

## **Ram in the thicket**

God's providence is usually difficult for us to understand. When I was young, I understood (and indeed was taught) that as a Christian God would provide the proper mate for life and everyone would live happily ever after. But when reality set in, rocking my faith to its foundation, I found the need to re-interpret my views.

I went through a series of events that redefined my faith and my understanding of God's plan for me. I was divorced, separated from my son, and removed from my home. All of these things appeared to be a judgment from God, or at best being simply ignored by Him.

It took a while in the pits, where I felt abandoned, but eventually life got much, much better. Things happened that had the mark of God, and I began to think that I was back in the active part of God's providence.

My story reminds me in a way of another time that God's plan was very difficult for someone to understand. God had promised to make Abraham a great nation (Gen 17), but then he asked him to take his son a distance away and sacrifice him. This son had been given Abraham to implement the great promise. Abraham's great faith enabled him to carry on in obedience until God stopped him from plunging the knife into his son.

My faith was not as great as Abraham's by any means, nor was my task as great. But I consider that I was asked to sacrifice my conception of the happy family ending, and the long period of loneliness corresponded to the long journey. I asked God what this was all about, but did not get a direct answer. I eventually decided that I would not ever have the fulfillment of a happy marriage, and made the choice to not even pursue it again. I was not going to enter the dating scene, for the risks seemed much too great.

Instead I developed a relationship with a woman that I had known through the church who had been through a similar life-shattering divorce. In so many instances, the timing was just too incredible to be totally without some kind of push from God. We are both satisfied that this was providence, and that our previous trials were meant to have us come to together as one.

She was the ram in the thicket for me. At the lowest point in my life, she became the answer to my prayers, and instead of having to give up a great sacrifice, I was given a great blessing. And our lives became part of the storybook ending that we had always wanted. Just as God restated His promise to Abraham after the mountain experience, so He restated His love for us and His interest in our future.