tell you why. Here is the next greatest word coming out: compounding. You know how you put your money in the bank or an IRA or one of those things, and the money you put in there, and it compounds interest over a period of time? Well, let me tell you something, in Abraham's life, perfect study. When he started the latitude gig, and God told him what to do, and he did not do what he wanted to do, you know what the distance between what God tells you and what you do is? The latitude. You give the devil an inch. My Lord, if somebody once said, "You give the devil an inch, and he will become the ruler." Abraham wants to believe God. I believe he wants to obey God, but you know what his problem is? He cannot let go of the things that he has got to let go of to get where God wants him to go. Oh, I see God's people in this struggle all the time. I struggle with it all the time. What happens now is a compounding effect. He did not obey God. He did not forsake all, and now one bad choice will never stay one bad choice, ladies and gentlemen. One bad choice will grow legs and then grow wings, become another bad choice. We call this the compounding effect.

Years ago, I preached another youth rally down in southern Missouri, probably 20 years ago, 15 years ago. He had a sweetheart little gal. She must have been about 17 or 18 years old. Looked like she could have just, just as picture perfect and as beautiful young gal as you could ever meet in your life. Before I preached, she got up and gave her testimony. Wonderful testimony. This gal could have had anything she wanted in life, or anybody she wanted in life, and this gal had a lot of ability, a lot of talent, and she gave one of the most wonderful testimonies I ever heard in my life. Well, after the Bible, after the message, you know, a bunch of people got saved. They had a little kind of a reception, and I was talking with her there, and I said, "Well, honey, I really appreciate that testimony." And she said, "Well, Brother Bob, I appreciate your message." We went back and forth, and we stood there talking, and another little gal came up, and she comes and she tagged her on the arm, and she says, "Oh," she says, "I want you to know," she said, "that was the greatest testimony I think I ever heard. It was such an encouragement." She said, "You know what?" she says, "I would give the world to have a testimony like that." That little girl

looked back at her and said, "You know what, honey? That is exactly what it cost me. It cost me the world." That is what it cost you. It cost you the world.

We see in Abraham's life where he was not willing to do that, and now, now the cause and effect. Now we begin to see the compounding effect of one bad choice leads to another bad choice. Now look at, look at chapter 12, just turn over a couple. Look at chapter 12, verses 6. Come on down through here. He goes to Canaan. It says in Abraham took Sarai his wife and Lot his brother's son and all their substance that they gathered and they got in Haran and went forth into the land of Canaan and into the land of Canaan they came. Now look at the next verse. Look at that in verse 10.

10 And there was a famine in the land: and Abram went down into Egypt to sojourn there; for the famine was grievous in the land.

11 And it came to pass, when he was come near to enter into Egypt, that he said unto Sarai his wife, Behold now, I know that thou art a fair woman to look upon:

12 Therefore it shall come to pass, when the Egyptians shall see thee, that they shall say, This is his wife: and they will kill me, but they will save thee alive.

13 Say, I pray thee, thou art my sister: that it may be well with me for thy sake; and my soul shall live because of thee.

You see what happened? Because he did not forsake everything that God told him to forsake when he got to the land the first time, the cage got rattled. God was good enough to bring him out, but he was not good enough to get him through a famine. What did he do? He went right back to Egypt, a type of the world. Every time you go back to the world, it compounds it. It compounds it because read the verse down through this. He goes back to Egypt, and I just stopped there. Sarai was a pretty good-looking woman, I guess. Abraham, see, once you do not do what He tells you to do, once you give the devil latitude, he drives an 18-wheeler through it. Now he is down in Canaan, but the plan of God is on hold because he cannot obey God, and now a famine comes up. He loses faith, runs down into Egypt, a type of the world. When he is down there, Abraham starts to take over the driver's seat again. Oh, now, honey, you know you are a good-looking woman. Whoa, you are really good-looking. When we go down there, all those Egyptians are going to look at you, and they are going to know that you are my wife, so what they are going to do? They are going to kill me so they can take you. So you take, oh, be my, you be my sister. You see, that is what happens when God stops driving the bus, and you get in the driver's seat. Yet you want to see the fallacy of it. You want to see the fallacy of me and you in this. Could we all do this? Look what happens. Look what happens when that famine hits here. It is right back to Egypt, type of the world, and again, the compounding effect begins to fall into his life.

Look what he does. Look what he does. Look at, look over to chapter, look over there in chapter 13. Look at verse 4. Now he comes out of Egypt. He gets down there, and he gets in a mess. He almost gets killed. God has to intervene in his life. He is totally out of God's will in his life, totally out of God's plan structure, and he comes down through there.

