

Thank you for sampling,
**HOW TO BE A MAN: LEARNING FROM
THE REAL MEN OF THE BIBLE.**

“How To Be A Man: Learning From the Real Men of the Bible” is a 40-day devotional that will challenge and equip you to become the man God has called you to be by learning from the real-life examples of men you encounter in the Bible. The devotional, by Andy Blanks and Bryan Gill, examines the ups and the downs of eight biblical characters, calling men to learn from their examples.

If you have any questions about
**HOW TO BE A MAN: LEARNING FROM
THE REAL MEN OF THE BIBLE**
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HOW TO BE A MAN

**LEARNING FROM
THE REAL MEN OF
THE BIBLE**

ANDY BLANKS & DR. BRYAN GILL

FOREWORD BY RICK BURGESS



ARE YOU WILLING TO TAKE THE

HOW TO BE A MAN

CHALLENGE

We've crafted a pretty cool experience to go alongside this book. Now, you can do this book on its own and not miss a thing. But if you'd like to take your experience to the next level, we've created the "How To Be A Man Challenge." The challenge equips you to get the absolute most out of this book.

IF YOU'RE A DAD, THE CHALLENGE WILL HELP YOU AND YOUR SON GROW CLOSER TO CHRIST TOGETHER.

IF YOU ARE A GUY IN A SMALL GROUP WITH OTHER MEN, THE CHALLENGE WILL HELP YOU COLLECTIVELY BECOME THE MEN GOD IS CALLING YOU TO BE.

IF YOU'RE A YOUTH WORKER DISCIPLING TEENAGERS, THE CHALLENGE WILL HELP YOU LEAD THESE GUYS TO PURSUE CHRIST-CENTERED MASCULINITY.

AND IF YOU'RE JUST A MAN READING THIS BOOK ON YOUR OWN, THE CHALLENGE WILL GIVE YOU A WAY TO REFLECT ON WHAT YOU'RE LEARNING AND PUT IT INTO ACTION.

Sure, you can do this without taking the challenge. But don't you want to go bigger? Man up. Take the challenge.

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HOW TO BE A MAN: LEARNING FROM THE REAL MEN OF THE BIBLE

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FOREWORD

When my schedule allows, I always look forward to having lunch with men that God has placed in my life to hold me accountable and challenge me. On this particular day, I was having lunch with a pastor friend of mine. We were in the middle of a relatively normal conversation when he looked me in the eye and said something I will never forget.

“Rick,” he said, “if anyone else - a small group leader, a pastor, a youth pastor - is functioning as the spiritual leader for your wife and your children, then they are a better husband to your wife and a better father to your children than you are.”

Wow. It hit me at that moment that the biggest threat to the church, the family, and our society are men who are ill-equipped to take on the God-given responsibility of being the spiritual leaders in these crucial areas of life. The problem was so obvious to me: there are men all around us who are not being disciplined from spiritual infancy to spiritual maturity. It seemed so clear. But when I looked around, I didn't see much of a game plan in place to address this issue.

This conversation and many others around this same time began the journey that ultimately produced the first book in the “How To Be A Man” series. “How To Be A Man: Pursuing Christ-Centered Masculinity” challenged men to look at the one, flawless example of masculinity. The perfect example of true masculinity will always be when God decided to become one. And so the book called men to emulate Jesus Christ, the Son of God, the new Adam. The book continues to be consumed by men each week for the first time, and the stories we hear are powerful. But time flies, and all of a sudden, I turned around, and the first book was almost two years old. Men kept asking us, “When will there be another book?” Well, the book you hold in your hand answers that question.

Andy Blanks and the entire crew at Iron Hill Press have completely bought into the vision that God clearly showed us: if the church concentrates on discipling men as a top priority, then God will use those men to tackle the ills of the church, family, and society. And so it was such an honor when Iron Hill Press asked me to serve as executive producer to work with the team to produce more material designed by men for men. I humbly accepted, and this book is the next step in the “How To Be A Man” series. I couldn't be more excited to take this next journey.

