

**‘Bradley’s entire
life is a testimony
to the power of
prayer and God’s
supernatural hand
at work in his life’**

Dr. Bradley Stuart

Dr Bradley Stuart is Yada’s founding director. His entire life is a testimony of the power of prayer and an intimate journey with the Lord which led him to this 8 part series ‘Destiny An Intimate Journey.’

“This work contains Dr. Bradley Stuart’s unique testimony of God’s work in his life, the reality of abiding presence of the Lord, and some deep lessons learned along the way.”

Michael Fenton-Jones

President, Int’l Christian Chamber of Commerce (1996-2002)

“This series will help every believer live in more intimate and effective union with Christ.”

Gary P. Bergel

President, Intercessors For America



destiny

An Intimate Journey

course 6 – a father’s journey

Dr. Bradley Stuart



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I trust that you will be blessed as you work through this material and that it will help you to discover your destiny through an intimate journey with the Lord.

Dr. Bradley Stuart
Founding Director

THE CALL

Abraham was in prayer and received his call of faith. We are going to explore this

Genesis 12: 1-3

Now the LORD had said to Abram: "Get out of your country, From your family And from your father's house, To a land that I will show you. 2 I will make you a great nation; I will bless you And make your name great; And you shall be a blessing. 3 I will bless those who bless you, And I will curse him who curses you; And in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed."

His obedience was not complete as he was codependent on Lot, someone that was familiar.

Genesis 12:4-6

So Abram departed as the LORD had spoken to him, and Lot went with him. And Abram was seventy-five years old when he departed from Haran. 5 Then Abram took Sarai his wife and Lot his brother's son, and all their possessions that they had gathered, and the people whom they had acquired in Haran, and they departed to go to the land of Canaan. So they came to the land of Canaan. 6 Abram passed through the land to the place of Shechem, as far as the terebinth tree of Moreh. And the Canaanites were then in the land.

He built altars (representing times of prayer) to help him in his faith journey.

Genesis 12: 7-8

Then the LORD appeared to Abram and said, "To your descendants I will give this land." And there he built an altar to the LORD, who had appeared to him. 8 And he moved from there to the mountain east of Bethel, and he pitched his tent with Bethel on the west and Ai on the east; there he built an altar to the LORD and called on the name of the LORD.

Abraham entered a time of famine going into Egypt. He leans on his own understanding lost his altar of prayer. Through fear of man the door opened for the iniquity of deception to enter. Sarai obey him and submitted to him the Lord fully protected her.

Genesis 12:9-20

So Abram journeyed, going on still toward the South. 10 Now there was a famine in the land, and Abram went down to Egypt to dwell there, for the famine was severe in the land. 11 And it came to pass, when he was close to entering Egypt, that he said to Sarai his wife, "Indeed I know that you

are a woman of beautiful countenance. 12 "Therefore it will happen, when the Egyptians see you, that they will say, 'This is his wife'; and they will kill me, but they will let you live. 13 "Please say you are my sister, that it may be well with me for your sake, and that I may live because of you." 14 So it was, when Abram came into Egypt, that the Egyptians saw the woman, that she was very beautiful. 15 The princes of Pharaoh also saw her and commended her to Pharaoh. And the woman was taken to Pharaoh's house. 16 He treated Abram well for her sake. He had sheep, oxen, male donkeys, male and female servants, female donkeys, and camels. 17 But the LORD plagued Pharaoh and his house with great plagues because of Sarai, Abram's wife. 18 And Pharaoh called Abram and said, "What is this you have done to me? Why did you not tell me that she was your wife? 19 "Why did you say, 'She is my sister'? I might have taken her as my wife. Now therefore, here is your wife; take her and go your way." 20 So Pharaoh commanded his men concerning him; and they sent him away, with his wife and all that he had.

VITAL LESSONS TO BE LEARNED

We need to be in prayer to hear God and receive His direction. To be clearly led by the Lord we need to be waiting on Him in prayer and giving ourselves to Him sacrificially.

Romans 12:1-2

I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service. 2 And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.

When God calls us to move out in faith we need to be careful not to hold on to or depend on people.

Hebrews 11:1-8

Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen. 6 But without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him. 7 By faith Noah, being divinely warned of things not yet seen, moved with godly fear, prepared an ark for the saving of his household, by which he condemned the world and became heir of the righteousness which is according to faith. 8 By faith Abraham obeyed when he was called to go out to the place which he would receive as an inheritance. And he went out, not knowing where he was going.

