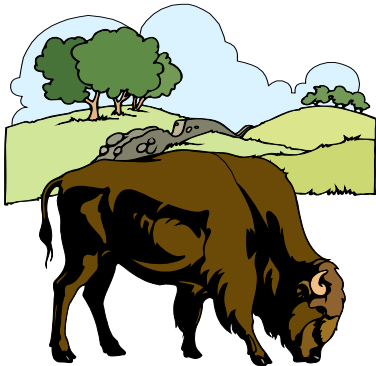




**HIS
WAY**

January
2009

NEWS



BUFFALO RIDGE

Hospitality & Retreat Center

Ministering to Pastors,
Missionaries and their Families



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His Way is a Non-Profit
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"He opened for us a new
way, a living way . . ."
Hebrews 10:20

Formula For '09

Part 1

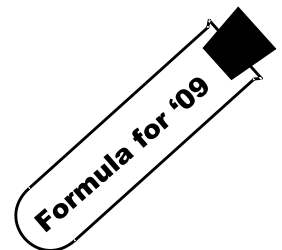
by Sam Renfro

As I was thinking about the upcoming year and the title for this message, various sayings like, "We'll be Fine in 09" or "Let Your Light Shine in '09" came to mind, but I wanted it to be more than a cliché. As I was thinking about the Scripture text, it became clear to me that "Formula For '09" would be appropriate. It's very important, and I'm very excited about it. Although it's just a saying, I don't want you to pass it off so simply. I know it's the name of a cleaning product, but I want you to think about this with me. If we can apply what I am going to share, then it can be a formula that will help us throughout the entire year of 2009. Hopefully the play on words will help you remember. If you use Formula 409 cleaner, then every time you use it, I hope you'll remember the principles of Scripture I am going to share with you.

Philippians 4:6 says, "*Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God.*"

What do you think of when you hear the word "anxious"? You might think of anxiety, stress, worry, concern, inner turmoil, impatience, nervousness, fear, tension, etc. The word "anxiety" carries a lot with it. Almost everything you think of is negative; but in this verse there is a command, "*Be not anxious.*" Some versions say "don't worry", "don't be concerned about anything", "be careful for nothing." A few weeks ago I had to confess to our small group that I was overcome with the feelings of anxiety, worry, nervousness – I was scared. I was reading and the Lord gave me this Scripture verse and ever since it's been on my mind. It's so powerful. *Be anxious for nothing.* We could add finances, mortgage payments, gas and grocery bills to our list as things that can make us anxious and nervous. If you watch or listen to any type of news source there is an overwhelming, all consuming sense of uncertainty, worry, doubt and even depression due to the economy, the job market and the state of our nation. You start looking at all that, and it's easy to get overwhelmed. Even God's people can get swept away with everything that's going on. We can fall into the same frame of mind if we're not careful. We start fearing and fretting. I think the Lord knew this about us and that's why He had the apostle Paul pen these words for us. Let me ask you, what do you worry about? What SHOULD you worry about based on this Scripture? It's so easy to say isn't it? Even now you may be worrying about something. We really don't have the right to be anxious about anything. I am aware that it's easier said than done, so I want to give you this formula in two parts.

If the Bible says, "Be anxious for nothing," then I want, I *need*, to know HOW to do that. If we don't figure out how, it will ruin our happiness. Being anxious is a joy sucker. Not only do you become anxious, but you also make everyone around you anxious. Let's deal with the first half of this Formula for '09 by looking at a man from the Old Testament who faced something that none of us will probably ever have to face. It's a situation that was so extreme, that for anyone else it would have produced the ultimate anxiety attack. Our story is located in Genesis 22.



(continued on page 2)

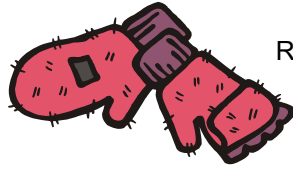
How many of you, young and old, remember walking into a classroom at school or college and your teacher or professor said, "Take out a piece of paper and a pencil, we're going to have a pop quiz." Now does that bring on anxiety or what? I hated that! This is exactly what God is doing with Abraham – He gives him a pop quiz. It is a familiar story. God told Abraham and Sarah at 90+ years old that she was going to have a baby, she laughed at God, but a year or so later it happened. She has a little boy named Isaac. God says to Abraham one day – "pop quiz." The test is defined beginning in verse 2: *"Then God said, 'Take your son, your only son, Isaac, whom you love, and go to the region of Moriah. Sacrifice him there as a burnt offering on one of the mountains I will tell you about.'"*

Wow! God told Abraham to take the son He had promised, the son He had given to Abraham in his old age, the son that came with all the miracles of his birth, and told Abraham, "I want you to take him and I want you to sacrifice him." Wow!