I do want to once again introduce you to Andy Blanks who co-wrote “How To Be A Man: Pursuing Christ-Centered Masculinity” with me. Andy serves as the Publisher for Iron Hill Press. He and Dr. Bryan Gill (another powerful man with God-given talent to write the type of content that I would endorse and consume), have partnered

to write the second book in this line, and let me assure you it is once again, meat with zero fluff, designed to be consumed the way men learn and grow.

Jesus is the perfect model of masculinity. But He's not the only one. The Bible is full of compelling examples of men following after God. Our challenge is to learn from them, which is not a foreign concept to us. The undeniable truth is that we are influenced (both positively and negatively) by men in our life. Think of how many times you have caught yourself saying or reacting to something exactly the way your dad, grandfather, uncle, boss, coach, or teacher would have responded or reacted. Many people don't often think of the men of the Bible being men that can shape our lives. This is a big mistake.

There is no better teacher than a man who has already traveled your same path. It's invaluable to learn from another man who has gained wisdom by undertaking the journey ahead of you, warning you of the traps ahead and enlightening you to the proper paths to take — paths that lead to life, not destruction. God gave us the example of the men of the Bible to function in much the same way. These men challenge and convict us by their faith, while at the same time teaching us through their mistakes. Abraham, Joseph, Joshua, David, Elijah, John the Baptist, Peter, and Paul all serve as excellent examples of the power of God to transform lives, but also as examples of His incredible grace and mercy.

I continue to be moved and inspired by how God faithfully uses the first “How To Be A Man” book to challenge men all over the world. If you haven't read it yet, consider going back and reading it as well. But for now, take the challenge to learn from the real men of the Bible. As you accept this challenge, never lose sight that these men are just men; the only great thing about them is the God they serve. You too have access to that same power, but you must surrender your life to the Lord.

Are you willing to submit to the Lordship of Jesus Christ and become the kind of man that can only be accomplished through the transformation provided by the redeeming power of God through His Son Jesus Christ? Until you do, you will never be a real man.

Are you ready?

Rick Burgess
Co-host, The Rick and Bubba Show
New York Times Best-Selling Author
Birmingham, AL
2019



INTRODUCTION

Who are the men who have shaped your life?

When we look back over our lives, many of us can identify men who had an oversized impact on the people we are today. These men were our fathers, our grandfathers, our uncles, our brothers. They were men in our neighborhood. Or men from our churches. They were college roommates, or teammates, or co-workers. These individuals helped teach us what it meant to be the kind of man we are today.

We learned from their examples. We watched how they interacted with their wives. We watched the way they conducted themselves in public. We noticed how they dealt with tough situations. We watched them. And we learned.

They taught us to drive. They taught us how to shoot. They taught us how to take something apart and put it back together. They listened when we needed someone to listen to us. They disciplined us when we went astray. They laughed with us. Maybe they cried with us. They shepherded us, walking with us as we grew into the men we have become today.

These men, these examples, were not perfect. They made mistakes. They may have let us down. But they took the responsibility of their roles seriously, and they shaped our lives as a result. We are better off as a result of our lives having intersected with theirs.

As many of you read the previous paragraphs, you thought of the men in your life who had just such an impact on you. But how many of you thought about

the men of the Bible? It's safe to say, probably not a lot. Which is a shame.

The Bible is the true Word of God. The people we meet in its pages are real people. They are not mythical characters. They are not made up creations. They are men and women who lived in specific times in specific locations. They are not two-dimensional people, as we sometimes make them out to be. They are complex human beings, just like the people you interact with every day. We can look at their lives and trust that what we are seeing is a snapshot of people who went about their days thousands of years ago much like we do today.

