

# Abraham's Failure

*As Abraham's failures demonstrate, the life of faith is counterintuitive. The more you rely upon your own strength, intellect, and resources, the more likely you are to slip and fall in the trials of life. The only way to stay standing in difficult times is to cling to God in faith, patiently trusting Him to provide and protect.*

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## 4 Failures of Faith in Abraham's Life

### 1) Facing drought (Gen 12:10)

- Abraham arrives in the Promised Land and is disappointed to find famine!
- Disappointment turns to fear – how will his family survive?
  - When we feel fear, we face a choice: either trust God to protect and provide or take matters into our own hands trusting our resources and abilities
  - Abraham could have trusted God and waited for Him to fulfill 12:2
- Instead Abraham chose to craft a plan - he'll leave Canaan and go to Egypt
  - logical choice; Egypt has the Nile River – constant irrigation
- The plan doesn't work out – just exchanges drought for a greater threat...

### 2) Facing danger (Gen 12:11-20)

- Abraham arrives in Egypt and it's not the safe-haven he expected
  - Egyptians can kill foreigners who have something they want
  - Abraham has something every Egyptian wanted: Sarah
- Again Abraham feels fear and so faces a choice. He can trust God or take matters into his own hands.
- Once again he takes matters into his own hands: crafts a plan (v13)
  - He tells Sarah to call herself his sister
  - Technically true and wise from a human perspective
- But Abe never expected the one who takes a liking to Sarah to be Pharaoh (v14-16)
  - Abraham has no say in the matter – plan backfired
- Abraham has lost Canaan and now his wife – all because he wouldn't trust God
- Fortunately, God is gracious. He steps in to fix the mess (Gen 12:17-20)
  - Afflicts Pharaoh – Pharaoh discovers the truth about Sarah
  - Pharaoh REBUKES Abraham
    - Sad: Pharaoh, a pagan king, is more righteous than Abraham!
- Abraham jeopardized his wife and shamed the name of God

### 3) Facing delay (Gen 16:1-6)

- Abraham and his family have lived in the Promised Land for 10 years and still have no child despite God's grand promise
- Out of **fear**, Sarah crafts a plan
  - She does not trust God to provide a son (she blames God in 16:2)
  - Her plan is hideous to us – but was moral, proper, necessary in their day

- It is **NOT BAD**:
    - For Sarah to try to find a solution to infertility
    - For her to make a plan
    - For Abraham to listen and agree to her plan
  - It **IS BAD** to leave God out of the plan!
    - Neither Sarah nor Abraham turn to God for approval or direction
  - The plan fails: Hagar becomes pregnant and gives birth to Ishmael; but he's not the son of promise (Gen 17:18-19). 4000 years of strife ensue.
- 4) Facing danger, again (Gen 20:1-2)
- Abraham does exactly the same thing he did in chapter 12. Why? Fear (20:11)
  - Once again, God must rescue Sarah
  - And once again a pagan king comes out looking better than Abraham!
    - 20:9 – “what you have done to me is unconscionable!”

#### **Four times Abraham faced a trial that made him afraid**

- Each time he felt fear, he had a choice – trust God or rely on his abilities
- Each time he chose to rely on his abilities and take matters into his own hands
- Each time it failed miserably!

#### **Abraham's failures prove that life is all about faith!**

- Things work out well when you trust God

#### **Most people don't get that. They are trying to earn their way to God**

- By doing good works, giving to the poor, obeying the law, attending church, etc.
- That's not how salvation works – it's not something you earn, it's a gift you receive in faith. **Salvation comes to those who trust God for eternal life**

## How to Walk in Faith

- 1) Expect trials
  - Obeying Jesus today doesn't guarantee you happiness tomorrow!
  - When those trials come, you will be tempted by fear
- 2) Recognize that fear gives you a choice
  - Where will you go for relief – to God or to your own abilities and resources?
- 3) Make plans with God at the center
  - **NOT** wrong to make plans. Making plans isn't bad; leaving God out of the plan is!
    - Prov 14:12 – our wisdom is limited, our plans are fallible
  - When you make plans, put God at the center. Here's how:
    - **Pray** for God's guidance
    - **Commit to obey** God's word
    - **Seek the counsel** of God's people
    - **Submit your plans to God**