

Abraham

Courageous | Obedient | Afraid

Three Questions

CAN YOU MAKE A LIST WITH 10 ITEMS?

Most men think in lists more than they realize. Lists create structure, direction, and a sense of order. We build routines, plans, goals, and mental checklists for how life is supposed to work. Scripture is full of lists too. Names, commands, warnings, promises, blessings. Lists reveal what matters to us and what we believe will hold life together.

WHAT DO YOU DO WHEN YOU ARE AFRAID?

Fear rarely announces itself clearly. Sometimes it looks like control, overplanning, withdrawal, anger, humor, isolation, or the need to manage outcomes before they happen. Most of us have developed strategies for surviving uncertainty long before we realized that's what we were doing.

OBEDIENCE OR CONTROL?

Some of the most important moments in life happen in the tension between trust and self-protection. We can move toward God while still trying to control the outcome. We can obey externally while internally building contingency plans in case things fall apart. Abraham's story forces us to wrestle with both.

Don't be afraid.

Commands related to fear appear **well over 100 times** throughout the ESV translation of the Bible. The repetition is difficult to ignore. Again and again, God speaks to people standing in uncertainty, transition, vulnerability, responsibility, conflict, or surrender. Scripture does not present fear as unusual. It presents it as deeply human.

“DO NOT FEAR”

Often connected to moments of movement, leadership, conflict, or uncertainty.

“FEAR NOT”

Frequently used when God calls people forward into something unknown.

“DO NOT BE AFRAID”

Often spoken directly into moments of vulnerability or perceived danger.

“BE NOT AFRAID”

Commonly connected to reassurance, presence, and trust in God's care.

Key Receiptients

ABRAHAM

Leaving home for an unknown future.
Genesis 15:1

MOSES

Facing conflict and opposition.
Numbers 21:34

JOSEPH

Facing shame and uncertainty.
Matthew 1:20

ISAAC

Facing famine and instability.
Genesis 26:24

JOSHUA

Leading after the loss of Moses.
Joshua 1:9

PETER

Stepping out into the storm.
Matthew 14:27–30

JACOB

Returning toward unresolved conflict.
Genesis 46:3

GIDEON

Called while hiding in fear.
Judges 6:23

PAUL

Continuing ministry under opposition.
Acts 18:9–10

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God's first interaction with Abraham is not comfort. It is movement. Leave your country. Leave your people. Leave what is familiar. Abraham is asked to walk away from stability before he is given clarity.

Before promises are fulfilled.
Before outcomes are visible.

There is real courage in taking a step when you do not yet know where it leads.

Go from your country

Genesis 12:1

God told Abram: "Leave your country, your family, and your father's home for a land that I will show you."

Say you are my sister.

Abraham has already obeyed. He has already left home, followed God, and stepped into the unknown. But before entering Egypt, he creates a plan to protect himself if things go wrong. The same man moving forward in faith is also quietly preparing for survival.

Genesis 12:13

As he drew near to Egypt, he said to his wife, Sarai, "Look. We both know that you're a beautiful woman. When the Egyptians see you they're going to say, 'Aha! That's his wife!' and kill me. But they'll let you live. Do me a favor: tell them you're my sister. Because of you, they'll welcome me and let me live."

Courage vs. Contingency

OBEDIENT



FEARFUL

Abraham leaves home, follows God into the unknown, builds altars, and continues moving even when the future is unclear. His life is marked by movement, trust, and repeated moments of surrender. There is real courage in his obedience.

The same Abraham also manipulates situations, protects himself, and quietly prepares for worst-case scenarios. He obeys God while still trying to control outcomes. Fear does not stop his journey, but it remains tangled up in the way he moves through it.

Both of these versions of Abraham exist at the same time. The tension in his story is not that he is sometimes faithful and sometimes flawed. The tension is that he is often both in the very same moment. He follows God sincerely while still struggling to trust completely. Abraham's life reminds us that formation is rarely instant. God works with people who are still learning how to surrender control.

Which one is the real Abraham?

Leaves Ur

Builds altars

Follows God

Intercedes

Lies about Sarah

Protects himself

Doubts outcomes

Grabs for control

MATURATION

External obedience
does not equal internal
trust.

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Genesis
12

Plan and Lie

Genesis
22

Prepare and Worship

IV Decades

From Genesis 12 to Genesis 22, nearly four decades pass. The man who once told Sarah, "Say you are my sister," does not become the man who can walk Isaac up Mount Moriah overnight. Abraham's trust is not formed in a moment, but across years of

**uncertainty
failure
waiting
wandering
promises
setbacks
altars
and repeated encounters with God.**

The binding of Isaac is not simply a test of obedience. It is the visible result of decades of formation.

**Abraham changed
places faster than
he changed
patterns.**

Things we change.