When allowed to enter a time of dryness or famine we need to draw near to Him. We should not lean on our own understanding (**Proverbs 3:5-6**) or allow fear to dominate the choices that we make.

Proverbs 3:5-6

"Trust in the LORD with all your heart, And lean not on your own understanding; 6 In all your ways acknowledge Him, And He shall direct your paths."

When we begin our walk His grace covers our mistakes and He undertakes even when we do not fully trust Him. Our falls are not as important as having the courage to get up and learn from our mistakes.

Proverbs 24:16

"For a righteous man may fall seven times And rise again, But the wicked shall fall by calamity."

When a wife submits to her husband in obedience, as she should, He covers her and protects her.

Genesis 13:1-4

Then Abram went up from Egypt, he and his wife and all that he had, and Lot with him, to the South. 2 Abram was very rich in livestock, in silver, and in gold. 3 And he went on his journey from the South as far as Bethel, to the place where his tent had been at the beginning, between Bethel and Ai, 4 to the place of the altar which he had made there at first. And there Abram called on the name of the LORD.

God's grace lets him start again as he returns to the place of prayer and devotion.

Genesis 13:5-13

Lot also, who went with Abram, had flocks and herds and tents. 6 Now the land was not able to support them, that they might dwell together, for their possessions were so great that they could not dwell together. 7 And there was strife between the herdsmen of Abram's livestock and the herdsmen of Lot's livestock. The Canaanites and the Perizzites then dwelt in the land. 8 So Abram said to Lot, "Please let there be no strife between you and me, and between my herdsmen and your herdsmen; for we are brethren. 9 "Is not the whole land before you? Please separate from me. If you take the left, then I will go to the right; or, if you go to the right, then I will go to the left." 10 And Lot lifted his eyes and saw all the plain of Jordan, that it was well watered everywhere (before the LORD destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah) like the garden of the LORD, like the land of Egypt as you go toward Zoar.

LIFE APPLICATIONS

What was the basic error made by Job's friends?

Have you ever given or received false comfort?

Give biblical examples of a lack of follow through.

How do we seek man?

How can condemnation and guilt hinder us?

How do we use blame shifting and self-pity?

We must see that, in spite of our circumstances, there is hope in Jesus.

Roman 5:3-5

"And not only that, but we also glory in tribulations, knowing that tribulation produces perseverance; (4) and perseverance, character; and character, hope."

James 1:1-4

"(2) My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into various trials, (3) knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience. (4) But let patience have its perfect work, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing."

Cain tried to hide from the guilt which resulted from his iniquity, instead of facing up to it and dealing with it.

Genesis 4:9

"He said, "I do not know. Am I my brother's keeper?"

BLAME SHIFTING

It is a major problem when we want to cover up for what we have done wrong by shifting the blame onto someone else.

Adam and Saul are two good examples of this.

Genesis 3:9-13

"(12) Then the man said, "The woman whom You gave to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I ate." (13) And the Lord God said to the woman, "What is this you have done?" The woman said, "The serpent deceived me, and I ate."

1 Samuel 15:15

"And Saul said, "They have brought them from the Amalekites; for the people spared the best of the sheep and the oxen, to sacrifice to the Lord your God."

SELF PITY – AHAB

1 Kings 21:1-4

"(4) So Ahab went into his house sullen and displeased because of the word which Naboth the Jezreelite had spoken to him; for he had said, "I will not give you the inheritance of my fathers." And he lay down on his bed, and turned away his face, and would eat no food."

11 Then Lot chose for himself all the plain of Jordan, and Lot journeyed east. And they separated from each other. 12 Abram dwelt in the land of Canaan, and Lot dwelt in the cities of the plain and pitched his tent even as far as Sodom. 13 But the men of Sodom were exceedingly wicked and sinful against the LORD.

When his relationship is restored towards God, God allows conflict to separate him from Lot. He is able to deal with this conflict in love and the right way, as his relationship with God was correct.

Genesis 13: 14-18

And the LORD said to Abram, after Lot had separated from him: "Lift your eyes now and look from the place where you are -- northward, southward, eastward, and westward; 15 "for all the land which you see I give to you and your descendants forever. 16 "And I will make your descendants as the dust of the earth; so that if a man could number the dust of the earth, then your descendants also could be numbered. 17 "Arise, walk in the land through its length and its width, for I give it to you." 18 Then Abram moved his tent, and went and dwelt by the terebinth trees of Mamre, which are in Hebron, and built an altar there to the LORD.