There are four characters in this story. The first one is God, and His **desired result**. God's desire was for Abraham to take his only son and kill him. He wanted Abraham to tie his son up, stab him with a knife, put some wood around the altar, light the fire and burn him up. Can you imagine? Someone might say, "Sam, you have ten kids, you wouldn't miss one of them." Trust me, you can have one or you can have fifteen, you love each and every one of them, and you don't want to lose any of them. But God told Abraham to take his one and only son and kill him. This was God's desired result. Talk about a hard test, talk about worry, talk about anxiety!

The second character is Abraham, and his **deliberate response**. In verses 3-6 we're told how Abraham responded to what God wanted him to do. Verse 3 says that Abraham rose up early in the morning, and saddled his donkey, and he went as far in the other direction that he possibly could. Is that what it says? What we really see is **instant mobilization**. I want you to notice that Abraham instantly got up and did what God wanted him to do. For some reason, somehow, there is no anxiety here. No bickering, arguing or complaining. No questioning God. There's none of that happening. Abraham just got up and did it. He instantly mobilized, he moved.

The second thing involving Abraham here is not only this instant mobilization, but his **intense preparation**. He didn't just haphazardly do this. He intently prepared for what God had told him to do.



Remember in verse 3 it said that before they left, Abraham gathered up wood. He didn't even know where they were going, and he's not sure there is going to be wood there. God told him to sacrifice his son, which required wood. He did everything that he could to accomplish the task. In verse 6, we see he not only got the wood, but he made sure he had a knife so he would be able to do the job, he also took fire, and he took his son. He was prepared.

The most important thing I want you to notice about Abraham was his **intentional declaration**. Abraham makes a declaration to his servants in verse 5 that they will go and worship and then they will both come back. Now wait a minute. How is he going to take Isaac over there, tie him up and put him on an altar, then stab him and set him on fire, and have Isaac come back with him? Abraham is predicting the future. He was telling his servants that they were going to see a miracle. That's an amazing declaration. Abraham basically said, "I don't understand the test but I believe His promise." (Gen 21:12) Abraham believed God's promise that his descendants were going to come from Isaac. He couldn't disappear. Abraham doesn't have any anxiety because he is trusting in the promise of God.

Let me ask you a question. Hasn't God given us a few promises? Like "I not seen the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging bread." (Psalm 37:25) and "I will never leave you nor forsake you." (Joshua 1:5) There are promises in the Scriptures that God has given to us and we need to stop worrying about the anxiety of the situations and start believing in the promises that God has given to us. Has God given us the promise that we'll all be rich and healthy and well, that we're never going to face any problems? No! Has God given us the promise that our brand new President is going to come along and fix everything? No! But He has promised that if you trust Him, He will take care of you. He's promised us that if we love Him and worship Him and serve Him that He will meet our needs. God hasn't promised us that everything is going to be easy, but He did promise when this life is over, if you believe and trust in Him, you're going to have a home in Heaven that's far superior over anything you could ask or imagine. That sounds pretty good to me.

I know it's hard here. I know the bills have to be paid. I know jobs come and go. I know the problems and anxieties that come our way. But God says that if we just trust Him, He will take care of us. Abraham knew that somehow God would fix the problem. Right there is the key. We've got to know that God will fix the problem.





From Our Guests



I want to show you two other characters in this story. This is Isaac's **defining role**. Notice three things about Isaac. He was curious. He was committed. He was cooperative. The first one defines most teenagers. Isaac wasn't very old at this time. He probably was a teenager. He was curious. Isaac wanted to know where the lamb was. (Gen 22:7) He knew what they were doing, Abraham had taught him about sacrifices and worship. He knew that God had told Abraham to do something, but all the pieces of the puzzle weren't put together. I want you to notice something about this teenager. Here is a dad trying to do what God has called him to do, and here's a teenager who doesn't understand, but Isaac is committed. Abraham is already one hundred years old. Isaac is a teenager. Abraham couldn't have caught him if he ran, but Isaac didn't run, he went along. He was committed. He is trusting God through his father. Isaac is also cooperative, he allows his father to do what needs to be done. He has a defining role in this thing. He yielded completely to his father.

The peace of God truly rests upon Buffalo Ridge Retreat Center. I found the answers I needed while in prayer during my stay. Thank you.

- Indiana

We want to tell you what a blessing you were to [us] last week. Your hospitality was exceptional! We were able to rest, get work done that I needed to do and just enjoy your facilities. The facilities at Buffalo Ridge are outstanding and the way you cared for us was absolutely a blessing.

