

## Never Too Old

**Abraham fell facedown; he laughed and said to himself, “Will a son be born to a man a hundred years old? Will Sarah bear a child at the age of ninety?”** (Genesis 17:17).

**Scripture:** Genesis 17:15–22

**Song:** “All Things Are Possible to Him”

When I was young, an elderly gentleman at church met us kids with a stick of gum every Sunday morning. While he’s best remembered for this kindness, it was just one of many things he did to serve and bless our church community. He kept the grass mowed, made sure the water pump worked, and hauled trash away after our potluck dinners. He didn’t doubt God’s ability to use him, even as he reached old age.

As we grow older, we might begin to wonder, *Am I too old to be used by God?* We may not have the physical strength or capabilities we had in our youth. Abraham thought he and his wife were too old, and he *laughed* at God’s plan. Could Sarah bear a child at 90 years old? With God making it possible, she sure could!

Our age and abilities aren’t what matters. God matters. *Nothing* is impossible for Him. He will accomplish His will through us as we continue to trust and follow Him. His purposes in our older years may yield the most amazing fruit of our lives.

**Father,** help me trust Your plans even as I grow older. In Jesus’ name, amen.

---

June 9–15. **Melinda Eye Cooper** lives in Tennessee. She has three sons, two daughters-in-law, four beautiful granddaughters, and one spunky dog.

## Opening God's Grace Gift

[Paul, quoting David, wrote,] “Blessed are those whose transgressions are forgiven, whose sins are covered. Blessed is the one whose sin the Lord will never count against them” (Romans 4:7–8).

**Scripture:** Romans 4:1–15

**Song:** “Amazing Grace”

*Good Morning America* aired the following lighthearted story: On Christmas Eve, while his family slept, a 3-year-old boy opened all the gifts under the tree. *Every single gift!* His parents discovered what he'd done when he woke his mother, asking for a pair of scissors to open the packaging that contained a toy he wanted to play with. Even as Mom and Dad hurried to rewrap the gifts, it was an easy transgression for them to forgive, and it's a comical Christmas memory the family will never forget.

Our own transgressions can be memorable as well . . . not because they're fun memories, but because they're shameful, painful, haunting, disappointing, or even devastating. We may find ourselves rolling them around in our minds when God would have us receive His forgiveness and move forward in His grace. Maybe we need to make amends with someone to move past where we're stuck. Maybe we simply need to receive God's grace. We're not perfect. We will make mistakes in life. There's no getting around it.

Because of Jesus, our own transgressions are not being held against us. God has provided tremendous grace for us and has blessed us with His forgiveness. Often, we just need to receive it gratefully.

**Father,** help me humbly receive Your grace and move forward in the peace of Your forgiveness. In Jesus' name, amen.

## The Chinese Bamboo Tree

**[Abraham] did not waver through unbelief regarding the promise of God, but was strengthened in his faith and gave glory to God, being fully persuaded that God had power to do what he had promised** (Romans 4:20–21).

**Scripture:** Romans 4:16–25

**Song:** “Wait on the Lord”

The seed of the Chinese Bamboo tree grows a root system underground for four long years until, in the fifth year, it finally finds its way above ground. Every day during that long waiting period, the ground must be watered and fertilized where the seed has been planted. That’s a long time to tend something without any visible results! But once the tree sprouts, it grows up to 90 feet (27.4 meters) in as little as five weeks. The persistent labor prior to this growth spurt is rooted in the belief that the seed *will* become the tree.

Abraham knew that God would be faithful to His promise, no matter how long it took. Some parts of God’s promise were fulfilled in Abraham’s lifetime. Other parts came to fruition long after he was gone. Regardless, Abraham trusted God’s faithfulness.

In faith, we plant spiritual seeds in the lives of others. Sometimes we get to see them spring up into saving faith. Other times we may not see results in our lifetime. But we know that Jesus came to seek and save the lost (Luke 19:10), and His Spirit is faithfully tending the seeds that have been planted.

**Father,** I will wait prayerfully for the seeds of the gospel to spring up to salvation in the lives of those who will trust in You. In Jesus’ name, amen.

## Grieving in Leaving

**The LORD had said to Abram, “Go from your country, your people and your father’s household to the land I will show you” (Genesis 12:1).**

**Scripture:** Genesis 12:1–7

**Song:** “I’ll Go Where You Want Me to Go”

A good description of grief is that it’s really *love with nowhere to go* (because we no longer have our loved one). Death is often the culprit when we grieve, but there’s also a grieving in leaving. There may be times in our lives when God leads us to move away from family and friends. At such junctures, we may mourn, and our hearts may ache to go back, but we move forward, trusting God’s plan. Even long after we’ve moved, it can be challenging to remain far away from the ones we love most, but God may sometimes call us away to fulfill His purposes.

