

“Here I Am”

Shying away from opportunities to serve others is easy, but doing so robs us of growth that could come our way by stepping up to the challenges.

*“Now it came to pass after these things that God tested Abraham, and said to him, ‘Abraham!’ And he said, ‘**Here I am.**’ . . . Isaac spoke to Abraham his father and said, ‘My father!’ And he said, ‘**Here I am, my son.**’ . . . The Angel of the Lord called to him from heaven and said, ‘Abraham, Abraham!’ So he said, ‘**Here I am**’” (Gen. 22:1, 7, 11).*



To appreciate the value of these verses, let’s walk through the story and note the key language:

God desires to test Abraham, so He calls his name to get his attention. Ever the loyal servant, Abraham responds with a respectful “*Here I am.*”

God’s test is a difficult one: Abraham must sacrifice his only son as a burnt offering to God. As they trudge to the place of offering, young Isaac is puzzled by the lack of an animal, so he addresses his father to inquire about the missing element. Abraham does not avoid his soon-to-be-dead son. Again, he responds, “*Here I am.*”

Finally, just as the patriarch is about to plunge the knife into the body of his son, the Angel of the Lord calls out to prevent the execution. Once again, Abraham stops what he is doing to reply, “*Here I am.*”

So, in the space of eleven verses, Abraham said “Here I am” three times. Abraham was not a milquetoast character being ordered around by others. Rather, “here I am” was the response of a man who understood the concept of *duty to others*. As a child of God, Abraham respected the authority of the One who created him, so he was quick to listen when God called. As a father, he knew that he had an obligation to teach and train his offspring, even when it was difficult to do so.

Abraham was always “there” for others in his life, and that character trait served him well. Every time Abraham said, “Here I am,” what followed was usually a new and unexpected challenge. Abraham refused to back away from those challenges, and in doing so, he grew into the great patriarch we know and respect.

Let’s make this personal. How quick are we to respond, “Here I am,” when others call out to us?

For example, God speaks to us today, not directly as He did with Abraham, but through His written word. As we study the counsel and guidance He provides in His Book, are we sensitive to His instructions? Are we ready to accept His rebuke, to step up to His challenges, to change our lives to conform to His design? That is the path to maturity. Or do we close the book and turn away to a shriveled, selfish existence?

When our children come to us with their childish questions, or just to talk about the ordinary “stuff” that occupies their little hearts, do we set aside quality time to talk with them? Or do we brush them aside as a distraction? A “here I am” parent will make himself available to his children, no matter the cost to his personal affairs. His children depend on him for everything; he will not retreat from that responsibility.

When our friends reach out to us for help, encouragement, or support, do we say, “Here I am,” and get involved in their lives? Do we drop what we are doing and dedicate our time and resources to addressing their needs? Or do we quietly disappear and hope they won’t bother us again?

God put us on this earth to serve Him and our fellow human beings. Our potential for accomplishing good in that work is great, but only if we are willing to respond “Here I am” when opportunity calls. Let us rise up and seize the moment.

— David King