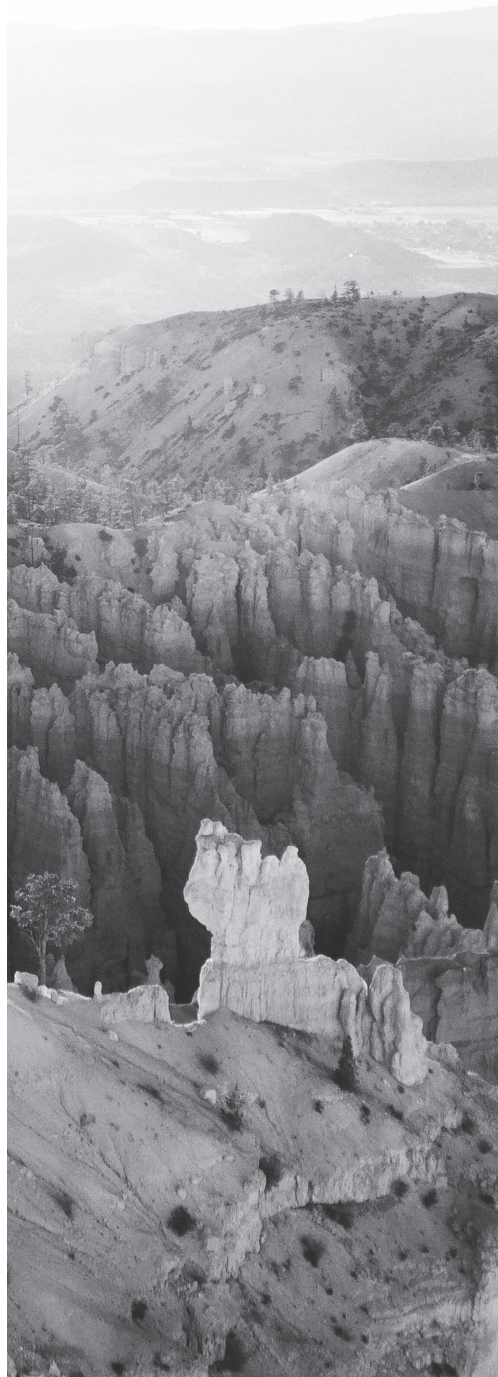
If we believe that the Bible was given to us by God and that it is the primary way He wants to show us Himself and His ways, then we have to believe we can learn from the stories of the people we read about in its pages. Especially the stories of the men of the Bible.

In the men of the Bible, we see an example of what it looks like to follow after God. We see men forced to grapple with their faith and how to live their lives in a world that often seems opposed to their values. We see them experiencing successes and failures. We see them taking stands for God. And we see them falling short of what God wants for them. In short, we see ourselves.

We can learn from the men in the Bible in the same way in which we have learned from the men in our lives.

The first book released in this line, *How To Be A Man: Pursuing Christ-centered Masculinity*, guided men to look to Jesus to define what it means to be a man. In Jesus, we see God as He was walking on this earth, fully God, fully man. Jesus is the ultimate example of what it means to be a man. The stories we heard after talking to men who had gone through the book were amazing. God is still using that book in powerful ways to challenge and convict men to be the men God desires them to be. We knew that we wanted to follow the first *How To Be A Man* book with a different book, one that still called men to embrace a biblical model for masculinity. We prayed and thought about what that book might look like.

It didn't take long for us to decide to focus on the men of the Bible. Through their stories, we learn so much about God and ourselves. Their faith challenges us, and their missteps convict us.



Deciding who to focus on was the hard part. We sat down with Rick Burgess, host of the nationally syndicated radio show *Rick and Bubba* and co-author of the first *How To Be A Man* book, and talked through the men of the Bible who had the most to teach us. We came up with a pretty good list. In this book, you'll study the lives of eight real men from the Bible, including:

- ABRAHAM
- JOSEPH
- JOSHUA
- DAVID
- ELIJAH
- JOHN THE BAPTIST
- PETER
- PAUL

By examining the lives these men lived, you'll be challenged to live a life of impact and influence, changing the world around you for the sake of the Gospel.

