

## Genesis

Chapter 17 - God's Commitment to More  
God's No Means More (vs. 15-21)

**Genesis 17:15-21:** Then God said to Abraham, “As for Sarai your wife, you shall not call her name Sarai, but Sarah shall be her name. I will bless her, and indeed I will give you a son by her. Then I will bless her, and she shall be a mother of nations; kings of peoples will come from her.” Then Abraham fell on his face and laughed, and said in his heart, “Will a child be born to a man one hundred years old? And will Sarah, who is ninety years old, bear a child?” And Abraham said to God, “Oh that Ishmael might live before You!” But God said, “No, but Sarah your wife will bear you a son, and you shall call his name Isaac; and I will establish My covenant with him for an everlasting covenant for his descendants after him. As for Ishmael, I have heard you; behold, I will bless him, and will make him fruitful and will multiply him exceedingly. He shall become the father of twelve princes, and I will make him

a great nation. But My covenant I will establish with Isaac, whom Sarah will bear to you at this season next year.”

We come to this marvelous book of beginnings, and we realize that it's not as much about individuals as it is about God. “In the beginning, God...” Isn't that how it starts off? God is the gracious one; God is the good one. We would tend to maybe embrace individuals within the passage. We look at Abraham, “Father Abraham”. So many people are drawn to be a part of this great individual. Nevertheless, it is not Abraham that was so great. It is God. Psalm 100 says, “Know this, that the Lord Himself is God. And He's the one that made us, not we ourselves.” I would add to that, there is nothing good that comes from us. Every good and perfect gift comes from Him. So, it is with that, that the focus always should be on Him, no matter what individual we're talking about, whether it's Adam or Noah or Abraham or Isaac and Jacob. It is God that is a common thread from whom all blessings flow. God created; marvelous, wonderful, as

Genesis 1 will say, very good things. That was His idea. That wasn't man's. He wasn't even created at the very beginning of this. But God had created all this for him. I mean, how can you read something like that and think that God has it out for you? When He begins to display right off the bat His graciousness. And though, man in the Book of Genesis would embrace cruelty and violence, God would embrace salvation. It was His idea to save man and to preserve creation. It wasn't man's. It wasn't like Noah goes, "Hey, I have an idea. Let's build a boat." It was God's idea. And it was God's idea to actually disperse the people so that they would not be hampered by tyranny as well as deception. It was God's graciousness that would do that. And ultimately, as we come to Abraham and this wonderful calling in Genesis 12 in which God calls him and He says, "I'm going to bless you. I'm going to make you a blessing." It was God's idea. We don't see anywhere that Abraham's up in Ur of the Chaldeans going, "I wonder when God's going to tell me I need to be a blessing." Or we don't even see him actually formulating the concept of being a blessing. Man not only lacks the ability to be gracious, but he also doesn't have the imagination to

actually think about it. It is God that brings all these things to fruition, and though man may ultimately kind of accept his condition, and man will live with his problematic, treacherous, disappointing life, God will say, "No. We're not going to do that."

And it's His graciousness that declares, "No." We're going to be talking about today when God says no. And we like Him to say yes about everything, but man, I'm so glad He says no. It is His grace, and as you see in the title, His no means more. We would settle for certain things. We have an idea, and might I add, though we might perceive ourselves to have a great and marvelous imagination, next to God, our imagination is nothing. It's very limited. And we would tend to settle for things that are tolerable. We would tend to settle for things that are few. We would tend to settle for things that are perhaps lenient. But God would give us grace. God would give us more. When God pulls Abraham off to the side in Genesis 15, He goes, "Let me show you something." And He takes him outside, and He says, "Now, start counting those things. Those things in the sky, all those stars, if you can count

those..." And He reveals to us that He has far greater things than we can imagine. Abraham's thinking, "If I could just have one kid." God goes, "Thinking too small. No, not one kid. Look at the stars." And that's the heart of God. For God so loved, He gave. And it is God's nature to give. It is not our nature to give. It's our nature to mess things up. And though we look at an individual like Abraham, and I think a lot of times people see him as such a paragon that they would almost rule out the ability to be like somebody like Abraham, as you begin to read the events that surround Abraham's life, you begin to realize, no, you could probably be like Abraham. In fact, you've probably been more like him than you thought. Because you see the struggles that he has, the difficulties.

