

Faith of Abraham: Discipleship Lessons from the Patriarch of Genesis

Participant Guide Handout Sheets

If you're working with a class or small group, feel free to duplicate the following handouts in this appendix at no additional charge. If you'd like to print 8-1/2" x 11" sheets, you can download the free Participant Guide handout sheets at:

www.jesuswalk.com/abraham/abraham-lesson-handouts.pdf

Discussion Questions

You'll find 3 to 5 questions for each lesson. Each question may include several sub-questions. These are designed to get group members engaged in discussion of the key points of the passage. If you're running short of time, feel free to skip questions or portions of questions.

1. The Call of Abraham (11:27-12:9)
2. Sarah's Abduction (Genesis 12:10-20 and 20:1-18)
3. Abraham Rescues His Nephew Lot (chapters 13-14)
4. God's Covenant with Abraham (chapter 15)
5. God Speaks to Hagar, Abraham's Other Wife (chapter 16)
6. The Covenant of Circumcision with Abraham (chapter 17)
7. Abraham Intercedes for Sodom (chapter 18)
8. The Destruction of Sodom (chapter 20)
9. Isaac Born, Ishmael Banished (chapter 21)
10. Abraham Offers Isaac on Mt. Moriah (chapter 22)
11. Death of Sarah and Abraham (22:20-25:11)

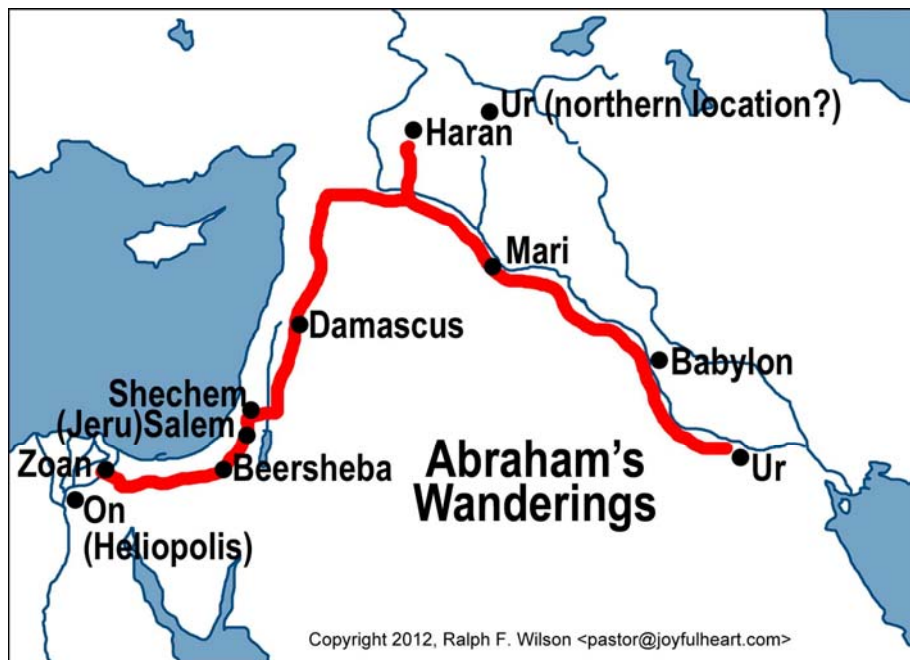
1. The Call of Abraham (Genesis 11:27-12:9)

Q1. (11:32) Have you ever begun something in response to God's urging and then stopped? Did God want you to stop? Is it time now to renew your obedience and begin again? (Don't take this question lightly. Sometimes circumstances prevent us from doing what we once felt God wanted us to do. However, he is able to redirect you into his will for you now. Seek him diligently to learn his will.)

Q2. (12:2-3) In what ways was Abraham blessed? How have all the peoples of the earth been blessed? In what way does Abraham continue to bless people through your life?

