

Walking with God the Way I Started with God

Romans 4:19-22

When a person reads this text they immediately think of Abraham as a superman of faith. *He was not weak in faith (v.19); he staggered not (v.20), but was strong in faith (v.20); and he was fully persuaded, that what God promised He was able also to perform (v.21).*

Paul is accurately describing how Abraham received imputed righteousness (Gen.15:6). However, after Abraham was saved there was a period of 14 years when he entered into a personal wilderness where he seemed lost, alone and anything but a child of God (Gen. 16:16 – Gen. 17:1). His adulterous relationship with Hagar, the resulting birth of Ishmael, and no communication between God and Abraham for 14 years are signs that not all is rosy in Abraham's spiritual life. What has Abraham done to bring about this wilderness?

I. The explanation

Abraham's love relationship with God **commenced by grace through faith, but Abraham tried to continue his love relationship with God by self through works.** The Christian is to **live** "*in accordance with grace*" (Rom. 4:16) but too often the Christian ends up living what the Bible calls a life "*in accordance with the flesh.*"

God by grace called Abram out of the Ur. God by grace told Abraham that he would be the father of many nations. Abraham believed God. Yet, after he believed God and *it was credited to him for righteousness* (Gen. 15:6), Abraham set aside grace and faith and picked up the yoke of self and works. Rather than trusting God's grace to fulfill the promise, Abraham came up with his own plan. We do too! (Gal. 4:29).

II. The evidence

What are the signs that we have abandoned living "*in accordance with grace?*"

(A). There is impatience with the timing of God . . .

We want done *now* what God has said He, and only He, will produce.

(B). There is ignorance of the joy that comes in waiting on God . . .

"We are half-hearted creatures, fooling about with drink and sex and ambition when infinite joy is offered us, like an ignorant child who wants to go on making mud pies in a slum because he cannot imagine what is meant by the offer of a holiday at the sea. We are far too easily pleased" C.S. Lewis – *The Weight of Glory* pp.1-2.

(C). There is ingenuity in the ways we manufacture substitutes for God's work.

As Abram and Sarah schemed to make Hagar the bearer of a son for Abraham, so we mold our lives to the point we no longer need God; a false sanctification.

(D). There is irritability when God produces that which He promises . . .

We get so comfortable with the lives we've manufactured without God that when we see grace we shout "*O that Ishmael may live before you*" (Gen. 17:18).

III. The exhortation

"As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him" (Col. 2:6).
Cast out the bondwoman! You shall now the truth and the truth shall set you free!