You go in the New Testament, and we read, and the New Testament actually makes reference to Abraham on a number of occasions. One in Romans 4 declares him as the father of faith. But he wasn't always there. He wasn't always the father of faith. What God does in the pattern as we begin to see God working in his life as He calls him right from the very start is God is going to reveal Himself

as kind and gracious and giving. And it's in the process of God revealing Himself to him that Abraham goes, "I can trust You, can I?" That's what brings us to faith. It is not a blind faith that we have. We see God's love for us on that cross. The evidence is all around. Romans 1 would say, even creation cries out that God is a good God.

Conscience tells us that God is good because He gives us a sense of right and wrong. I mean, if there wasn't a sense of what was right and wrong, then the One who created us messed up somewhere. But we have all these things, and Romans conveys that; that you actually have to suppress the truth in unrighteousness, not to believe that God is good.

As we go through the life of Abraham, we see the struggles that this individual has. And to me, it's extremely comforting because I go, you know, it's like James says in James 5, Elijah was a man with a nature just like yours. And you realize this Abraham is more like me than I thought. He's struggling. I mean, right off the bat, God calls him, and then he has to deal with the famine, and does he trust God right away? No, he does what most

of us do. He thinks practically, he thinks pragmatically, and he goes, "We've got to go down to where the river is. We have to go down to the Nile, where there's water." That just makes sense, doesn't it? Unless you're walking by faith. And God will work in his life. I mean, he'll see himself as the rescuer. How many of us have seen ourselves as the rescuer? We have to rescue our family. We have to rescue our children. And we hop right in there and do it. And God is gracious to rescue us as we're rescuing. I mean, what person in the right mind goes out with 300 men against 1, 2, 3, 4... How many nations to fight and to war? I mean, that was truly an impulsive act. There is no passage that says, "And Abraham turned to God and says, 'What do I need to do?'" He just gets on his high horse and goes. And we know that it wasn't God's idea for him to have relationship with Hagar. I mean, that was Sarah's idea, but that wasn't God's idea.

You find yourself in the process of learning what it means to believe and finding that you make a lot of errors. And in the process of making the errors, you find yourself dealing with the consequences of those errors. So, we

have a problematic, treacherous, disappointing life, and being the brainiacs that we are, we say something like, “I guess this is my lot. I guess I'll just accept it.” Well, it's this that God will not put up with.

Zechariah 14 gives us an interesting picture as you see the apocalyptic horses go throughout all the earth. And as God sends them out, He goes, “So, how are things going?” And it was at a time in which the Medes and the Persians were in control. And it was a time in which they had helped rebuild Jerusalem, so Jerusalem was doing okay. And they come back, and they meet the Lord back in the ravine. And He says, “Tell me what's going on.” And they go, “All is well in the earth.” And the text reads, “And God was angry.” You say, “Why would He be angry?” because Israel was in the ravine and He wanted them on the mountain. Zechariah will end in Zechariah 14 with Christ coming and stepping on the Mount of Olives and it's splitting open and Jerusalem being raised above all the nations of the earth. God gets upset over the fact that we are complacent. God gets upset over the fact that we are

willing to settle for the things that we have messed up in our lives. We tolerate mediocrity, and God goes, “No.”

Verse 19 within this particular passage really to me is the hub of the text because it is the text of “no”. God says, “You think and you see things a certain way, but I say to you, no way.” He uses what we call an asseverative, that means that He is declaring emphatically something with great certainty, “This will not happen.” I am comforted by that; that He cares that much. And it will be around that “no” that this whole passage will rotate.

In fact, at the very beginning of it, in verse 15, (Genesis 17:15) “Then God said to Abraham, “As for Sarai your wife, you shall not...”

