

## ANSWERING GOD'S CALL CAN BE STRESSFUL

Genesis 12:1-4

(Not entirely original with me)

**Introduction:** Anytime God calls a person to full time service there will be a lot of changes and often it can be a very stressful experience. Most preachers can testify to the fact that when they surrendered to God's call, there was a whole new life to begin and many things to leave and forever separated from. Why would God call a person to give up the very things that mean so much to a person? Is it perhaps because it is natural for a person to put family and the world before God? Abraham is an example of what it means to a person to surrender totally to God's call.

### I. GOD HAD TO CALL ABRAHAM TWICE BEFORE HE OBEYED

1. God first called Abraham when he was living in Ur.
  - Stephen mentioned it in his sermon just before he was stoned. - Acts 7:2-3
  - God, Himself reminded Abraham of the first call. - Genesis 15:7
  - Nehemiah also mentioned Abraham's first call. Nehemiah 9:7
2. Abraham didn't completely obey God's first call.
  - He started out following God's directions and left Ur but stopped in Haran, not the place God told him to go to.
    - Was it because his father, Terah, had become ill?
    - Did Abraham lose interest in following God and what God had promised?
    - Did Abraham find a business opportunity in Haran that he gave in to?
    - Did Abraham's father and his family put pressure on Abraham to stay in Haran?
  - Abraham "backslid" and turned away from the promises of God.
  - He was not the only one who turned away from God's call, many men whom God called them to preach refused His call, some, like Abraham, finally answered God's call.

### II. ABRAHAM HAD TO LEAVE HIS COUNTRY

1. A person's country means a lot to him/her.
  - Where he/she was born, lives, is a citizen.
  - The place of his/her own people and language.
  - The land of his/her own culture and environment.
  - The land of his/her own society and community.
  - The land of his/her own government and laws.
2. Why would God want Abraham (any person) to forever separate himself from his own people, etc?
  - The people of Abraham's world had become:
    - idolators
    - false worshippers
    - ungodly
    - immoral
    - covetous
    - lawless
    - wicked
  - The people of Abraham's world had forsaken and denied the ONLY God.
  - It was/is totally impossible to live for God and the world at the same time.
  - God demanded that Abraham live a life of separation, from the worldliness of his country.

- Abraham was being called to a new life, to start life all over again and to move to a new country, a land God promised to him and that God would show him.
- The life of separation from the world is not a cold, heartless demand of God, it is simply the demand that one separate from the ungodly, immoral, wicked ways of the world which is extremely wicked in the sight of God and should be to any whom God calls.
- Acts 2:40; Romans 12:2; 2 Corinthians 6:17-18; Ephesians 5:11; James 4:4; 1 John 2:15-16; Isaiah 52:11

### **III. ABRAHAM HAD TO LEAVE HIS FAMILY, RELATIVES**

1. He had to leave his relatives.
  - Parents, grandparents, brothers, sisters, uncles, aunts and cousins.
  - All people within his family who were related by blood.
  - Family and relatives in Abraham's time provided love, care, acceptance, support, responsibility, training, education and security for each other.
  
2. Why did God demand that Abraham separate himself from his family and relatives?
  - Everyone in Abraham's time were living immoral and wicked lives and families were heavily influenced by their friends and neighbors.
  - Even Abraham's family had become idolaters, worshippers of false religion, rejecting the ONLY living and true God. They were worshipping man-made religion.
  - God called Abraham to turn away from his old life and begin a new life.
    - Totally separated from the world and its pleasures and possessions.
    - A life that would be totally separated unto God, totally committed to God and a life that would diligently seek after God.
    - Such a life is not some heartless demand of God, it is simply that God wants His people to be totally separated unto Him, that they put God first in their lives, even before family, relatives and friends.
    - Matthew 22:37-38; 10:37; 8:21-22; Deuteronomy 6:5; 10:12

### **IV. ABRAHAM HAD TO LEAVE ALL HIS FAMILY POSSESSIONS BEHIND**

1. Abraham's father had just died, therefore he was to inherit property and wealth from his father.
  - God did not want Abraham to become influenced and enslaved by worldly things.
    - possessions, recognition, property, influence, furnishings, position, comfort, honor, power.
  - The human heart always wants more and more and that seems to be a natural greed/lust.
    - God had to demand that Abraham break away from his family, to be totally separated from those who were enslaved by their desire to want and have more.
  - Once again, God's demand that there be a life of separation from one's house, immediate family and family possessions is not a heartless, cold, indifferent demand of God.
    - People are often ruined by worldly influence and greed, therefore God calls His people to turn away from all that the world, family and friends offer.
  
2. It is not a heartless, cold indifferent demand that God commands.
  - It is simply the demand that His people focus their minds and hearts first of all upon God.
    - Matthew 22:37-38
  - It is simply the demand that His people put God first in their lives, even before family members, even before father and mother.

- Matthew 10:37
  - It is simply the demand that God's people seek Him first, even before food, shelter and clothing.
    - Matthew 6:33
  - It is simply the demand that God's people focus their attention and affections on things above, lasting things, not on earthly things that are temporary.
    - Colossians 3:2
  - It is simply the demand that God's people not trust in the uncertainty of riches, but in God.
    - 1 Timothy 6:17; Luke 14:33
  - It is simply the demand that God's people exchange the riches of the world for the treasures of heaven.
    - Mark 10:21-22; Philippians 3:8
3. God was calling Abraham to leave and get away from his old life, for his own benefit, good and welfare.
- Abraham would receive great results of he separated himself from the ungodly world.
  - It was for his advantage, gain and profit that God was demanding a life of separation from the world and so it is with every one who believes in the Lord Jesus Christ.
    - Matthew 6:33; Colossians 3:2-4; Mark 10:28-30; Titus 2:12-13; Jude 21

## **CONCLUSION:**

1. Does God ask too much of those whom He calls into full time service?
2. Does God ask too much for those who believe in His Son, Jesus Christ?
3. What reward did Abraham have for leaving all and trusting God for his future?
4. What reward does the Christian have for leaving everything which God demands?
5. What has God done for the Christian and what awaits them when their lives end on earth?
6. So, did God ask too much of Abraham? Does God ask too much of the beleiver in Jesus Christ?