- Kansas

Now let me give you the fourth character in this story – the angel. One of the definitions of the word "respite" is postponement of the carrying out of a death sentence. That is exactly what is taking place here in this story. This is the angel literally **delivering respite**. Abraham has Isaac tied to the altar and is ready to stab him, light the wood surrounding him, and offer his only son as a sacrifice. Then the angel of the LORD steps in. (Gen 22:11-12) I want you to notice three things. First of all, there is a welcome pause. I know it was welcome for Abraham and Isaac. There is also a waiting provision. (Genesis 22:13-14) Abraham looked up and saw a ram caught. All of a sudden God's promise comes true. Abraham didn't have to kill his son! There is a wonderful promise given to Abraham and his descendants. (Gen 22:15-19) It sounds to me from these verses that Abraham passed the pop quiz. It sounds to me like he passed the test. He was supposed to kill his son. You talk about anxiety! But when it's all said and done, it's simply that he trusted in God.

GoodSearch

A great big **thank you** to those of you who use the search engine GoodSearch and have chosen His Way as your charity of choice. In 2008 we received \$121.65 in proceeds from GoodSearch. Those pennies do add up!

If you aren't familiar with GoodSearch, or just haven't started using it yet, His Way Ministries can earn a donation every time you search the Internet and shop online.

Go to www.goodsearch.com for more information about how you can help in this way.

The first part of the Formula for '09 is **"Be anxious for nothing"**. How can we be anxious for nothing? Follow Abraham's example. When God gives you a test, move on, do it, don't wait around. He didn't mope, or complain, or worry. Prepare for it. Face it head on. Then have faith through it that God will keep His promises. This year things are going to come up. I don't know what they're going to be. We don't know what's going to happen. Tests are going to come. You can mark that down. But the Formula for '09, the first part, is to be anxious for nothing. I'll share the rest of the formula with you next month. ❄

Could You Help?

We have been in contact with a pastor and his wife who are experiencing a crisis and very much need to come to Buffalo Ridge. They can not afford to pay even our minimal rates. We have agreed to let them come because we sense there truly is a need. Would you consider making a donation to cover their stay at Buffalo Ridge? The cost would be around \$300. Thank you.



In Memory



Col. (Ret.) Norman B. Gates
1932-2008

Norman Gates went Home to be with his Savior on December 8, 2008. Norm was a real friend to me and this ministry, and I already miss him a great deal.

I knew him for many years. When I used to visit my home church, the Free Methodist Church in Lawrence, Kansas, I was usually asked to preach. Norm attended the church and that's where we first became acquainted. His

wife, Carol, was the church secretary at the time.

Norm and Carol helped us out at Buffalo Ridge with many, many hours of volunteer work over the years. Norm was a great work partner and I really enjoyed working with him. One of his sayings that really sticks in my mind is, "You gotta keep the main thing the main thing." The main thing is Jesus. Let's keep it so!

God bless you, Carol. We love you and pray that the God of all comfort will minister to you and your family.

- Chaplain Jim Robinson

Buffalo Ridge Schedule

Please pray for each of these groups and individuals – that their time at Buffalo Ridge will be beneficial and productive.

Dec 30-Jan 2: Pastor & Wife
Jan 16-17: Church Leadership Retreat (5 couples)
Jan 19-24: Pastor & Wife
Feb 2-7: Pastor & Wife
Feb 12-14: Pastor & Wife
Feb 17: Ministerial Alliance Day Retreat
Feb 24: University Group Day Retreat
Feb 28: Pregnancy Care Center Board Retreat
Mar 6-7: Church Leadership Retreat (5 couples)

Worth Underlining

Are You Being Made Perfect?

Though He was a son, yet He learned obedience by the things He suffered. And having been perfected, He became the author of eternal salvation to all who obey Him. Hebrews 5:8-9

There is a positive aspect to suffering. We all endure suffering to some degree, but the good news is that through it we can become like Jesus. Are you willing to pay whatever price is necessary in order to become like Christ? There are some things that God can build into your life only through suffering. Even Jesus, the sinless Son of God, was complete only after He had endured the suffering His Father had set before Him. Once He had suffered, He was the complete, mature, and perfect Savior through whom an entire world could find salvation.

If you become bitter over your hardships, you close some parts of your life from God. If you do this, you will never be complete. Some places in your soul can be reached only by suffering. The Spirit of God has important things to teach you, but you can only learn these lessons in the midst of your trials. King Saul was made king without ever enduring hardship, but he never developed the character of maturity to handle God's assignment. David spent years in suffering and heartache. When he finally ascended the throne, he was a man after God's own heart.

Don't resent the suffering God allows in your life. Don't make all your decisions and invest everything you have into avoiding hardship. God did not spare His own Son. How can we expect Him to spare us? Learn obedience even when it hurts!

- Henry T. Blackaby & Richard Blackaby
Experiencing God Day by Day

