

Ephesians 3: 20–21

“God can do anything, you know—far more than you could ever imagine or guess or request in your wildest dreams! He does it not by pushing us around but by working within us, his Spirit deeply and gently within us” (MSG).

Other translations put it this way: He can “do above and beyond” or “exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think.”

God can take every limitation that has been put on you by yourself as well as others, and expand your heart and purpose in a way that is infinitely bigger than you can imagine

God’s ultimate desire is to see us filled and overflowing with every good, wonderful, perfect gift from Him

- His purpose in that desire is to build His church and expand the Kingdom
- The point of serving God is that we live to succeed and succeed to serve

When your dreams and success are centered around the cause of Christ and serving others you will cause others to step out of their comfort zone

- You will become a leader of your generation
- You will help others inherit their promised land

Matthew 20:26 (NKJV)

²⁶ Yet it shall not be so among you; but whoever desires to become great among you, let him be your servant.

Obedience and Blessings

You can't force God's hand of blessing by striving and works

- Its not, "Do good, get good."
- We have all fallen short of the glory of God – **Romans 3:23**

However, God honors obedience and that is displayed in our lives through faithfulness

- Obedience and faithfulness are inseparable
- Love is the doorway to marriage
- Discipline is necessary for weight loss
- Sowing will usher in reaping
- The abundant life is made possible through obedience

Obedience to God's word and obedience to follow and trust His precepts

John 10:10 (NKJV)

¹⁰ The thief does not come except to steal, and to kill, and to destroy. I have come that they may have life, and that they may have *it* more abundantly.

Some assign any thought of abundance to the afterlife, believing that in this life we will only experience lack and suffering

- True that suffering and tribulation are part of this life
- However, we must believe that God has a desire to bless us in this life
 - Above and beyond our wildest imaginations

Jesus and His disciples have just had an encounter with a rich young ruler

- He walked away from following Jesus, in despair
- Unwilling to give up everything he had and take up his cross
- The disciples were filled with questions
- Wondering if there was hope of salvation for any of us

Peter reminded Jesus that they had left everything to follow Him

Jesus' Response

Mark 10:29–31 (NKJV)

²⁹ So Jesus answered and said, “Assuredly, I say to you, there is no one who has left house or brothers or sisters or father or mother or wife or children or lands, for My sake and the gospel’s, ³⁰ who shall not receive a hundredfold now in this time—houses and brothers and sisters and mothers and children and lands, with persecutions—and in the age to come, eternal life. ³¹ But many *who are* first will be last, and the last first.”

- Notice, “*now in this time*” and, “*in the age to come*”
- He make a clear distinction between the two
- He also reminds us that along with the blessings in this time there will be persecution

Not everyone understands the blessings of God and His promises to those who live in faithful obedience

What is Abundance?

The dictionary defines abundance as, “*plentifulness of the good things in life*”

- Plenty of love
- Plenty of kindness
- Plenty of joy
- Plenty of peace
- Plenty of success
- Plenty of relationships
- Plenty of laughter
 - Plenty of desert

God’s word is very clear that He will bless us with finances and resources as well

His word is also clear that He blesses those who are committed to blessing others

Ephesians 3:20 (NKJV)

²⁰ Now to Him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us

- *Exceeding*: surpassing and going beyond
- *Abundant*: full and overflowing
- *Above*: lifting you higher than you could ever ask

All made possible by His power working in you

Abundance and success were some of the first things God spoke over humans

Genesis 1:28 (NKJV)

²⁸ Then God blessed them, and God said to them, “Be fruitful and multiply; fill the earth and subdue it; have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over every living thing that moves on the earth.”

- God was speaking of an entire life of blessing and increase
 - Perpetual and generational
- That blessing, and increase had a purpose
- That purpose continues today

God blesses us to bless others and display God’s goodness in our lives

If we are going to live this way our thinking must come into *alignment* with what the Bible teaches about living a blessed life

- The key to that *alignment* is what you put first

Matthew 6:33 (NKJV)

³³ But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you.

- What a promise!
- But, what does it mean?

John 14:15 (HCSB)

¹⁵ “If you love Me, you will keep My commands.

- Obedience is not the most popular word these days
- There are whole movements built on being disobedient to those in authority
- Bucking the system – Resist

God doesn't want us living under a bunch of rules and regulations

- Yes, the Christian life should be full of obedience
- We should tithe and give offerings to missions
- We should read our Bible and pray
- We should volunteer in church

However, these things should be much more than ritual

When you walk in a true, living, dynamic relationship with Jesus Christ, obedience is not a sacrifice, it is an overflow of your love for God

- Your ability to hear God's voice and trust His best intentions and promises for your life becomes your motivation
- Seeking the kingdom first becomes a natural response not a forced reaction

Abraham and Sarah:

For years she is barren and carrying the shame of her condition
Abraham continued to hold on to the promise of being a father
of multitudes

- From a ninety-year-old women?
- Again, God does the impossible
- They name him Isaac
- He was the joy of their lives
- He was the culmination of hope and trust

A promise that the descendants of this child would be as
numerous as the stars of the sky

Think about your own children

- They hold your hand to cross the street
- Making sure that they are safe and secure
- Watching them ride their bike the first time
- Watching them drive a car
 - Don't be too late, be careful

If anything were wrong with our children, we would drop
everything to be by their side

- We are committed to our families

God asks the unthinkable

Genesis 22:1–8 (NKJV)

¹ Now it came to pass after these things that God tested Abraham, and said to him, “Abraham!” And he said, “Here I am.” ² Then He said, “Take now your son, your only *son* Isaac, whom you love, and go to the land of Moriah, and offer him there as a burnt offering on one of the mountains of which I shall tell you.” ³ So Abraham rose early in the morning and saddled his donkey, and took two of his young men with him, and Isaac his son; and he split the wood for the burnt offering, and arose and went to the place of which God had told him. ⁴ Then on the third day Abraham lifted his eyes and saw the place afar off. ⁵ And Abraham said to his young men, “Stay here with the donkey; the lad and I will go yonder and worship, and we will come back to you.” ⁶ So Abraham took the wood of the burnt offering and laid *it* on Isaac his son; and he took the fire in his hand, and a knife, and the two of them went together. ⁷ But Isaac spoke to Abraham his father and said, “My father!” And he said, “Here I am, my son.” Then he said, “Look, the fire and the wood, but where *is* the lamb for a burnt offering?” ⁸ And Abraham said, “My son, God will provide for Himself the lamb for a burnt offering.” So the two of them went together.