It is only after Lot has separated of Lot and Abraham that the Lord clearly direct him and confirms his calling. As he moves on from there he builds his altar.

VITAL LESSONS TO BE LEARNED

God knows our hearts and allows us to grow and mature from our mistakes.

When our relationship is right with the Lord we are able to face difficult relational issues with the right heart attitude and motive.

Often we have to let go of the good to get His best for us.

1 Chronicles 13:1-12

We must be careful how we respond to circumstances. We can easily blame the devil when it is really God bringing a season to an end so that we can move on in freedom unhindered by man.

Once He has freed us from dependence on man and the things we often rely on, He is able to confirm His will to us and to help us to move on to what He has for us.

When we are independent we do our own thing, go our own way and battle to delegate. When we are codependent, we rely on others too much and can idolize and worship them. God wants us to be interdependent on Him and others and not to be independent or codependent. We are to function as a body.

1 Corinthians 12:12-31

For as the body is one and has many members, but all the members of that one body, being many, are one body, so also is Christ. 13 For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body -- whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free -- and have all been made to drink into one Spirit. 14 For in fact the body is not one member but many. 15 If the foot should say, "Because I am not a hand, I am not of the body," is it therefore not of the body? 16 And if the ear should say, "Because I am not an eye, I am not of the body," is it therefore not of the body? 17 If the whole body were an eye, where would be the hearing? If the whole were hearing, where would be the smelling? 18 But now God has set the members, each one of them, in the body just as He pleased. 19 And if they were all one member, where would the body be? 20 But now indeed there are many members, yet one body. 21 And the eye cannot say to the hand, "I have no need of you"; nor again the head to the feet, "I have no need of you." 22 No, much rather, those members of the body which seem to be weaker are necessary. 23 And those members of the body which we think to be less honorable, on these we bestow greater honor; and our unpresentable parts have greater modesty, 24 but our presentable parts have no need. But God composed the body, having given greater honor to that part which lacks it, 25 that there should be no schism in the body, but that the members should have the same care for one another.

26 And if one member suffers, all the members suffer with it; or if one member is honored, all the members rejoice with it. 27 Now you are the body of Christ, and members individually. 28 And God has appointed these in the church: first apostles, second prophets, third teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, administrations, varieties of tongues. 29 Are all apostles? Are all prophets? Are all teachers? Are all workers of miracles? 30 Do all have gifts of healings? Do all speak with tongues? Do all interpret? 31 But earnestly desire the best gifts. And yet I show you a more excellent way.

Being persistent and going all the way to the end is vital, illustrated by the man who just struck the arrows on the ground a few times.

2 Kings 13:18-19

"You should have struck five or six times; then you would have struck Syria till you had destroyed it! But now you will strike Syria only three times."

SEEKING MAN

When Saul had sinned and disobeyed God, instead of repenting and turning back to God, he consulted the wizard of Endor.

1 Samuel 28:6-7

"(7)Then Saul said to his servants, "Find me a woman who is a medium, that I may go to her and inquire of her."

Paul talks of those who are tossed back and forth by every wind of human doctrine.

Ephesians 4:14

"That we should no longer be children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, in the cunning craftiness of deceitful plotting."

In **Judges 17**, we read of a man who sets up his own priest to serve him.

Judges 17:1-5

"(5) The man Micah had a shrine, and made an ephod and household idols; and he consecrated one of his sons, who became his priest."

We often can fall into the trap of doing what seems right in our own eyes instead of what is right in the sight of God, as this will give us so much more favor with man.

CONDEMNATION & GUILT

This can be a major problem, which can keep us in bondage as we are constantly looking back instead of forward. Paul knew of this battle and could share that we must forget what lies behind and press on to what lies ahead.

Philippines 3:13-14

"I do not count myself to have apprehended; but one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forward to those things which are ahead"

He knew of the battle of condemnation, which is different than Godly sorrow.

Romans 8:1-2

"There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus."

FALSE COMFORTERS

We see this illustrated by Job's Comforters, who were not aware of what God was doing in Job's life. This can often be a problem when God is trying to break and smite us.