Jobs

Churches

Spouses

Hobbies

Addictions

Houses

Luke 2:52

Even Jesus, in taking on human life, entered process, growth, and development. Scripture does not describe maturity as instant or automatic. It describes it as something formed slowly over time through experience, relationship, obedience, suffering, and faithfulness.

wisdom | practical understanding & sound judgment

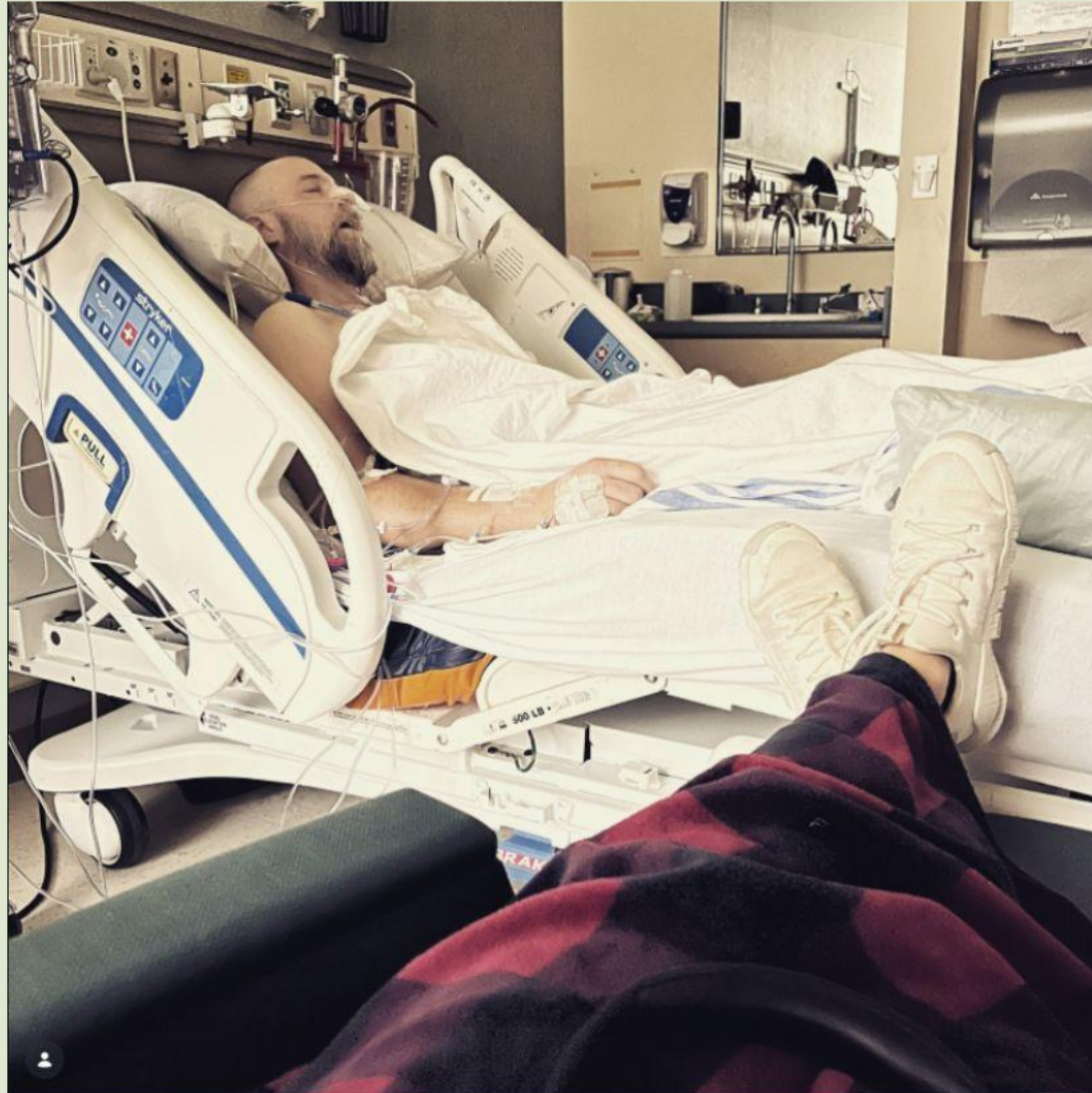
stature | physical age, maturity, development

favor with God | goodwill, delight, relational approval

favor with man | relational trust

Again and again throughout Scripture, fear emerges as one of the great obstacles to growth. Fear of loss. Fear of failure. Fear of surrender. Fear of trust. Yet the model Jesus gives us is not avoidance, but movement. Formation happens as we continue walking with God through fear instead of waiting to become fearless first.

Gentlemen, the mountain is coming.



cammierrerrick ...

cammierrerrick "Thank you, Jesus. I have not forgotten how very different my life could be today."

That's the thought I wake up with every morning since August 19. Ben's surgery was long, complicated, and very risky.

By midday, something usually hits me — a song or a verse — and before I know it, there's a lump in my throat and tears in my eyes.

I can count on a wave of emotion rising up in me every time I pass the UMMC building in Ridgeland. I vividly remember our first appointment at the Surgical Oncology Center there. I remember looking out the window of that tiny exam room on the top floor at the cars driving by on the interstate.

All I could think that day was how everyone in those cars was going about their normal lives, probably in a hurry to get from one place to the next. I had just been told my husband had a massive tumor on his pancreas. All signs pointed to cancer, and the team even estimated stage two or three. Ben's doctor told him surgery was absolutely necessary, and it would be major. I remember staring out that window, unable to take any of it in.

During those terrifying weeks leading up to surgery, I found myself adding worship song after worship song to a playlist that became a constant source of solace. I still listen to them all the time. I am so thankful to be on the other side of it all, and I'll always remember how powerfully near the Lord was in those weeks. I don't want to forget that.

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