

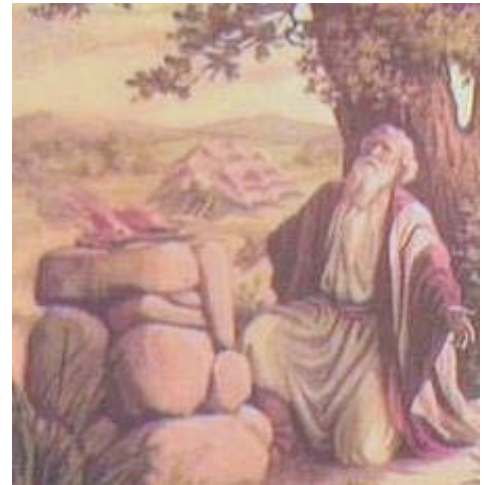
God's Very Best

In a recent study of Abraham's life, I realized that as Abraham was getting older, he had "become content with less than God's very best".

(Genesis 16-18)

God had promised Abram and Sarai that He would greatly multiply the fruitfulness of their lives. After years of waiting, they took matters into their own hands. (Genesis 16) In an effort to help God out and obtain God's best by "human effort" (Gal. 3), Ishmael was born.

By the time you come to Genesis 17, thirteen years later, Abram is now a hundred years old. Abram had become content with less than God's best... seemingly convinced that Ishmael was that!



As I studied the passage, **God takes Abram through a series of steps to break him out of the mundane to experience the spectacular!** Let me list those steps:

#1. Review God's Promises. Seven times God says "I will" after revealing Himself for the first time as El Shaddai (The All Sufficient Tender One). As sons-of-Abraham we too live in a covenantal relationship with El Shaddai and the New Testament lists over 33 things God has done in our lives at Salvation. Review these and remind yourself of God's mighty promises. (Gen 17:1-8)

#2. Question your everyday assumptions about your present experience of God. For 13 years, I believe Abraham and Sarah had settled back and assumed that Ishmael was God's very best. They had become content with status quo. God had much more to offer and they needed to think differently! (Gen 17:17-18)

#3. Be quick to seek His Presence. Gen 18:3 quotes Abraham as saying "*do not pass your servant by*". What a great statement by an elderly statesman! Abraham then very "*quickly*" served the Lord incarnate (18:2,6,7). Even as Abraham was getting older (100 years) and had many servants (at least 318 – Gen 14:14), the cry of his heart was "*do not pass your servant by*". Let me serve you and enjoy your Presence. Is this the plea of your heart?

#4 Think deeply about God's Goodness and Greatness. As the story unfolds, Abraham is reminded, "*Is anything too hard for the Lord?*" (Gen 18:14) Abraham and Sarah thought deeply about God's words and acted in faith - conceiving in their old age Isaac. Later Abraham asks the pre-incarnate Lord, "*Will not the Judge of all the earth do right?*" (Gen 18:25). Another profound thought to ponder-both God's Goodness and Greatness deeply imbedded in Abraham's thoughts.

#5. Remain in the Lord's Presence. When the Lord was ready to leave, Abraham in obedience "*walked along with them*" (Gen 17:1, 18:16) and "*remained standing before the Lord*". A high-water mark in Abraham's personal growth and development, he was now **not content** with less than God's very best!

#6. Ask boldly and expect the miraculous. Abraham and Sarah now acted boldly and conceived Isaac. Abraham also "*approached*" the Lord and **boldly** interceded on behalf of the Nation and his nephew Lot. (Gen 18:23-33)

As we enter 2009, God very sovereignly brought these passages into my life. Having just turned 58, and finding my energy waning at times, I now find myself leading not only Global Youth Initiative; but also the relaunch of Sonlife Classic in North America.

In GYI we are boldly asking God to have organizations in 100 countries by 2020 reaching the next generation. We are now in 46 countries. We are also boldly asking God for 100,000 emerging young leaders to be multiplied “from everywhere to everywhere” through this Alliance of organizations.

In the relaunch of Sonlife Classic in North America, we are boldly asking God for 100 “2:6 Groups” (two year training groups living out I John 2:6) by 2010 and 1000 of these Groups by 2020. We are also boldly asking God for 500 students to be equipped this summer in evangelism to reach 2000 of their non-Christian friends over this next year.

Through Gen 17-18, God has reminded me, **“Do not be content with less than His very best”!** He has reminded me, that even in older age, *“nothing is too hard for the Lord”*, and that *“He is a just and good God”*. (Gen 18:14, 25)

Char and I are praying the same for each of you!

- 1. Review His Promises**
- 2. Question your Everyday Assumptions**
- 3. Be Quick to seek His Presence**
- 4. Think Deeply about His Greatness and Goodness**
- 5. Remain in the Lord’s Presence**
- 6. Ask Boldly and Expect the Miraculous**

Prayer requests

- 1. Pray boldly with us for 1000 2:6 training Groups to be multiplied across North America by 2020!**
- 2. Pray with us for 100 Organizations in 100 countries reaching youth by 2020-pray for the 46 we now have (www.globalyouthinitiative.com/places_people/index.asp) and the 54 new ones the Lord will raise up!**
- 3. Pray for 500 student leaders to be equipped as “fishers of men” at SEMP July 6-11 at Moody this summer!**
- 4. Pray for Steve Hudson (now on staff full time with GYI) as he and I go to South Africa in February for an African leadership Summit with J-Life Africa!**
- 5. Pray for our March 15-19 GYI Lead Team meeting in Orlando as we develop a Global Training Manual. Please pray with us for the needed \$8000 to fund this gathering!**



On the Lighter Side

A man is in bed with his wife when there is knocking on the door. He rolls over and looks at his clock. It's half past three in the morning. "I'm not getting out of bed at this time," he thinks, and rolls over. Then, a louder knock follows.