- What comes between the moments of sacrifice and provision?
 - Obedience
- Abraham certainly wasn’t doing this because he wanted to
 - Walking up the mountain, wiping the tears

Abraham binds his son, lays sticks around him, places him on the altar and raises his hand to slay his boy

- Obedience is costly
 - *Abraham held his boy in his hand*
 - *He held his promise in his heart*
 - *In his obedience the Lord provided*

Genesis 22:11–18 (NKJV)

¹¹ But the Angel of the LORD called to him from heaven and said, “Abraham, Abraham!” So he said, “Here I am.” ¹² And He said, “Do not lay your hand on the lad, or do anything to him; for now I know that you fear God, since you have not withheld your son, your only *son*, from Me.” ¹³ Then Abraham lifted his eyes and looked, and there behind *him was* a ram caught in a thicket by its horns. So Abraham went and took the ram, and offered it up for a burnt offering instead of his son. ¹⁴ And Abraham called the name of the place, The-LORD-Will-Provide; as it is said *to* this day, “In the Mount of the LORD it shall be provided.” ¹⁵ Then the Angel of the LORD called to Abraham a second time out of heaven, ¹⁶ and said: “By Myself I have sworn, says the LORD, because you have done this thing, and have not withheld your son, your only *son*—¹⁷ blessing I will bless you, and multiplying I will multiply your descendants as the stars of the heaven and as the sand which *is* on the seashore; and your descendants shall possess the gate of their enemies. ¹⁸ In your seed all the nations of the earth shall be blessed, because you have obeyed My voice.”

The blessing God promised didn't stop with Abraham

- Because of his obedience the nations would be blessed
- There is “more” on the other side of your obedience
- Both now and in the future
- Hold fast to God's promises
- Trust His provision

Believe that His desire for your life is abundance

- Jehovah-Jireh is your provider
- In the difficult times
- In the testing times
- In the waiting times
- In the trying times

He is walking ahead of you and providing!

- He has a life for you that is Above and Beyond

Abraham would become the patriarch of the Davidic line that would lead to Christ

- What a promise
- What a hope we have!

Unlike Abraham, we have been given all the promises of abundant life and all the parameters of holy living without the sacrifice

Life with Christ is often found in a posture of surrender and that obedience to His call leads to abundance for us

- Abraham had a God Dream about the innumerable stars in the sky
- That dream was carved out in his obedience

1 John 2:6 (The Message)

Anyone who claims to be intimate with God ought to live the same kind of life Jesus lived.

If you want a life that is abundant, you must find yourself surrendered and obedient to the Lord Jesus Christ

Just as the mystery of a life that is Above and Beyond has to do with knowing Jesus, so the journey of more must ultimately be about obeying Him

- Living for Christ can never be about convenience
- We must never live in disagreement of the conviction of the Holy Spirit

King Saul's reign was ended because even though he sacrificed the burnt offerings as a ritual, he did it in an environment of excuses, interpretation and disobedience

- He was in the eye of the storm in Gilgal – 1 Samuel 13
- The prophet Samuel had departed and said he would return in a week

Samuel left explicit instructions for king Saul that no sacrifices were to be made until he returned

- The tense environment and pressure were mounting for Saul
- Thousands of Philistines were marching toward them
- The Israelites were outnumbered and trembling in fear
- Many of Saul's men were hiding in caves, thickets, rocks, holes, and pits
- Some panicked and went a-wall

Saul became impatient and after seven days he took matters into his own hands

- He made the sacrifices and burnt offerings
- When Samuel returned he offered every excuse he could think of
- But Samuel had bad news for the king
- It wasn't Saul's place to interpret and adjust the word of God to fit his circumstance
- It was clear that he placed more faith in his own judgement than God's
- His disobedience cost him his kingdom

Have we allowed our pressing circumstance to give us every logical reason to translate, decipher and interpret the word of God to fit our personal situation?

Matthew 5:37 (NKJV)

³⁷ But let your ‘Yes’ be ‘Yes,’ and your ‘No,’ ‘No.’ For whatever is more than these is from the evil one.

- This doesn’t mean yes until it doesn’t suit us or becomes inconvenient

Compromising our beliefs will never attract abundance and blessing

- We need to obey even if it doesn’t make sense

Peter and the others had been fishing all night

- They hadn’t caught anything
- They were disappointed and likely cleaned their nets and got the boat ready for the next day’s work

Luke 5:4–7 (The Message)

⁴ When he finished teaching, he said to Simon, “Push out into deep water and let your nets out for a catch.” ^{5–7} Simon said, “Master, we’ve been fishing hard all night and haven’t caught even a minnow. But if you say so, I’ll let out the nets.” It was no sooner said than done—a huge haul of fish, straining the nets past capacity. They waved to their partners in the other boat to come help them. They filled both boats, nearly swamping them with the catch.

- Even in deep waters your obedience matters
- Trusting His voice and obeying His commands will always exceed your expectations