The world is in dire need of men to step up and live the life God intends them to live. All around us we see the effects of men who have chosen not to boldly pursue Christ. God has called you to Himself and placed you where you are so that He might work through you to bring glory to Himself. And yet, too many men aren't faithful in living out the role God has tasked them with. We're passionate about trying to challenge men to embrace God's call on their lives. It is our prayer that God will work through this book, and each book in the *How To Be A Man* line, to call His children to a kind of faith that shakes up the world around them.

On behalf of Rick, whose foreword sets an excellent tone for this book, and the entire YM360/Iron Hill Press team, we want to thank you for investing your time and spiritual energy in this book. It's our prayer that God would work through you to impact your world for Christ. Please don't hesitate to let us hear from you.

God Bless,

Andy Blanks and Bryan Gill

WEEK 1:

ABRAHAM

What's the craziest thing you've done in the name of love? Because let's be honest, it'll make you do crazy things, won't it?

I'm almost sure I've spent more money and more time for love than I have anything else. The list of things I've done just because I love my wife would be the length of my arm. Places I've been. Movies I've watched. Walls painted, and pictures hung. Every DIY known to man. All for love.

I love my daughters. And I've done more for them simply because I love them than I ever thought possible. My son is still just a little guy, but I imagine the same will be true for him, as well. Love is a great motivator when it comes to our wife and kids.

But what if I asked you to tell me how your love for God has motivated you to go to great lengths to serve Him? To obey Him? To see His will done in the world and your life? What would your story be? If you're Abraham, you'd have no problem answering that question. Abraham's love for God was the motivation for an incredible journey, one that would shape history.

The next five days you're going to learn about Abraham's life and his faith. You're going to see that he was capable of tremendous trust in God but also capable of a surprising amount of doubt. And through examining Abraham's faith, you'll be challenged to examine your own and to consider just how far your faith in God will take you.



ABRAHAM DAY I

SCRIPTURE PASSAGE: GENESIS 12:1-9

What's the most you've ever had riding on a risky decision?

In 2009, a friend and I started YM360 (the parent org under which Iron Hill Press publishes this book) from scratch. We had enough investor dollars raised to leave our jobs and build a website. But that was about it. We were launching a publishing company with nothing to sell and no one to sell it to. We had no database. No email list. Nothing.

What we did have were families, and mortgages, and car payments, and a million other needs. And let me tell you, those first few years were as lean as they come. Our families made huge sacrifices for us to step out on faith and give birth to a dream God had put on our hearts. Through God's unfailing faithfulness, the ministry has thrived. Looking back, we can see God's hand of providence over us the entire time. But during those early years, the risk still felt overwhelming at times.

Read Genesis 12:1-9. Here we see one of the foundational moments in all of the Bible. God called Abram, who would become known as Abraham, to be the father of a great nation. The nation in question was the Israelites, God's chosen people. When God tells Abraham "in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed," He is foreshadowing the salvation that would one day be offered through His Son, Jesus. Of course, the main issue here is that Abraham and Sarah were unable to have children. God's declaration that His mighty work of nation-building would pass directly through this old, childless couple was miraculous. It shows once again that there is nothing God can't accomplish. But for the purpose of this devotion, I want to focus on Abraham's response in verse 4.

Abraham risked everything to respond in faith to a call from God. If we're honest, the call itself was pretty vague. God didn't even tell Abraham where he would be going, only that He'd show him on the way. Scholars think Abraham was probably pretty well off. He uprooted all his people, all his flocks, everything, for the sake of obeying God's call. The question we have to ask ourselves is, what are we willing to risk to be obedient to God's call on our lives?

God's plan for you is probably not to build a nation out of your family. I mean, He could if He wanted to . . . But that's most likely not it. Rest assured, however, that God DOES have a plan for you. He knows you, and just like Abraham, He desires to work through you to accomplish His purposes. What you have to decide is whether or not you will listen and obey. Are you willing to put it all in God's hands and trust Him to lead you, no matter what?