"Aren't you going to answer that?" says his wife.

So he drags himself out of bed, and goes downstairs. He opens the door and there is man standing at the door. It didn't take the homeowner long to realize the man was drunk. "Hi there," slurs the stranger, "**Can you give me a push?**"

"No, get lost, it's half past three. I was in bed," says the man and slams the door.

He goes back up to bed and tells his wife what happened and she says "Dave, that wasn't very nice of you. Remember that night we broke down in the pouring rain on the way to pick the kids up from the baby-sitter and you had to knock on that man's house to get us started again? What would have happened if he'd told us to get lost?"

"But the guy was drunk," says the husband.

"It doesn't matter," says the wife. "He needs our help and it would be the Christian thing to help him."

So the husband gets out of bed again, gets dressed, and goes downstairs. He opens the door, and not being able to see the stranger anywhere he shouts, "Hey, do you still want a push?" and he hears a voice cry out, "Yeah, please!"

So, still being unable to see the stranger, he shouts: "Where are you?"

And the stranger replies: "I'm over here, on your swing."

THE GRANDMA TEST

I was out walking with my 4-year-old granddaughter. She picked up something off the ground and started to put it in her mouth. I took the item away from her and I asked her not to do that.

"Why?" my granddaughter asked.

"Because it's been on the ground. You don't know where it's been, it's dirty, and probably has germs," I replied.

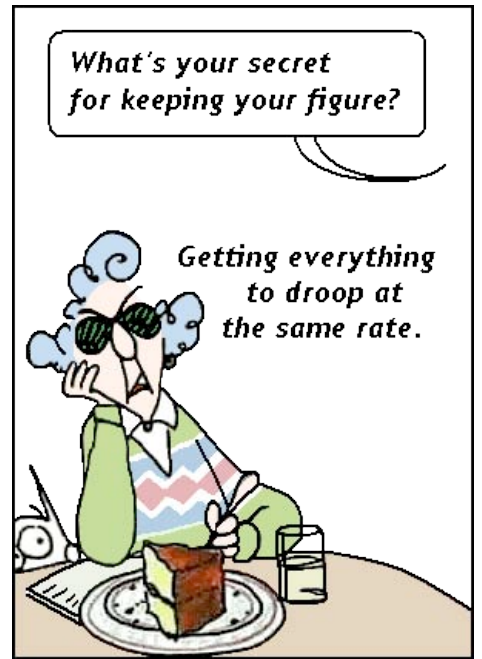
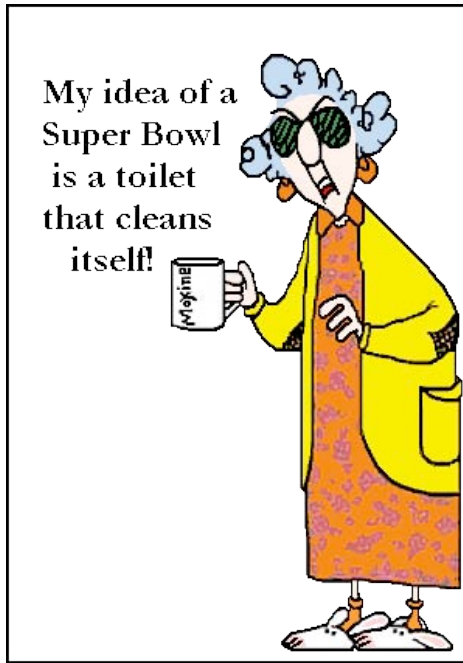
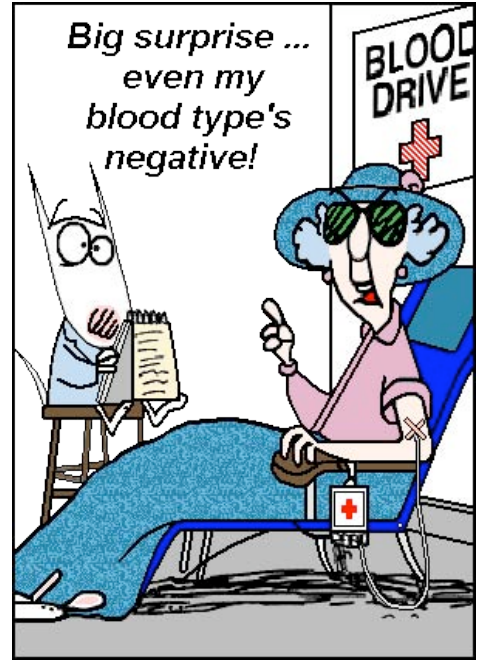
At this point, my granddaughter looked at me with total admiration and asked, "Grandma, how do you know all this stuff? You are so smart."

I was thinking quickly, "All Grandmas know this stuff. It's on the Grandma Test. You have to know it, or they don't let you be a Grandma."

We walked along in silence for 2 or 3 minutes, but she was evidently pondering this new information. "Oh...I get it!" she beamed, "So if you don't pass the test, you have to be the Grandpa."

"Exactly," I replied.

THE LATEST FROM MAXINE:



Support for Dann and Char Spader or the ministries of Global Youth Initiative can be sent to: Global Youth Initiative c/o Josiah Venture, P.O. Box 4317, Wheaton Illinois 60189-4317