4 Unto the place of the altar, which he had made there at the first: and there Abram called on the name of the Lord.

5 And Lot also, which went with Abram, had flocks, and herds, and tents.

6 And the land was not able to bear them, that they might dwell together: for their substance was great, so that they could not dwell together.

Oh my, we played a so spiritual game. Look, look at 13:1. He leaves Egypt, and Abraham went out of, or Abram went out of Egypt, he and his wife and all that he had, and Lot was with him into the south. And Abram was very rich in cattle, in silver, and gold. He is still in the same mindset. He just cannot let go of all the glittery, shiny things he thinks mean something, and he has got the audacity to build an altar to God that says, "Why, God, I am really doing what You want me to do, am I not?" Look at verse 6, or verse 5. Compounding problems. Here it comes. All he gets out of this phony altar prayer thing is more chaos in his life. "And Lot also went with Abram, at flocks and herds and tents, and the land was not able to bear them that they might dwell together, for their substance was great, so they cannot dwell together."

Let me tell you something, folks, the land is never going to bear your plan and God's plan at the same time. You might as well get it in your mind, kid, you are never going to be fruitful. You are never going to be happy. You are never going to be satisfied as long as you try to do your plan and do God's plan at the same time. It is a non-negotiable item. It is one or the other, and you can blame it on whoever you want to blame it on. You can point fingers at whoever you want to point fingers at. At the end of the day, it is between you and God and your inability to do what God has called you to do, and you will never fulfill God's plan for your life. You never will. Strife will always be, strife will always be there when you try to put a ladder between what God says and what you want to do. Abraham now is in a great pretend mode, like so many of God's people. He is pretending he is spiritual when he is not.

Hey, now I am going to tell you, and I, you know, and I have got to address this now. I know as a child of God, you are going to have strife in your life, and you are going to have issues in your life. The Bible tells us in 2 Timothy chapter 3, verse 12, that all that live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution. So I want to make it very clear, I am not saying you will not have a strife-free life. I will not say you are not going to have a problem today. But what I am saying is this: make sure your strife and your problems are not caused because you are disobedient to what God called you to do. Make sure you are suffering for right things. Abraham up there building an altar, he had not obeyed one thing God said. He brought everything out of Haran, and he brought everything out of Egypt, and now here he is. You know what? You want to see, you see, we always look short term. God always looks long term. You see your family, like we talked about a minute ago, and all you see is yourself. You do not look long term and see the impact that your boy, your girl, and holding them accountable, and the commandments, and commanding your family, and making sure they do the right thing while you still have control over them. You do not see that because we just look at short term. Abraham looking at the short term. He is looking at the gold, the cattle, the sheep, the flocks, and all of this stuff. Look at the people I got. He runs

from Haran to Canaan. He loses faith there when he runs down to Egypt, and when he comes out of Egypt, compounding effect.

1 Now Sarai Abram's wife bare him no children: and she had an handmaid, an Egyptian, whose name was Hagar.

2 And Sarai said unto Abram, Behold now, the Lord hath restrained me from bearing: I pray thee, go in unto my maid; it may be that I may obtain children by her. And Abram hearkened to the voice of Sarai.

3 And Sarai Abram's wife took Hagar her maid the Egyptian, after Abram had dwelt ten years in the land of Canaan, and gave her to her husband Abram to be his wife.

It says Hagar the Egyptian. He picked up Hagar down there. Who is Hagar? Oh, she is the one that is going to destroy the whole concept of the nation of Israel because he made one side trip that he should not have made because he could not trust God. He picked up Hagar. From Hagar comes Ishmael, and hence this is what we have going on in the Middle East today. I told you that God looks long term. Let me tell you something else, ladies and gentlemen, the devil looks long term too, brother. The only one that has not figured it out yet is you and me. He picked old Hagar up down there. Now from this point on, he struggles in his life, and God's plan basically goes on hold.

Abraham is a study of how God calls a man out because God has a plan for that man or that woman. I am saying it again, if you are sitting here this morning and you are a saved man or you are a saved woman, I do not care how old you are, God has something He wants you to do with your life. Abraham is the case study. It is the model to show you how you overcome it through the ensamples and the examples and the admonition of somebody that made every mistake you do not have to. He shows you as a young parent the number one thing you want to build into your family. You want to be able to command your children. Your children hit 17, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, and they are living under your roof, and you cannot tell them what they need to do, you have failed as a parent, simple as that. You cannot let your little kids grow up that are down that elementary. We may teach them down there. We may do all kinds of things down there, but it is your responsibility to bring them and nurture them up in the Lord, not mine or not some elementary worker. You start by giving them the commandments, but as I said, very few parents can do that.

