

Unpleasant Tasks

"Whatever your hand finds to do, do it with all your might; for there is no activity or planning or knowledge or wisdom in Sheol where you are going" (Eccl 9:10).

Nobody said everything in life would be easy. Sometimes an unpleasant task confronts us. Personally, my natural tendency is to delay those duties. But procrastination never accomplishes the job. In most cases, it merely multiplies the misery.

On at least two occasions, God gave Abraham profoundly difficult tasks. First, in Genesis 21, Abraham's wife, Sarah, insisted that he "cast out" his concubine, Hagar, along with his son, Ishmael (v. 10). To Abraham's dismay, the Lord agreed. "Whatever Sarah has said to you, listen to her voice" (v. 12). "So Abraham rose early in the morning, and took bread and a skin of water, and . . . gave it and the boy to Hagar, and sent her away" (v. 14).

As if that weren't hard enough, God tested Abraham's faith again in chapter 22, commanding him offer his son, Isaac, as a burnt offering on a mountain in the land of Moriah (vv. 1, 2). Abraham's normal paternal love made his obedience challenging; but remember, too, that Isaac was the child of promise, the one through whom God's promises to Abraham were to be fulfilled (see 21:12). How was Abraham going to have innumerable descendants through Isaac if he killed him? Nevertheless, "Abraham rose early in the morning . . . and went to the place of which God had told him" (22:3).

Did you notice that in both of these instances, Abraham rose early in the morning? Despite the trying circumstances that made his duty difficult, Abraham did what he had to do promptly. No procrastinating!

What unpleasant tasks are you facing? Maybe you need to swallow your pride and apologize to someone. Humiliating? Embarrassing? Yes and yes. It won't get any easier, and it won't go away. Stop delaying. Just do it.

Perhaps you ought to confront that sinful brother or sister, in hope of restoring fellowship. What if they die, or the Lord returns, before you "get around to it"? Stop procrastinating! Do it now.

Our difficult tasks pale by comparison to Abraham's. He rose early in the morning and did his duty

Go and do likewise!