Job 5:17-27

"Behold happy is the man whom God corrects; Therefore do not despise the chastening of the Almighty. (18) For He bruises, but He binds up; He wounds, but His hands make whole. (19) He shall deliver you in six troubles, yes, in seven no evil shall touch you."

Hosea 6:1-3

"Come, and let us return to the Lord; for He has torn, but He will heal us; He has stricken, but He will bind us up."

Instead of pressing into God and allowing Him to do the work, we run to people who we know will comfort us and make it all better.

God speaks of those who have healed His people slightly.

Jeremiah 6:14

"They have also healed the hurt of My people slightly, Saying, 'Peace, peace!' When there is no peace."

We need to beware that we do not, ourselves, fall into this trap.

LACK OF FOLLOW THROUGH

We often want to receive counsel, but then when it is given to us, we do not have the willpower or courage to follow through with it. This is illustrated by:

SAUL

1 Samuel 15:10-23 " (14) But Samuel said, "What then is this bleating of the sheep in my ears, and the lowing of the oxen which I hear?" (15) And Saul said, "They have brought them"

REHOBAM**1 Kings 12:10**

"Then the young men who had grown up with him spoke to him, saying, "Thus you should speak to this people who have spoken to you, saying, 'Your father made our yoke heavy, but you make it lighter on us' – thus you shall say to them: 'My little finger shall be thicker than my father's waist!"

ISRAEL**Jeremiah 43:1-2**

"(2) and said to Jeremiah the prophet, "Please, let our petition be acceptable to you, and pray for us to the Lord your God, for all this remnant (since we are left but a few of many, as you can see)."

LIFE APPLICATIONS

Quote Hebrews 11:1 – "faith" in a nutshell.

Do you think it is easy for us to become overly dependant on some else? Reflect on some personal instances where you could have taken the 'familiar' along when God has called you out.

Why do you think Abram built altars? Can you identify any of these 'altars' in your life?

What do we need to do to know the leading of the Lord?

What is the result of a wife submitting to her husband even in a situation such as Sarah found herself?

When and how does the root of iniquity enter into Abram's family?

Does God's grace allow us to start again.

What did Abram do when he reached his old camp ground between Bethel and Ai and why?

What happened after his relationship was restored with the Lord?

How did Abram deal with the conflict between his herdsmen and Lot's herdsmen? Can you apply any of those principles in real life situations that you face today?

Deuteronomy 23:2

"One of illegitimate birth shall not enter the assembly of the Lord; even to the tenth generation none of his descendants shall enter the assembly of the Lord."

In the Old Testament, under the Law, they had to wait ten generations for this to be broken, but because of the finished work of Calvary in the New Testament, it can be broken immediately and we need not wait ten generations.

Hebrews 6:4-7

"For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted the heavenly gift, and have become partakers of the Holy Spirit, (5) and have tasted the good word of God and the powers of the age to come, (6) if they fall away, to renew them again to repentance."

LIFE APPLICATIONS

In the book of James, how does lack of emotional control produce disastrous results?

How had money become the rich young ruler's friend? Identify and list some other possible 'familiar' dependencies.

Give examples of righteous terminology being destroyed by over-use.

Give an example of the effect of a blind spot in your own life, before and after it was revealed.

Ask the Holy Spirit to reveal any blind spots in your life.

Matthew 26:31-34

"(34) Jesus said to him, "Assuredly, I say to you that this night, before the rooster crows, you will deny Me three times.""

Jesus spoke of this as seeing the splinter in our brother's eye, but not being able to see the log in our own.

Matthew 7:3-5

"Why do you look at the speck in your brother's eye, but do not consider the plank in your own eye?"

God will use different people to point out our blind spots to us so that we can deal with them and be set free. Many times, He will use those closest to us to do this work. At other times, He may use others, as those closest to us have become too familiar with those weaknesses in us and are not a good vessel to use.

SELF

Self can often be one of our greatest hindrances. We either become so self-focused that we want everything to revolve around us or we use our own problems to attract attention. We want so much to be the best or for someone else to be the best, that we are blinded by our desires. This is illustrated in the story of the mother of James and John.

Matthew 20:20-23

"21) And He said to her, "What do you wish?" She said to Him, "Grant that these two sons of mine may sit, one on Your right hand and the other on the left, in Your kingdom.""

Jesus knew the heart of man and therefore would not give Himself to them.