Q3. (12:1 with Hebrews 11:8-10) Why does it take special faith to begin to do something in obedience to God before we see how it will turn out? Have you had any of these "opportunities"? Are you in the midst of this adventure now?

Q4. (12:9) What was the significance of Abraham "calling on the name of Yahweh"? What does it mean for you to "call on the name of the Lord"?



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2. Sarah's Abduction (Genesis 12:10-20 and 20:1-18)

Q1. (12:10) What dangers faced Abraham and his family as aliens and sojourners in Egypt and elsewhere? Who might oppress them? What "aliens and sojourners" live in your community? Why did they come? How are they being oppressed or discriminated against by employers and others in the community? What can you and your church do to "love those who are aliens"?

Q2. (12:17-20) Why did Pharaoh and his household get sick? What effect did this have? What was God seeking to accomplish through this affliction? Did it have the desired effect?

Q3. (20:3-6) What does this story teach us about God's view of adultery? Can God forgive a person who has committed adultery?

Q4. What do you think about Abraham's and Sarah's ethics and faith? Are they ethically and morally wrong? Does the Scripture intend to show their actions as a lack of faith? What lessons should we disciples learn from these stories?

Q5. (12:2-3) What relationship does God's promise to Abraham in 12:2-3 have to do with the incident of Sarah's abduction in 20:10-20?



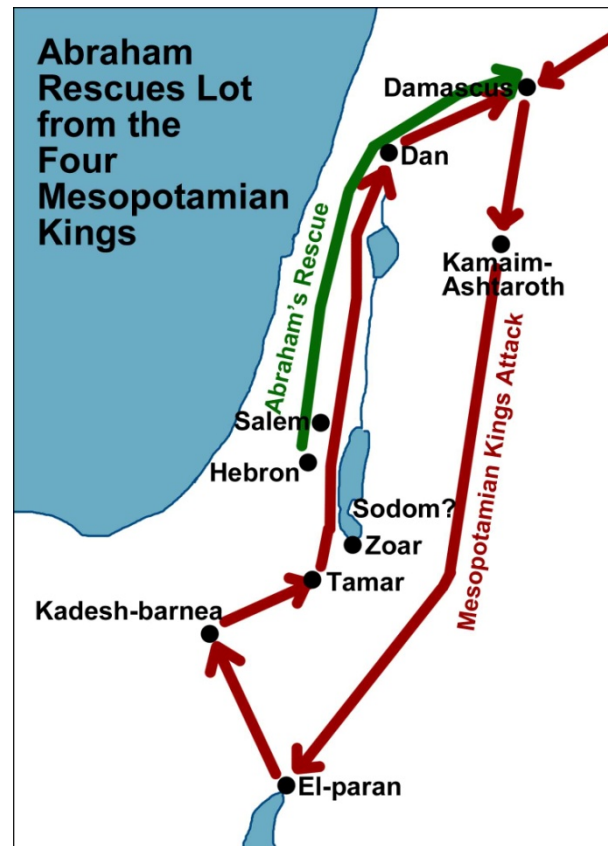
3. Abraham Rescues His Nephew Lot (Genesis 13-14)

Q1. (13:2) Does Abraham's material wealth reflect God's blessing on him? Does material wealth always reflect God's blessing? Does physical poverty always reflect God's curse?

Q2. (14:13-16) What does Abraham's military expedition to rescue Lot from the Mesopotamian kings tell us about his character? About his abilities? About the way he deals with neighbors? What is here for us to emulate?

Q3. (14:20) What is the significance of Abraham giving one tenth of the spoils of war to Melchizedek? Does tithing today represent the same kind of worship? Why should we tithe to God first (like Abraham did) *before* dividing up our paychecks to pay our bills?

Q4. (14:21-24) Why does Abraham refuse to take the spoils of war that the king of Sodom offers him? What does this tell us about Abraham's character? What is the lesson here for us to learn?



4. God's Covenant with Abraham (Genesis 15)

Q1. (15:1) What does it mean to you personally to call God your "Shield"? What does it mean to you that he promises to you (as heir of the promises to Abraham) "an exceedingly great reward"? What does it mean to you to call God your Suzerain or Sovereign?

