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Mid-Week Motivation: Don't Settle for Ishmael, Wait for Your Isaac

Don't settle for Ishmael when you've got an Isaac coming.

WARNING: I'm about to get my Bible on, so if that isn't your thing, it's cool. Come back tomorrow. But I suggest reading this anyway.

Have you ever fallen short of a goal? Perhaps you're tempted to give up. Some of the goals you've set seem impossible, distant, and completely out of reach.

I'm telling you to keep reaching. Do not give up. Not now. Not ever. If you've dreamed about it, it's time to go get it. Don't settle for Ishmael when you've got an Isaac coming.

What does that mean you ask? It's a reference to the life of Abraham in the book of Genesis chapters 15-18, and 21. I told you I was about to get my Bible on.

Abraham was childless and he and his wife easily qualified for the senior discount at every known restaurant in the world. The hope of a legacy had long faded.

To put it into perspective, my father was a miracle baby and his mother was half of Sarah's age (my grandmother was 45 when my father was born). Sarah was *slightly* past her prime. But God said:

...a son who is your own flesh and blood will be your heir. Look up at the sky and count the stars—if indeed you can count them. So shall your offspring be. (15:4, 5)

That was a promise from God. It was a covenant. God wasn't pulling Abraham's chain here. He just told him that He was going to give him children. So his wife did what any woman would do (or not...), *she told him to sleep with her servant*. Oops.

That's where the story gets kind of messy. The servant had a son named Ishmael. It doesn't say in the Bible, but I'm pretty sure that God did a facepalm, but He again told Abraham:

I will make my covenant between me and you and will greatly increase your numbers. I have made you a father of many nations. I will make you very fruitful; I will make nations of you, and kings will come from you. (17:2, 5, 6)

God was sticking to His end of the bargain no matter how hard Abraham tried to settle. That's how He works. Abraham laughed and questioned God (mental note: God is OK with that. Questioning is perfectly acceptable, doubting, not so much). Would God really give a nearly 100 year old man with a 90 year old wife a child? Come on, really? Abraham had to be thinking, "God, just let Ishmael have the blessing. Let him be the one from whom nations would be born."

But Ishmael was not the one. Abraham laughed. Sarah laughed. *God did not give up.*

At some point, I believe Abraham and Sarah bought in. *They believed in God's promise. They stopped settling for less than the best.* The promised child was born. His name was Isaac and he was the miracle child that God had promised all along. But he was almost never conceived because Abraham and Sarah wanted to settle.

But not you. You will not settle. If you have it in your heart to do something great, you can and will do it if you just keep going. All God required of Abraham and Sarah was *faithfulness and belief*. Stay faithful to your goals. Do not settle. Do not compromise. Do not quit.

In what ways have you settled for an Ishmael when you had an Isaac on the way? What were the results?