LEARNING FROM ABRAHAM

1. How much weight do you give to your "security" or your "comfort"? How much do these concepts impact the decisions you make in your life?
2. Have you ever let your security or comfort impact the way you think about your faith? If you were to make a list of things that are too important to you to risk to follow God, what would that list look like? Feel free to use this space to write out your list.
3. When we put our comfort over God's call, we're saying that we know better than God about how best to use the life God's so graciously given us. What's wrong with this way of thinking?
4. When we look at Abraham and his response to God, it all comes down to trust. Ask yourself today, "How much do I trust God? Do I trust God enough to follow Him where He leads me?" Only you know the answer to this question. Spend some time in prayer today allowing God to reveal to you where your heart is when it comes to how much you trust Him.

ABRAHAM DAY 2

SCRIPTURE PASSAGE: GENESIS 15

I struggle with patience. It's not that I'm impatient all the time. I'm pretty patient in a boat with a fishing rod, or in a tree stand with a rifle. But put me behind a slow driver in the fast lane, and my patience goes out the window.

Read all of Genesis 15. (It won't take you long, and it's an essential passage of the Bible.) Here we get a look at how God chooses to interact with people. God chooses to engage with Abraham in a way that honors God's perfect plan and addresses Abraham's imperfect faith. What we see at the beginning of this passage is Abraham asking questions about God's plans. He looked at God and said, "I continue childless." In other words, Abraham is impatient. He knows God has promised Him an heir. But at this time, God has not yet delivered.

I love seeing how God treated Abraham here. There were a lot of things He could have done. What He did is quite powerful. God showed Abraham the stars. God basically said, "If you can count these it will give you an idea of just how big your family will one day be." And something in the way God showed this to Abraham got his attention and assured him of God's promise. "And he believed the Lord."

But God wasn't done. What happens next seems kind of strange to our 21st-century understanding. God conducts a covenant ceremony. There were animal parts, and blood, and God represented as a smoking pot and a torch. What do we make of this? In its purest form, here is what is going on: this is God ratifying a covenant with Abraham in the manner that was customary during this time. For the sake of this devotion, don't get too caught up in how God went about it. Focus on what God did.

The eternal God of the universe, the perfect creator of all things, made a binding, eternal promise to one of His flawed, finite, created beings. Abraham didn't walk through the pieces of the animals. God did. God bound Himself to a promise to Abraham, and God always keeps His promises. Let that sink in. God does not see personally interacting with humanity as something to shy away from. He does not look at you and see someone to be avoided. God blesses us with His presence and His promises.

When we are tempted to be impatient with God's timeline, remember that just like His promises, His timing is perfect. God will always act for His glory and our good, in line with His perfect understanding of timing. That's a promise you can rely on.

LEARNING FROM ABRAHAM

1. Why is it so hard for us to wait on God? What does our tendency to rush God say about our faith in Him?
2. There are quite a few stories from Scripture of people waiting on God. Abraham would wait 25 years before Isaac, his son, was born. David would wait 15 years between the time God promised him that he would be king and when he actually took the throne. Simeon waited his whole life to see the Messiah. Why do you think God allows us to wait on Him to work? What is it about waiting that He finds so instructive?
3. We could spend a lot of time talking about the fact that God didn't ask Abraham to promise Him anything, but that God initiated this covenant with Abraham. What does God's faithfulness and His willingness to show Himself faithful to Abraham say about His faithfulness to you?
4. Spend some time today in prayer, thanking God for His faithfulness, and asking Him to grow in you the desire to wait patiently for His plan to come to fruition in your life.

ABRAHAM DAY 3

SCRIPTURE PASSAGE: GENESIS 20

Read Genesis 20. And get ready: this isn't Abraham at his finest. Here we see Abraham telling Abimelech that Sarah was his sister, not his wife. Abraham had a bad habit of doing this; he did it three times over the course of traveling from Ur of the Chaldeans to the land of Canaan. He did this because he was scared that if the rulers of the lands he passed through knew Sarah was his wife, they'd kill him and take her as a concubine. If he lied and told them Sarah was his sister, these rulers would probably still take her as a concubine but wouldn't kill Abraham. (Still a pretty crummy deal for Sarah.) Abraham shows us here the very real truth that as men, we are prone to following hard after God one minute, and sinfully acting in our own self-interest the next.