And once again, there's that “no”. Abraham has his own ideas about the way things are going to go, and we oftentimes have worked up those ideas in our own minds, the way that things are going to happen. We begin to plan, we begin to do things, and we actually find ourselves digging deeper holes and getting into worse situations than ever before. We're looking in a very shallow way at things that might be temporary. One of

the things that we oftentimes settle for is that thing called “now.” Do you know what I’m talking about? So, like when you’re praying for something and you go, and kind of end your prayer, at least with the thoughts, “And now would be good,” because patience is really not our forte. And so, we kind of, even in our hearts, demand that sense of now. But that’s us settling for mediocrity.

Peter will say in 1 Peter 5 that You need to humble yourself under the mighty hand of God. Actually, it's an interesting quote that James will use as well. “Humble yourself under the mighty hand of God, and He will exalt you,” listen to this, “at the proper time.” Would you rather it be now, or would you rather it be the perfect time? So, we'll oftentimes settle for things that are hurtful, inappropriate, and wrong rather than best. God has the best for us.

This passage is about God's best for us, and if you look with me in particular in verse 15 of chapter 17, God turns to Abraham. Now, He turns to Abraham at this point and talks about his wife. Now, up to this point, the one thing that he's called Abraham to do is be all in himself. He's got

to put some skin in the game. And if you back up, God has already Himself declared what He's going to do. God has fundamentally said, "I have these wonderful promises for you. I guarantee you it's going to happen. But I want you to be a part of this as well." In order for there to be a relationship, that's what needs to happen. But now, He turns to Abraham, and He goes, "And I want to make sure that we understand something, that no way can you settle for second best." I believe when God calls us into His family as children of God, He's just not going to let us settle for second best. He has greater things for us. We are children of God. John will say, "Behold, what manner of love the Father has bestowed upon us that we should be called..." I mean, it's unimaginable, but "children of God. "Peter will say, "We're a royal priesthood, a holy nation. You were once not a people, but now you are." What do you think He expects of us? Everything. He wants to give us everything. Not one good thing is He going to withhold from you. You're actually going to be called joint heirs with Christ. We come before the Lord with our requests, and I have to admit that oftentimes they're very compromising because we have this tunnel vision of this

one thing that perhaps we want. In Abraham's life, it was a son, "I've got to have a son." Through the process of now, they come up with a son by the name of Ishmael. Well, he has a son. And for 13 years, he has had a son. Isn't that amazing how I could actually figure out how long?

Well, if you look in Chapter 17, if you drop on down to verse 25,

(Genesis 17:25) "And Ishmael his son was thirteen years old..."

But for 13 years he's been with Abram. With God talking about the fact that there's going to be another son, he goes, "Why? I mean, it can't happen anyway." He begins to think through reasoning and practicality. "Sarah can't, I mean, she's 90 years old. Come on. I'm 100. So, we're not going to have any kids." And God goes, "Oh, yes, you are."

The passage starts off this way, if you look with me in verse 15,

(Genesis 17:15) "Then God said to Abraham, "As for Sarai your wife...""

Now, you might want to underline that phrase because He's going to mention her again in verse 19, "But God said, "No, but Sarah your wife..."

Why is God saying that? Because Hagar is not his wife, even though she will be mentioned as such. Well, you go to a passage like in Matthew 19 where the Pharisees were going, "Is it okay to divorce for any reason?" And He goes, "Let me tell you something. From the beginning, it was not so. God created man and woman." He talks about, well, I mean, how many wives could Adam have? Uh, one. Because there weren't any other women. But the point is that God had created a monogamous relationship. And in a very not so subtle way, God is reminding Abraham, "Sarah is your wife, and it's from Sarah that you're going to have a child. You just didn't wait." Now, let me just emphasize this as well, that in the process of us going after certain things and doing it our way, we know that it's the blessings of God that make rich. He adds no sorrow to that, right? So, when God does it, there's no problems. When we force it, somebody's going to get hurt. And who got hurt in all of this? Well, I know it was

Sarah's idea, but she got hurt because he bought into it. And he went ahead and did what he knew he shouldn't have done. He didn't wait on God. When you don't wait on God, somebody's going to get hurt. If it's God that does the giving, nobody's going to get hurt because He's going to do good for everybody.