Q2. (15:6) What is so amazing about this verse? On what basis does God declare Abraham a righteous person? What significance does this have to our New Testament understanding of justification by faith?

Q3. (15:16) Have you ever been frustrated with God for not fulfilling his promise to you immediately? Why does God sometimes delay the fulfillment of his promises to a future time?

Q4 (15:17-18a) Why did God go through the covenant ritual with Abraham, with the divided carcasses? Why does God bind himself to a solemn promise? How does Abraham respond to God's promises (15:6)? What promises has God made to us that affect our futures? What significance does blood sacrifice have in those promises?

5. God Speaks to Hagar, Abraham's Other Wife (Genesis 16)

Q1. (16:1-6) Why does Sarah take her anger out on Abraham? Why does she take her anger out on Hagar? Is she trying to get rid of Hagar or the baby? In what sense is Hagar's pride Abraham's fault? In what sense is Hagar's affliction Abraham's fault? What situation in your family does this remind you of?

Q2. (16:7-9) Why does the angel ask Hagar something that the angel already knows? ("Where have you come from, and where are you going?") Why does the angel send her back to Sarah? Have you ever reacted and got yourself out of the place God wanted you?

Q3. (16:13-14) What is the significance of Hagar's name for God – El Roi, the God Who Sees? What does it mean to a person who is discouraged and losing hope? What does it mean to you personally?

Q4. What lesson is God teaching you out of Hagar's experience? Which situation that God is calling you to is most difficult for you to submit to?

6. The Covenant of Circumcision with Abraham (Genesis 17)

Q1. (17:1-2) When God tells Abraham, “Walk before me and be blameless,” is he requiring moral perfection? What kind of blamelessness does he require of Abraham? Does he expect more (or less) of Christians under the new covenant?

Q2. (17:11) What does circumcision signify for Abraham, his household, and his descendents? Why is some kind of definite act on Abraham’s part important to confirming the covenant? What does Abraham’s obedience the very same day signify?

Q3. What does it mean to have your heart circumcised? Why is this a necessity for all true believers, both Jew and Christian? How can we keep our faith active as an inward expression of love rather than become only an external religion? Have you ever struggled with this?

Q4. In your own words, how would you explain why circumcision is now obsolete for Christians and that baptism is now the sign of the covenant?

7. Abraham Intercedes for Sodom (Genesis 18)

Q1. (18:14) How can we tell if we really believe in God's present willingness to do miracles in our day? Is there any indication in Scripture that God will *stop* doing miracles? Is there any indication that God continues to do miracles? How can we regain an active faith in the God of miracles?

Q2. (18:16-19) How can fathers and husbands strike the right balance – of being godly, caring leaders without being dictators? How can mothers and wives strike the right balance – of being submissive and at the same time being open about their needs and desires? (I know of no Christian cookie-cutter answer to this. It must be conscientiously worked out within the crucible of marriage.)

Q3. (18:19) In your own words, describe what a lifestyle of “keeping the way of the LORD by doing what is right and just” looks like in the twenty-first century. In what ways is this difficult? In what ways is this easy? What are the special challenges?

Q4. On what ground does Abraham so boldly address God? Do you think God desires us to do the same? Why or why not? Why do you think Abraham's intercession pleased God? What will it take for us to please him in our prayers?

8. The Destruction of Sodom (Genesis 19)

Q1. (19:4-11) How can Christians keep balance on the issue of homosexuality in our day? Is it really possible to be loving and compassionate toward practicing homosexuals at the same time as you condemn the sin? Should the church be silent about homosexuality? If not, what should we be saying? Where should we be saying it?

Q2. (19:15-16) Why did Lot and his family hesitate? Have you ever hesitated when you should have been fleeing a danger? What is the lesson for us?