What happened as a result of the lie Abraham told Abimelech? First, Abraham put Abimelech in the position of sinning in God's eyes. God had a disturbing heart-to-heart convo with Abimelech. God told Abimelech He'd kill him for taking Abraham's wife. As a result, Abimelech was understandably a little miffed at Abraham. Second, in his "apology," Abraham tips his hand that he underestimated the faithfulness of the people of the Negeb. Abraham assumed they didn't know God. Abimelech did. Abraham allowed his fears to get in the way of his faithfulness. Third, the brand of faith Abraham demonstrated for his wife was a far cry from the kind of faith a husband wants to model. Ultimately, Abraham showed a considerable lack of faith in God, in this instance, and in the two other cases in which he pulled this ruse.

Abraham proved faithful in many aspects of the journey (both physical and spiritual) that God called him to undertake. After all, when God commanded, Abraham obeyed. But Abraham proved over and over that there were moments where even as he obeyed God's big-picture directives, he failed in dealing with the specific uncertainties of life like a man of God should.

When things got hairy, Abraham acted in cowardice. He put his well-being ahead of the wellbeing of those he loved. In doing so, he showed a lack of faith in God.

How we respond when we encounter obstacles goes a long way in defining our character. When life throws us a curveball, and we respond in faith, we honor both God and the people He has given us influence over. When we fail to seek God in the midst of trials, we not only fail God, but we can easily lead others in our lives to go astray as well. It's easy to respond in faith when the road is smooth. But when things get a little bumpy, the real depth of our faith is tested.

LEARNING FROM ABRAHAM

1. If you were to ask your wife and children, or maybe even your co-workers and friends, how you react in times of crises, how do you think they might respond?
2. What does this say about your faith in God? Are you convicted by how you imagine they might respond? Or does it confirm the closeness of your relationship with God?
3. Remembering God's past faithfulness in times of trials goes a long way in how we handle trials in the future. Yet too many of us never stop long enough to recall how God saw us through the challenges we've faced in our lives. Stop now and reflect on some specific challenging times in your life and God's role during the midst of those trials. Write them down in the space provided if you want.
4. Now, spend some time thanking God in prayer for how He has walked with you in the midst of life's trials. Thank Him for never forsaking you and for acting within His goodness and mercy. Let this time of prayerful reflection strengthen and uphold you.

ABRAHAM DAY 4

SCRIPTURE PASSAGE: GENESIS 22:1-14

Yesterday you read an account of Abraham modeling a fragile faith in the face of trials. Today, you're going to see Abraham demonstrating a level of faith in God that is so deep it's hard to put into words. But before you read, let's get caught up. Find Genesis 22 in your Bible or Bible app. At this point in the story, God has been faithful to Abraham. He and Sarah had a son, Isaac. This passage starts by telling us that some time has passed, and Isaac is most likely a young adult.

Now, read Genesis 22:1-14. Let's get straight to the question you're probably asking right now: Why would God have asked Abraham to sacrifice his child? It seems so un-Godlike, doesn't it? The answer is twofold. First, verse 1 tells us that God wanted to test Abraham's faith. God wanted to see what Abraham's first love was: Himself, or Isaac. Second, child sacrifice was something that was common in many of the pagan cultures in Abraham's time. It would have been a practice that, although horrific, would not have been unheard of to Abraham. Furthermore, God wasn't asking Abraham to do anything He wasn't willing to do, as He would prove one day on a cross at Calvary.

God tested Abraham to determine what Abraham valued more: the gift or the Giver. If God was going to set-up Abraham as the father of His people, He had to make sure Abraham was a man of undying affection for Him. God asked Abraham to sacrifice his son as a burnt offering, and amazingly, Abraham agreed. By doing so, he demonstrated a remarkable faith in God.