Abraham is a study of how God calls a man for the fulfilling of his plan and how fulfilling God's will is the key to fulfilling that plan through obedience by faith. You know, a couple of weeks ago, maybe it has been a couple of months ago now, I asked you if you thought your life pleased God. Remember, I had everybody, and I asked you, "Do you really think your life pleases God?" And I was a sucker punch, and then I asked you to give me the defining verse in the Bible that tells you what it really takes to please God, and I could see by the look on your face that 99 percent you had no idea what I was talking about. Yet you have fooled yourself into thinking that your life really pleases God when you do not even know what it takes to please God. Boy, if there is any statement on modern day 20th century Christianity, that is it right there. Today, you feel you love God. You feel you please God. It is a feeling to you. It is nothing based on a

principle in the Word of God because you do not know the Word of God that well. Do you have, and you know, it is just where it is at. Many of you came over that week or called me on the phone, and many of you in the appointments came over and you said, "I want to know what that verse is." Most, many of you did exactly what most people do, just moved on with life because you had some better deal out there. But the answer to that question is in Hebrews chapter 11, verse 6.

6 But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.

Now that is the life of Abraham, and I just need to tell you this, when you study his life, you have got laid out before you the greatest study anywhere in the Bible that I know of that is a complete, entailed study of showing you a man from where he gets saved, and even before he gets saved, where he gets saved, and where he winds up, and the struggle that he has in between getting to the place that he winds up being God's friend. It gives you everything you need to know about one: if you are going to fulfill God's plan, you are going to have to first fulfill God's will. It shows you now that you cannot have one foot in the world and one foot with God. You have to leave the world behind, no matter who she is, who he is, what it is. You have to leave it behind. There is no room in Canaan land for the junk from Egypt. It just compounds your life. It adds stress to your life, and it brings the things in, and you are just kidding yourself and in a delusion if you think you can do that. It shows you young parents how to structure your family because now you understand probably one of the greatest principles in the Bible: God is not going to get it done through your life alone. He expects, just like He did with Abraham, to reach the world. Now this has come back to what I said, how that you can reach the world in time. Maybe you will not do it yourself, but God will do it through your family and your children as you command them after yourself. Incredible. It is incredible. One of the greatest life stories you will ever study, and yet I stand before you this morning completely inept to be able to lay it out to the truths that are in there. I look at all the stuff that I got here, plus all the stuff that I know, plus the stuff, and I could stay here till six o'clock tonight and only be halfway done with it. His life is an absolute gold mine that shows you every aspect that how you fulfill God's plan in your life by first recognizing the fulfillment of God's will in your life, the process of building our relationship with God, getting to the point in our lives where most God's people never get. He actually shows us the issues, the problem, the obstacles, and I do not care if he puts it in a form that he went down to Haran or he came out of Haran and then went back down to Egypt and then came out and brings. You may not, you say, "Well, I do not, you know, I am not going to Egypt. I do not have any gold, any cattle." That is all figurative. It is always a picture of the substance that he had, like we have, that gets in the way of our relationship with building that faith.

Hey, Abraham is a case study of a man, and you and I need to learn what the Bible says in the book of Corinthians where it says we should walk by faith and not by sight. In the early years of his life, he is walking by sight, not by faith. Ah, but there comes a process in his life where he ceases to walk by sight, and he begins to walk by faith. That is what pleases God, and in that concept, he became the friend of God. Incredible study. We just scratched the surface. Where do we go back and we look at him as Abram? Then we see how and why God, not just how, but why

God changed his name. Let me show you the process in his life that brought him to the place where he was what God equated. Just like God has something that He looks for that pleases Him, God has something that He looks for in you that makes you His friend. I could ask, I could ask that same question, "You fancy yourself God's friend today?" If you would really say to yourself, "Yeah, I believe I am God's friend," and yet, just like, "Do you please God?" Probably nobody in this room, maybe other than one or two of you, even understand what it takes. What is the bottom line necessity that God has to have in your life before you can be His friend? See, it is all emotion, is it not? It is all warm, it is all nice feeling. "Well, I heard this great song on the way to church this morning, and now I feel closer to God." That does not put you closer to God. It may put you closer to the radio, but it did not put you closer to God. Those things do not make you closer to God, but we think they do. "Well, I came out, and it was a beautiful sunshine, and I saw the clear air, and it was so nice and cool, and I just, I felt so, it was just really nice to be close to God." That does not make you close to God. You can be close to God in a mine cave-in when you are six miles underneath, and you are never going to get up. We always make it a condition, do we not? We cannot just make it the Bible. It always has to be some circumstance, some song, some event, some person, some this, some that. We just, now we will never learn how to have a relationship and be God's friend based on the way that He says to do it.