Q3. (19:26) After being nearly delivered, why did Lot's wife stop and gaze rather than escaping? What was in her heart? Have you ever struggled with this in your heart? What lesson does Jesus draw from Lot's wife in Luke 17:31-33?

Q4. (19:30-38) Why did Lot's daughters turn to incest? What does this tell us about their values? About their faith? Why does Lot turn to intoxication? What does this incident tell us about his faith? His hope? His influence? His choice of residence? What lessons should we learn from this story?

9. Isaac Born, Ishmael Banished (Genesis 21)

Q1. (21:5-7) The name Isaac means “he laughs.” What is Sarah’s laughter like now compared to her laughter in 18:12-15 and Abraham’s laughter in 17:17? What does this tell you about God’s sense of humor?

Q2. (21:8-10) What motivates Sarah to demand Ishmael’s expulsion from Abraham’s family encampment? Is she righteous in this? Have you ever tried to force your spouse to act against his or her principles? Have you ever been forced yourself?

Q3. In what ways has God blessed Abraham in this difficult chapter 21? Given what we know about Ishmael’s character (16:12; 25:18), how has Abraham been blessed that he sent him away? How has Isaac been blessed? What might have happened if Ishmael hadn’t been sent away? Have you ever been rejected or sent away? Where is God in all of this?

Q4. (21:33) How does the realization that God is El-Olam, the Eternal God, effect you? How does it alter the way you live your life?

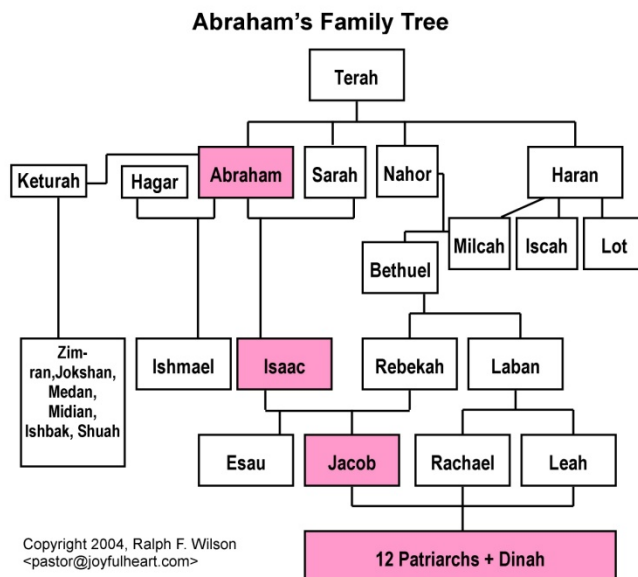
10. Abraham Offers Isaac on Mt. Moriah (chapter 22)

Q1. What effect does Satan want trials to have in our life? What effect does God want them to have? The effect really depends upon how we respond to the trial. Have you ever been through a trial that strengthens and invigorates you at the end? Have any of your trials inspired others or have you been inspired by another's trial?

Q2. Can we really know God until we can trust him with our whole lives? Have you surrendered your life to Jesus Christ? If not, why not now? If you have, what has that surrender entailed for you? How has God blessed you in return?

Q3. (22:14) How have you learned to trust God to provide for you? How has he provided for you in the past? What are you facing right now that will require God to be your Provider, your Jehovah-Jireh?

Q4. How does Abraham's near sacrifice of his beloved, only son Isaac help you understand better Jesus' crucifixion?



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11. Death of Sarah and Abraham (22:20-25:11)

Q1. Take some time to review Sarah's life and legacy. What were her strengths? Her weaknesses? Where did she show faith? Where did she lack faith?

Q2 (23:3-20) What is the significance of Abraham's faith in God's promises at the same time as he pays dearly for this small property? What does this tell us about faith?

Q3 (24:12-14) What do you think of the servant's prayer and test of God? Did the servant find the right girl on the basis of his hasty prayer? If not, then how?

Q4. Which of Abraham's achievements inspires you the most? As you reflect on his life, what stands out for you?