

# Does God Care About Your Happiness?

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**GOD SAID, “TAKE NOW YOUR SON,  
YOUR ONLY SON, WHOM YOU LOVE,  
ISAAC, AND GO TO THE LAND OF  
MORIAH, AND OFFER HIM THERE  
AS A BURNT OFFERING ON ONE OF  
THE MOUNTAINS OF WHICH  
I WILL TELL YOU.”**

**~GENESIS 22:2 (NASB)**

## **1) Abram & Sarai’s Great Plans For Happiness**

- A) After God establishes (Genesis 15:17-21) His covenant (land, descendents, and blessing) with Abram; Sarai conceives an idea for how Abram can have a son. Sarai offers Abram her slave-girl Hagar as a concubine to produce a child (16:1-3)!
  
- B) Hagar gets pregnant and gives birth to Ishmael. Abram is 86 years old when Ishmael is born (16:15-16).

## **2) God’s Re-assertion Of His Plan For Happiness**

- A) God, who has not spoken with Abram for almost 25 years (Abram is now 99 years old -- 17:1), re-establishes the covenant with a focus on “changing” Abram & Sarai.

Note: This particular chronological framework with the early dates is presented here as representative of the clear reading of the Masoretic text (MT). Any of the other frameworks can be derived from this. From John H. Walton’s *Chronological and Background Charts of the Old Testament*, page 15.

- i. God changes Abram's name ("exalted father," in reference to God, not man) to Abraham ("father of many/multitude"). In effect, when people would call out Abraham's name, they would be reminded of God's promise that he would be the father of a multitude -- of nations, and kings (17:5-6).
- ii. God illustrates that Abraham is to be "separated" from the rest of the world by placing a "sign" (17:9-11) of the covenant "in the flesh" of every male associated with Abraham through circumcision. This would have been a deeply personal reminder that God owned the whole man, right down to his "life-giving" (reproductive) organs (17:23-27).
- iii. God changes Sarai's name ("princess") to Sarah ("princess"). God intended that Sarai would be a princess all along! Despite Sarai obliging Abram with Hagar, God's intention is that Sarah will be the mother of the royalty, she is the princess of God's chosen line (17:15-16).

- B) Abraham, who has not spoken up to this point, falls on his face in worship -- reeling and even laughing (shock, not disbelief) at the notion of a 100 year-old man and 90 year-old woman having a child (17:17, cf. Romans 4:18-21)!
- C) Abraham, who had thought God had already fulfilled His promise in Ishmael, asks God to consider Ishmael as the heir of promise (17:18). God says no (17:19), but promises that Ishmael will be a great nation (17:20, cf. 25:12-18).

### 3) Laughter Has A Name, Isaac...

- A) Abraham, who laughed (in shock) when Isaac's birth was announced (17:17), doesn't tell Sarah about the news!

- B) Sarah, who "overhears" the re-announcement, also laughs at the idea of two "old people" having a child (18:9-11). Sarah's laughter is in apparent disbelief, her heart (unlike Abraham's) doubts God, for which she is embarrassed (18:15).
- C) As God promises (18:14), Sarah does conceive (21:2) at 90 years-old, and gives birth to Isaac (which means "he laughs," again with a view toward God). In effect, Abraham and Sarah laughed at the idea of a son, but God gets the last laugh (approving laugh) by providing their child, Isaac.

### 4) Abraham's Way Or God's Way, Which Way For You?

- A) In an emotional appeal (22:1-2), God commands Abraham to sacrifice Isaac as a burnt offering\* on Mount Moriah.
- B) The three-day journey must have been agonizing, but Abraham keeps his companions in the dark as to what he is about to do (22:3-5). Even Isaac's questions are met with a faithful answer by Abraham (22:7-8, cf. Hebrews 11:17-19).
- C) Abraham, who is close to 115 years-old shows remarkable resolve to follow God's leading. Isaac, who is around 15 years old, shows remarkable cooperation with his father in allowing himself to be bound and prepared for sacrifice.
- D) At the moment Abraham is about to sacrifice Isaac, God provides a substitute (22:11-13). This "mount" was known for its substitutionary provision for many generations, and is a "preview" of Christ's ultimate sacrifice on the cross.

\* "To an ancient "Middle Easterner," this type of 'burnt offering' suggested a process: first cutting the offering's throat, then dismemberment, and then a sacrifice by fire in which the body parts were completely consumed on the altar. This is the horror Abraham imagined, with his own son the sacrifice." *Genesis: Beginning and Blessings*, by R. Kent Hughes. Crossway Books, page 301.