It is amazing to me that it didn't enter into Abraham's mind, "Oh yeah, what about Sarah?" But it did God's. And God is saying, "Let's talk about your wife." I mean, now for 13 years, we have another son by another woman, and hey, Abraham got what he wanted. He's got a son. But what about Sarah? "Oh, I forgot about her." Yeah, she has been acting a little moody lately, not really happy.

(Genesis 17:15) "Then God said to Abraham, "As for Sarai your wife, you shall not call her name Sarai, but Sarah..."

It's a very interesting play of words. "Sar," at the very beginning of the name, is actually probably where we get our word "śar," which means to rule or to lead, oftentimes translated "chief". So then, in the female category, it would be "princess" because of the fact that it's a feminine. So, you go from like a prince to a princess,

therefore you have “*Sarai*”. Now, the interesting thing about that is that the question you have to ask yourself is, if in fact she is a princess, and more specifically, from the root word “*sar*,” which means that she's a leader or a chief, who is she leading and how is she leading? And the answer is, not too well. Because she's talked to Abraham about doing something that wasn't good, and so her influence was not good. Now, we know that Abraham was a wealthy individual. So, in that respect, she may have been considered a princess, one in charge of, and we know that Hagar is underneath her as one of her subjects, if we can put it that way. But everything that she's been doing has not been that proper. God says, “We're going to change this around a little bit. We're going to call you Sarah.”

Now, there is another passage that this name is actually used in, and you don't need to turn there, but it's actually found in Lamentations 1:1. And in that particular passage, it describes one who is a noble woman who is over provinces. As this particular passage will begin to reveal, “You're going to be over nations.” Now, what God has just

done with the stroke of a letter is He has declared that she will no longer be merely an individual that has a title. You know, people call us certain things. Quite frankly, for the most part, it doesn't mean anything, really. What are people calling you? I don't know. We're given titles. But what does the title mean? Does it mean that you actually are living out that way? Well, some of the titles I would hope you would, and other titles I hope you didn't. But the point is that we're given superficial titles that literally mean nothing. God says, "I'm going to turn this around. We're going to take you away from a superficial title, and we're going to make this your character. We're going to make this something that is happening to you and something that you are." He uses the phrase, like with Abraham, "you shall be". Now, He starts off, "You were called exalted father, Abram. You shall be Abraham." In other words, "You shall be a father of many nations." In other words, "You've gone from one being called something to one who is something." That's an interesting transition because God is not wanting us just to live a superficial life. He wants us to produce and He wants to bless us. It falls in the category of Genesis 12, "I

will bless you. You will be a blessing.” “You will be” See, there's a term “to be,” not just called. I know a lot of people go around, “Bless you, bless you.” They go around blessing people. But that doesn't mean they're blessed. What causes the blessing is you are a blessing. And God says, “This is going to happen. Nations are going to come up from you. You're going to rule over. You're going to be over provinces. You're going to be the noble woman that's in charge.” Now, I would say that Abram or Abraham was willing at this juncture to let it go. I mean, had they created a mess? Absolutely. Do they have problems? And was treachery ruling and disappointment ruling? Yes. Is this Abraham's idea? God turns, and He says, “Let's talk about Sarah. Let's make her into the person that I have ordained her to be, the blessed one.”

I am reminded of, in the New Testament in particular, when you read about Mary, and she hears the news that she's going to be the mother of the Christ child. And she goes, “How could something like this happen to me?” Now, Elizabeth turns, and she says, “Because God has done this, all the world will know that you're the blessed

woman above all women.” And from that point on, who she is literally changes. She becomes identified with what she did by the power of God in her. That God begins to work in our lives, and yes, I would have to say that we settle for whatever thing, whatever lot we've found ourselves being in. And I would not say that is as much fate as it is we've tripped over a lot of things, and we find ourselves hurting ourselves. Nevertheless, at that juncture, we go, “Well, I guess that's where I'm stuck.” God goes, “No. We're not going to be there. We're not going to stay here.” So, He says, “Sarai, we're going to change your name. We're going to change who she is. And she's going to be a blessing.”

