

In Genesis 22, God calls Abraham to travel to a mountain to sacrifice his only son, Isaac, as a burnt offering. This was a terrible prospect for any father to face, but it must have been especially harrowing for Abraham. This was a long journey for these individuals to take, but none as long or as unbearable as that taken by Abraham, for he alone knew what he was supposed to do to the son whom he loved. With each plodding step of this three-day journey, Abraham pondered his life, and that of his son, Isaac. Now the life of his precious son was soon to be extinguished, brought to an abrupt end through Abraham's own hands. As Abraham rehearsed the many years of his long life that had brought him to this point, he thought upon God and his own dealings with Him. Abraham realized that God had never let him down. God had never reneged on any of His promises. Abraham and Sarah had tried to help God keep His promises before, as if the Lord and Creator of the universe needed any help, but Abraham's and Sarah's help had turned out to be disastrous. It almost ripped their home apart, as Hagar and Ishmael turned out not to be part of the promise God had made with Abraham. God had told Abraham and Sarah that it was through them and Isaac, their miracle child, that the world would be blessed. It suddenly occurred to Abraham that nothing was too great for God to accomplish or overcome . . . even death! Abraham knew through his eyes and heart of faith that God would not leave Isaac dead in a heap of ashes on that mountaintop. God would raise Isaac from the dead! That long journey of three days was where the real battle of faith was won in the heart and mind of Abraham, long before the wood was carried up the mountain, and long before the altar of sacrifice was built upon which Isaac would be placed. Abraham resolved to do the will of the Lord, and he was prepared to be completely obedient. When push comes to shove, it is time that usually defeats us. It could have been this way with Abraham, but he chose to remain true to the Lord Who had always been true to him, and Abraham passed his test.

We generally lack patience and endurance. That is why we must take time to make the effort to grow in the fruit of the Spirit. Paul tells us in Galatians 5:22-23, 22. *But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness,* 23. *gentleness, self-control; against such there is no law.* It requires great resolve, and in Abraham's case, great faithfulness, to resist for a long time, but it can be done through prayer and faith in Christ, and the rewards are great. Paul also tells us that "*Henceforth there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the Righteous Judge, will award to me on that Day, and not only to me but also to all who have loved His appearing*" (2 Timothy 4:8).

May the Lord bless you as you grow in your faith in Him!