Abraham must have been heartbroken and distraught. Can you imagine the three-day journey to the mountain? Yet, even in verse 5 as they prepare to go up the mountain, Abraham tells his servants that he and Isaac will return. Abraham trusted God to relent or to find another way through it!

God did relent, making a way out for Isaac in the form of a ram in a thicket. The ram in this story foreshadows another time, on another hill, when God would miraculously provide the sacrifice that saved us from death. But at the heart of this story is a father who loved his son, and was willing to lose him for the sake of his trust in God.

As men living in a fast-paced world full of distractions, it's easy for us to underestimate God's desire for the full attention of our heart. God is not satisfied sharing your affection with anything else, whether that's your spouse, your kids, your career, or your hobbies. If God tested you today, what would you have a hard time withholding? What does that say about where your heart's affection lies?

LEARNING FROM ABRAHAM

1. Deep down, Abraham had faith in God's character. He showed in verse 5 that he believed that God would provide a way to save Isaac's life. Who is God to you? Do you know Him well enough to count on His goodness? In your own words, describe God's character in the space below.

2. If you had to make a list, what in your life competes with God for time and energy? Be honest.

3. What does it say about us as men that we are so quick to allow things to come between God and us? And why is it that so many of the things that we allow to come before our commitment to God have so little eternal value?

4. Here's a question for you to think about: What are you missing out by NOT allowing God to be the primary focus of your life? How might your vocation be different if God were your first priority? How might your marriage be different? What would your relationship with your children be like if you pursued God above all else? Maybe the biggest question is, "what are you waiting for?"

ABRAHAM DAY 5

SCRIPTURE PASSAGE: GENESIS 25:7-11

The older I get, the more I think about the impact my life is having. I think this is something most men consider as they age. I find myself living with a greater sense of purpose. There is a genuine desire not to waste the time I have been given. I want my life to count for something. I want the impact of my life to be felt long after I leave this world. Can you relate?

The word legacy is a powerful word. It can also be an overwhelming concept. When we think about living a life that is so meaningful that its impact is felt long after we're gone, well, it can seem like a tall task. But I want to help you think about legacy in a way that is not quite so overwhelming.

A legacy is what happens when you string together a lifetime's worth of days spent living in the center of God's will. It's accomplished in day-sized chunks. It's merely a matter of faithfulness over time.

Read Genesis 25:7-11. This is the period at the end of Abraham's life story. Abraham lived a long, long life. By all accounts, he lived a full life. The biblical language here in these verses is rich with meaning. If you read it in its original Hebrew and from the perspective of the original cultural context, everything about these verses speaks to Abraham having lived a fulfilling, blessed life. He was able to experience the realization of God's call on his life. His two sons buried him in the land God had promised him would be his and his family's home. His life was complete, and while history recognizes that Abraham wasn't perfect, his legacy is one of faithfulness and steady obedience to the Lord.

Every day, you build your legacy. Every day, the things you do and the things you don't do shape the world around you. When it's all said and done, and you look back over your life, what will the final verdict be? Did you use your talents and time to advance God's Kingdom? Did you invest in the people you love? Did your life tell the story of God's faithfulness to you?

It's too late to wait until it's over to start building a legacy. Decide today that you're committed to making the most of what God has given you.

LEARNING FROM ABRAHAM

1. Think about the men in your life who left or will leave a powerful legacy. What impact have they had on you and those around them? In what ways did their lives bring glory to God?
2. If you had to put a number on your legacy with "0" representing a completely negative legacy and "10" representing an amazing one, where would you be? How do you feel about where you rate yourself?
3. Have you ever taken a moment to write out how you would like to be remembered by your family and those close to you? Try it now. It may seem awkward at first, but give it a shot. Think about the people in your life and write a sentence or two about how you'd like for them to remember you and the impact you made on them.
4. The exercise you just did should serve as a huge encouragement for you to think of your life in terms of daily faithfulness. Pray to God today, asking Him to convict you of any sin in your life. Ask Him to give you the strength to be the man you are called to be, today. Then live today for the Lord. When you wake up tomorrow, do the same thing. And don't stop.