Well, I got news for you. It is an absolute trap. My fear is that most of God's people, and maybe some of you find yourself in this situation this morning, I do not know. I think for the most part, you are all really trying to do. I am not downing you at all today. I believe that for the most part, many of you are trying to be everything that God wants you to be. I do not want to discourage you today, but what I want to show you, there is a process to it, and there are some people that will learn the process like Abraham did, and there is somebody that will never learn the process. Five years from now, ten years from now, twelve years from now, you will be struggling with the same issues today than that you are today. You know why? Because your plan of God for you is on hold, not going anywhere. You can be disciplined. You can come to church and come to Bible study. You can go get you a 65-pound King James Bible. You can, you can get a two-wheeler to carry it around with you. You know what? If you do not enact the plan and leave the things of Egypt and Haran behind and begin to put the things in your life that God wants you to have and build that faith, you know why God tells you to leave those things behind? Did you ever get the psychology behind it? You know why God wants you to leave everything behind? He told Abraham, "Leave everything there." Why did He do that? Because everything we bring with us, we will wind up trusting more than we do God. It is just that simple. Just that simple. It is just that simple. So God just says, "Dump it all, flush it all, get rid of it all, and just simply begin to square one and trust Me." Most people cannot do that. Abraham could not do it. Most of us could not do it. I did not do it when I first got right. I struggled through the things in my life, still do struggle, but the bottom line is, I know what it takes to please Him, and I know what it takes to be His friend, and that is what you learn from the life of Abraham. That is what I hope you get out of this because God wants to be your friend. He wants you to be His friend, but He is going to be on His terms. It is not going to be like your mom and your daddy who allows you to do whatever you want to do, live the way you want to live, do what you want to do, and still feed you and take care of you. You will not go one inch with God in your relationship until you do it His way. His way is the only way.

When I talk about using and applying biblical principle, this is what I mean. His life shows us the obstacles, the issues, the problems that we all have to overcome that will impede our progress and stop our progress, get us off track, and help us lose our focus. When I look at this story of his life, I see his calling. I see God has a plan for him, just like God has a plan for you and for me. I see his struggle because the devil wants to take that plan out of his life. You see, the devil does not care if you are a Christian. He does not care if you call yourself a Christian. He does not care if you profess to be a Christian. He just wants to make sure you never go anywhere as a Christian, never do anything as a Christian. He does not care. Man, you were listening to that mess on television last night when we were in Obama and out there at Saddleback Church and tell you what, by that, everybody in the world is a Christian. Well, I am thinking now this morning after that, the devil is even a Christian. Everybody is a Christian. I told you before, I have been in the last five years of the ministry, I have yet to find a good old sinner. Most people I have to deal with, I have to get them unsaved before I can get them saved because it is all up here, nothing in here, nothing in here. Learning how to sidestep the mistakes that keep you and I from the life of walking by faith and not by sight, becoming God's friend.

My goal and my prayer for every one of you and everything that I do, everything that I do, good, bad, hard, indifferent, you may not like it, you may like it, you may not like it, you may complain about it, you may leave the church and badmouth me up one side and down the other. I really do not care. Bottom line is this: the only goal I have for you, I have two goals in mind, one for you, one for me. The goal for you is that I give you the best chance, the best chance for you to fulfill God's will for your life, thereby fulfilling God's plan for your life. Then the second one is very selfish. It is to cover my own rear end. It is a judgment seat of Christ. Even though you do not understand the structure, even though you do not like the structure, even though you do not want to submit to the structure, and you want to blame me or everybody else for the structure, the bottom line is, I understand that it is still the structure, and I will not stand at the judgment seat of Christ. I will be guilty of a lot of things. I probably will not get much of anything. I probably will get nothing, but there is one thing they will not lay at my feet, and that is that every time I did not get in that pulpit, I did not tell you the truth. You may not have liked it. You may not have cared for it. You may have made, taken that personal. You may have looked through this big book like this and saw me and blamed me for it, but the bottom line is, it was the truth. The truth. It was the truth. You have to do with it what you have got to deal with it. I have got to give an account for me. You have got to give an account for you. I will give an account how I preached the truth. You will give an account of what you did with the truth.

Every head bow, every eye close. Father, we thank You and praise You today. Wow, Lord, what a study. What a.