If you look at verse 16,

(Genesis 17:16) “I will bless her, and indeed I will give you a son by her. Then I will bless her, and she shall be a mother of nations; kings of peoples will come from her.”

“I'm going to bless her. I'm going to make her a blessing.”

(Genesis 17:17) “Then Abraham fell on his face and laughed...”

I will hand this to him. He was smart to fall on his face because you don't want to laugh in the face of God. So, if you're going to laugh in front of God, put it in the dust and laugh. The interesting word that is used in the Hebrew, we oftentimes use the translation “onomatopoeia” or “onomatopoetic,” and that is to say that the name itself, or the laughter itself, sounds like somebody kind of scoffing about something. This was not as much Abraham making sport of God, but making sport of the suggestion. “This has got to be crazy,” is what he's thinking.

So, the term that is used here, if you look in verse 17, that Abraham fell on his face and “ṣāḥaq”. You can almost feel him. “Ṣāḥaq” would probably be the way that it would come out. “By the way, because of this, you're going to name your kid, *Yiṣḥāq*,” we call him Isaac, “because you laughed. And every time you call *Yiṣḥāq*, you're going to remember you laughed. Every time you call his name, you're going to say, ‘There's my laughter walking and hugging me.’” It's an interesting reminder.

“Then Abraham fell on his face and laughed, and said in his heart, “Will a child be born to a man one hundred years old? And will Sarah, who is ninety years old, bear a child?””

Now, in all fairness, I mean, he's thinking practically, we understand that. But you know what practicality will get you? Mediocrity. God's not going to settle for that. That's not going to happen. We would settle for less than ideal. We would settle for less than what we truly wanted. Do you think Abraham truly wanted a son only through Hagar? But he's willing to let it go. He's willing to let it happen. Obviously, that option of Sarah having a child was not available to him. It wasn't practical. It's not something that is remotely possible. So, let's just accept it. And God says, “No, we're not.”

(Genesis 17:18) “And Abraham said to God, “Oh that Ishmael might live before You!””

“That's who you're talking about, obviously. You're not talking about Sarah having a kid. Ishmael is 13 years old. I've grown fond of the boy. We're close together. He is my son. If only you would bless Ishmael, I'm good with that.”

It's very kind of Abraham to give God a break. He doesn't want to make life too hard for God, so he kind of curtails his request. This is actually within the passage, a request of Abraham to God. So, you're actually seeing a prayer that is being conveyed, "Oh, let it be Ishmael."

(Genesis 17:19) "But God said, "No..."

Well, I love that, don't you? It just rings in my ears. "We're not going to settle for that."

"... but Sarah your wife..."

It's almost like, "Did you not hear Me? Let's go back to the beginning. You know, Sarah, your wife?" That's how He started off the conversation, isn't it?

"... Sarah your wife will bear you a son, and you shall call his name Isaac..."

"Because you laughed, and we'll just go with that. I mean, obviously, when you were laughing, I guess you were naming your kid, and that's what we're going to go with."

"... and I will establish My covenant with him for an everlasting covenant for his descendants after him."

God has something far greater than we could imagine. I mean, Paul would write in Ephesians, “Beyond what we could ask or think.” We’re afraid to think that way, because once again, I think that we feel like we’re imposing on God. It kind of reminds me of Ahaz when you’re looking in the book of Isaiah, in which, God says, “Ask. I know you’re in a pickle. I know that the nations are surrounding you. I know that you’re scared. Ask Me.” God says, “Ask me. As high as the heavens or as deep as Sheol, I’ll give it to you. I’ll take care of you.” And he goes, “Nah, I’ll go to Assyria.” And it will be Assyria that will ultimately attack him and be his demise. Oftentimes, the very sources that we turn to are the very things that destroy us. You want to be careful in what you hope in, and you want to be careful in what you run to, because those very things, God will require that they save you, not Him. You didn’t ask Him. You went to them.