John 2:24-25

"But Jesus did not commit Himself to them, because He knew all men, (25) and had no need that anyone should testify of man, for He knew what was in man."

LACK OF BALANCE

Many times we want to go to one extreme or the other. Either saying it was all taken care of on Calvary or that it's all under the blood, which is true. We are not willing to allow Calvary's complete work to have its way in our lives. The work of Calvary is complete. Jesus took care of all for us at Calvary, but if we do not let the Lord minister to our whole being, it can be like having all the ointment needed to get well, but simply not applying it. Jesus did not come to do away with the Law, but to fulfill the Law. For example, the bible talks of an illegitimate child not being able to enter the presence of the Lord for ten generations.

RELATIONSHIPS

Genesis 14:1-12

11 Then they took all the goods of Sodom and Gomorrah, and all their provisions, and went their way. 12 They also took Lot, Abram's brother's son who dwelt in Sodom, and his goods, and departed.

Genesis 14:13-16

Then one who had escaped came and told Abram the Hebrew, for he dwelt by the terebinth trees of Mamre the Amorite, brother of Eshcol and brother of Aner; and they were allies with Abram. 14 Now when Abram heard that his brother was taken captive, he armed his three hundred and eighteen trained servants who were born in his own house, and went in pursuit as far as Dan. 15 He divided his forces against them by night, and he and his servants attacked them and pursued them as far as Hobah, which is north of Damascus. 16 So he brought back all the goods, and also brought back his brother Lot and his goods, as well as the women and the people.

Abraham's relationship with the Lord is correct and therefore when he hears of Lot being in trouble he goes to rescue him.

Genesis 14:18-24

Then Melchizedek king of Salem brought out bread and wine; he was the priest of God Most High. 19 And he blessed him and said: "Blessed be Abram of God Most High, Possessor of heaven and earth; 20 And blessed be God Most High, Who has delivered your enemies into your hand." And he gave him a tithe of all. 21 Now the king of Sodom said to Abram, "Give me the persons, and take the goods for yourself." 22 But Abram said to the king of Sodom, "I have raised my hand to the LORD, God Most High, the Possessor of heaven and earth, 23 "that I will take nothing, from a thread to a sandal strap, and that I will not take anything that is yours, lest you should say, 'I have made Abram rich' -- 24 "except only what the young men have eaten, and the portion of the men who went with me: Aner, Eshcol, and Mamre; let them take their portion."

He has great discernment when he meets Melchizedek and the king of Sodom. With the first he shares in celebration and even gives him a tithe. With the second he reveals his heart and will not take anything from him.

TERMINOLOGY

Wrong terminology can bring confusion and fear rather than welcoming God's work in our lives. When blood line or generational curses are referred to, they are referring to [Exodus 34:7](#) or [Deuteronomy 23:2](#) where the bible talks about the iniquities being carried down to the third, fourth and tenth generations.

In [Revelation 2:20-22](#), we also see that God says He will strike Jezebel's children with sickness because of the sin of Jezebel. Ahab's family also suffered as a result of their father's iniquity.

1 Kings 21:28-29

When curses are referenced, they are generally discussing [Deuteronomy 28](#), where God clearly says that if we are obedient, we will be blessed with various blessings and if we are disobedient; certain curses will come upon us.

Inner healing is another term which often turns people off. The right biblical term, as we saw in our opening lessons, is binding up the broken hearted and restoring the soul.

BLIND SPOTS

We often cannot see our own weaknesses and failures, so the Lord will use others to point them out to us. We see this in the story of David and Nathan where Nathan is used to point out David's sin to him, which David was unable to see.

2 Samuel 12:1-14

"(5) So David's anger was greatly aroused against the man, and he said to Nathan, "As the Lord lives, the man who has done this shall surely die! (6) "And he shall restore fourfold for the lamb, because he did this thing and because he had no pity." (7) Then Nathan said to David, "You are the man!"

God, at another time, used David's heart to show him his sin. When he saw, it he repented.

2 Samuel 24:10

"And David's heart condemned him after he had numbered the people."

Jesus could see Peter's blind spots and weaknesses, but He addressed the source of the problem and used Peter in spite of these.

Matthew 16:21-23

"He turned and said to Peter, "Get behind Me, Satan! You are an offense to Me, for you are not mindful of the things of God, but the things of men." "

EMOTIONS**James 1:5-8**

"(7) For let not that man suppose that he will receive anything from the Lord; (8) he is a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways."