Abraham obeyed when God called him to move away from his home and people. As those who follow Christ, we too express our trust in God when we yield to His lead. There may be some sorrow in our hearts when we settle in a new place and sacrifice having our loved ones near. The heartache is because of love, and in time, it will grow less painful, even though our love remains the same.

God’s plans are perfect. Sometimes obeying Him brings heartache. But as we trust Him, making His purposes our first priority, our relationship with Him grows deeper, and we learn that following Him is always worth the cost.

**Father,** help me move forward in life wherever You lead, trusting fully in Your divine plan. In Jesus’ name, amen.

## Tears Now, Joy Later

**Those who sow with tears will reap with songs of joy**  
(Psalm 126:5).

**Scripture:** Psalms 125—126

**Song:** “For Those Tears I Died”

Most of us avoid crying. We hold back tears when we're overwhelmed and try not to cry in front of others. But tears were designed with purpose. In fact, researchers tell us we have three types of tears. *Basil tears* are in our eyes all the time, lubricating and protecting the cornea from dirt and debris. *Reflex tears* occur when irritants are present, such as onion fumes. Then there are *emotional tears*, which are the only kind that contain additional hormones and proteins. These tears are generated in response to sadness, grief, or joy. Researchers believe that allowing our emotional tears to flow releases toxins and stress, helping us to heal.

Spiritual growth may involve some tears. When our spirits are crushed, we can seek God for relief. Through experiences like betrayal or the death of someone we love deeply, we sow our prayers with tears, and in the process, we reap a deeper relationship with God. Today's passage reminds us that those who sow tearfully will later reap joyfully.

Perhaps you're struggling right now and it seems like the pain will never end, but it will. None of us can see it while we're suffering, but beyond the present pain, something wonderful is waiting. A day is coming when you will sing for joy at what God has brought about in your life.

**Father,** I will trust You, even as my tears flow. In faith, I thank You for the joy You have in store for me. In Jesus' name, amen.

## The Telescope

**From this one man [Abraham], and he as good as dead, came descendants as numerous as the stars in the sky and as countless as the sand on the seashore (Hebrews 11:12).**

**Scripture:** Hebrews 11:8–12

**Song:** “This Is My Father’s World”

In 2021, NASA launched the James Webb Space Telescope. Once it reached its place in space, it began transmitting data, providing images in high definition. Researchers have discovered some quirky things, such as a formation of stars that looks like a question mark and a galaxy cluster that resembles a Christmas tree.

Numerous stars, countless as sand on the seashore . . . *of course*, God can bring innumerable descendants from Abraham. He can do anything. Getting new glimpses into outer space only confirms to believers that we have a marvelous creator. These wonders are an unmistakable sign of God’s glory. Who knows what God might do through such images of His handiwork? We marvel at what we discover in space, even as we inhabit our amazing world, which God has made with perfect order and precision.

Unlike humanity, God has the power to make something out of nothing. He formed humans from the dust of the earth. He brings the dead to life. His ways are perfect and beyond understanding. His creation shouts for us to see Him and know our maker. Through the lens of a powerful telescope, we see a smidgen of His magnificent creation. May each glimpse of His handiwork remind us who He is and that He is able to accomplish all that He has promised.

**Father**, I see You through Your creation, and I worship You. In Jesus’ name, amen.

## Trust Tests

**Abraham called that place The LORD Will Provide. And to this day it is said, “On the mountain of the LORD it will be provided” (Genesis 22:14).**

**Scripture:** Genesis 22:1–14

**Song:** “God Moves in Mysterious Ways”

On a coffee table in my grandparents’ home, a large family Bible was on display. Beautiful artist depictions of the biblical text were dispersed throughout. One picture I recall showed Abraham hovering over his son Isaac with a large knife. It scared me as a child. At that time, I couldn’t comprehend the testing going on nor the foreshadowing it portrayed—a picture of a future event to take place—the sacrifice of God’s only Son, Jesus.

I couldn’t have understood then, either, how God tests us as His children . . . and provides for us. To be sure, God’s provision is always perfect. We may not see it that way when we’re struggling to make ends meet or when we’re distressed about some other situation that seems to threaten our security, but God will provide for us, usually in a way we could not have anticipated.

Trust tests lead us to a deeper understanding of God’s care for us as He proves Himself to us over and over again. And as we learn to trust Him more, we will begin moving through our tests with more faith and less stress, evidence that we have come to truly know Him as our faithful Heavenly Father.

**Father,** thank You for teaching me to trust You so that I can know the blessing of Your faithful provision. In Jesus’ name, amen.