We come to this passage, and what we have is the declaration of God saying, “I’m going to make an everlasting covenant with you through him.” And He goes immediately into the eternal realm, which I think is

wonderful. Because once again, we would think in terms of temporal; He would think in terms of eternal. It's one of the reasons why oftentimes our answers don't gel together, because we're thinking in terms of what satisfies us for this moment rather than what will benefit us forever. I mean, what would it profit a man if he gains the whole world and he loses his own soul? What would a man give in exchange for his soul? I mean, quite frankly, most of the requests that we have, we haven't thought through to the realm of the eternal.

This is an eternal covenant, an everlasting covenant, verse 19. Now the thought is that God didn't hear what Abraham was saying about Ishmael. Once again, 13 years old, you grow fond of the kid, right? It's your son. So, you care for him, and you want him to be okay. And God says, "I heard that request. I wasn't ignoring your request. I'm just saying we're not settling for that request."

The way it reads is, if you look in verse 20,

(Genesis 17:20) "As for Ishmael, I have heard you; behold, I will bless him, and will make him fruitful and will

multiply him exceedingly. He shall become the father of twelve princes, and I will make him a great nation.

(Genesis 17:21) But My covenant I will establish with Isaac, whom Sarah will bear to you at this season next year."

I love the fact that God is not only emphatic and He's certain in His promises, but His timing is perfect. And He knows exactly what He's doing in everything. It's going to be good. It's going to be wonderful.

Now, there are three things that I want to say that we have a tendency to settle for. And the first is clearly a status quo. There are things that are happening in our life that we just go, "Okay. Yeah, my life's a mess, but I've gotten used to it. I mean, it's tolerable. I'll function in it." And maybe it's a little bit above tolerable. Maybe it's even kind of quasi-comfortable. Maybe you're in this valley and you go, "It's cool." But God says, "No."

Why are we comfortable where we are? Because we're settling for our mistakes and the consequences of those, and God doesn't want us to do that. What we see in this passage is a very unique situation. I mean, both Abraham

and Sarah made the huge mistake, and we'll put it in the category of sin, of going and trying to do a work outside of God. "We're going to have a child. Obviously, God's not going to make it happen. So, even though He created the universe and spoke me into existence, He can't bring a child into being. But that being said, practically speaking, the way things have been running, we're going to have to do something ourselves." And because he did this, it has brought a rift between him, Hagar, and more specifically, him and Sarah.

Where is Sarah in all this? 13 years, how do you think she's been feeling? We know at the very beginning she was upset because Hagar was mocking her. So, how do you think she's been dealing with this? Abraham goes, "Well, I mean, you're just going to have to deal with it." I can see her coming to Abraham. She's going, "What are you going to do about it?" "There's nothing I can do." Abraham, did you think about praying? There's no passage that talks about Abraham praying on behalf of his wife at all. He's more like us than we think he is. So, God has to bring her up to him. Now, we would say, "Okay, I'm

settling for status quo.” God would go, “No, you're My kid. We've made a covenant. We're united together. You're going to make things right.” I can even hear my father in that. “Okay, I broke the window.”

I remember there was a car down the street in one of my friend's yards, and we were about 11 or 12. We had the ability to use his grandfather's double-barrel, 12-gauge sawed-off shotgun. And he thought he would put some slugs in it, which knocked him out as soon as he used it. But we started shooting at these cars that were in the backyard. They were old cars. They weren't like new cars. They were like, you could tell that they'd been in an accident. So, we're thinking, “Target practice.” Yeah, come to find out the insurance company hadn't written up the report yet on the cars. And I remember the police officer knocking on my father's door and my dad answering it, wondering what they're doing here. Yeah. And I remember the day he said, “You're going to make things right.” And I remember working a long time for that.

You can hear God going, “We're going to make this right. We're going to make Sarah your wife, the mother of your son. Things are going to be right.” We know how it will ultimately go because Hagar will leave as well as Ishmael. But God is making things right. You know, if, in fact, there are things in your life that are out of sorts, and you're having a little bit of difficulty with them, maybe that's God nudging you and going, “You're going to make things right.” Now, I know you might want to argue with God going, “Why?” The greatest answer He's going to give you is, “Because you're Mine. And I've given you a new name.” I think of that wonderful verse in Revelation, “The day is coming where I'm going to give you a new name. And it's a name by which you're going to be known by. Not the name of a title that you may be chosen for yourself, that you're not even living, but something that will actually define your goodness. I'm going to give you a name of character. I'm going to give you a name as a child of God.” Behold what manner of love the Father has given us, that we should be called, named, children of God.

We would settle for those superficial labels. We would settle for the name that we have, but God says, "No, I'm going to make you a blessing." And you'll be known for being blessed by God. I think it's wonderful when you begin to think that as we begin to walk in the way that Christ calls us, God begins to touch lives, and people will walk up to you, and say, "I can't tell you what a blessing you've been." And you realize you had nothing, absolutely nothing to do with that. But God has chosen you and is using you because He has not only changed your nature, but He's also changed your name. And you've become a blessing to people just by virtue of obeying Him, by virtue of doing the things that He tells you to do. I know that possibly you would have settled for being who you were. But you're a child of God. God's not going to let you settle for that.

And I think what's also interesting within the passages is that we would settle for something temporary. We would settle for something practical. Let me put it in another category. Attainable. And God would say, "No. We're going to go beyond the accomplishments that you could

do. And we're going to go into the realm of everlasting, never-ending." Think about that. God is actually going to create in you everlasting, never-ending, meaningful stuff rather than the status quo, rather than temporary, rather than practical, rather than attainable. Because if you think about it, the stuff that's attainable is stuff that's temporary, if it's attainable by you. But the stuff that's eternal is what God has done through you. Have you ever seen God work in the life of an individual and you go, "That's a miracle"? I was watching on TV, a guy, and he might be a Christian; I'm not going to argue about that one way or the other. But anyway, he's a physician, and he has a new book out. And on the cover of the book, he has kind of a subtitle on the book. I'm not going to tell you the name of the book, but on the book, the subtitle, which basically says this, "How God's Grace Plays a Part in Healing." That's kind of the subtitle. And I'm sitting there, I'm going, "Plays a part?" God's grace doesn't play a part. God's grace heals. It's His power that does that. And look, I know physicians do what they do, and you know, people find medicine and the things that certainly God has created for man to use, but in Him we live and breathe

and have our existence. At what point do you see that as a part? But anyway, in this particular book, he begins to record, and they actually interview other physicians, and these physicians began to say, “We have no idea how that happened.” Now, wouldn't it be wonderful to see that in your life? I mean, you being such a blessing, and God working through you in such a way that you begin to say, “That could have never happened by anything I could have done, by anything anybody else could have done, this was a miracle.” God wants and is calling us into the realm of miracle, and He won't settle for your best. He wants His best. And I'm so thankful when I consider the “No” in Scripture that that's just God saying, “More.” Isn't that true? If He says no, what does He want to do? Beyond what you could ask or think.

### **Closing Prayer:**

Father, we come before You today and we give You thanks for Your lovingkindness and for Your not settling for mediocrity in our lives; for Your calling us out to be a holy nation, a royal priesthood, for calling us out to be

princes and princesses of the King of the universe, that we would no longer settle for the titles that the world gives us, but that You would create in us a new character and a new nature in which we would be defined by what You do through us, that our lives would be a blessing and we would be blessed that those around us would say, "That's a blessed one." Well, that would have to be You. But we realize that this is what You've called us for. You've called us out of the realm of the status quo in which we've grown comfortable with, even complacent in, and You stir us up, and you say, "No, you can't do that. You've settled for not making things right, and you need to make things right. You need to heal relationships. You can't let this go on. You're My child. No, I'm not going to let you live for temporary. I'm going to cause you to live for the everlasting."

So, with your heads bowed and your eyes closed, we're asking you to heed the call of one of God's chosen ones. It's no different. We struggle with the same things. We've tried to work things out, and we've actually grown

complacent with the things that we've been handed. But God declares, "No." Do you hear His voice?