James 3:13-16

"(14) But if you have bitter envy and self-seeking in your hearts, do not boast and lie against the truth. (16) For where envy and self-seeking exist, confusion and every evil thing are there."

James 4:1-3

"Where do wars and fights come from among you? Do they not come from your desires for pleasure that war in your members? (2) You lust and do not have. (3) You ask and do not receive, because you ask amiss, that you may spend it on your pleasures."

LETTING GO OF OUR FRIENDS (FAMILIARITY)

There are things in our lives which have become so familiar to us that we do them without even thinking about it. They have become second nature habits. There are times we will be made aware that they are wrong and still not be willing to deal with them. This is illustrated in the story of the Rich Young Ruler.

Matthew 19:16-24

"(21) Jesus said to him, "If you want to be perfect, go, sell what you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow Me." (22) But when the young man heard that saying, he went away sorrowful, for he had great possessions."

When we have to leave our mother and father to cleave to our mate in marriage.

Genesis 2:24

"Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and they shall become one flesh."

We need to see the problem as an enemy and begin to hate it:

Hebrews 1:9

"Thou hast loved righteousness, and hated iniquity." (KJV)

VITAL LESSONS TO BE LEARNED

When we are in right relationship with the Lord he helps us to be a blessing to those who may have made a selfish choice for their best.

We need discernment as the hearts of men are continually desperately wicked. It is only God who can show us their true motives.

We should not make hasty decisions based on our own understanding without first consulting the Lord's counsel.

Joshua 9:14

Then the men of Israel took some of their provisions; but they did not ask counsel of the LORD.

1 Chronicles 15:13

"For because you did not do it the first time, the LORD our God broke out against us, because we did not consult Him about the proper order."

Genesis 15:1

After these things the word of the LORD came to Abram in a vision, saying, "Do not be afraid, Abram. I am your shield, your exceedingly great reward."

He is encouraged in his time of prayer and entering into a session (intercession) with the Lord.

Genesis 15:2-4

But Abram said, "Lord GOD, what will You give me, seeing I go childless, and the heir of my house is Eliezer of Damascus?" 3 Then Abram said, "Look, You have given me no offspring; indeed one born in my house is my heir!"

4 And behold, the word of the LORD came to him, saying, "This one shall not be your heir, but one who will come from your own body shall be your heir."

He asks the Lord if he is to have a son by Eliezer and the Lord says no, it will be his son.

Genesis 15:5-7

Then He brought him outside and said, "Look now toward heaven, and count the stars if you are able to number them." And He said to him, "So shall your descendants be." 6 And he believed in the LORD, and He accounted it to him for righteousness. 7 Then He said to him, "I am the LORD, who brought you out of Ur of the Chaldeans, to give you this land to inherit it."

He is encouraged further by the Lord who confirms His word to him. In this time of intercession his faith is strengthened as God confirms His word to him.

THE IMPORTANCE OF COVENANTS

Genesis 15:9-21

So He said to him, "Bring Me a three-year-old heifer, a three-year-old female goat, a three-year-old ram, a turtledove, and a young pigeon." 10 Then he brought all these to Him and cut them in two, down the middle, and placed each piece opposite the other; but he did not cut the birds in two. 11 And when the vultures came down on the carcasses, Abram drove them away. 12 Now when the sun was going down, a deep sleep fell upon Abram; and behold, horror and great darkness fell upon him. 13 Then He said to Abram: "Know certainly that your descendants will be strangers in a land that is not theirs, and will serve them, and they will afflict them four hundred years. 14 "And also the nation whom they serve I will judge; afterward they shall come out with great possessions. 15 "Now as for you, you shall go to your fathers in peace; you shall be buried at a good old age. 16 "But in the fourth generation they shall return here, for the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet complete."

17 And it came to pass, when the sun went down and it was dark, that behold, there appeared a smoking oven and a burning torch that passed between those pieces. 18 On the same day the LORD made a covenant with Abram, saying: "To your descendants I have given this land, from the river of Egypt to the great river, the River Euphrates.

The Lord confirms His word to him by entering into a covenant with him. There is a war that wages as this takes place and he has to chase away the birds of the air that came to attack and try to stop this taking place.

UNDERSTANDING THE PROCESS OF ENTERING INTO COVENANTS

1 Samuel 18:1-4

Now when he had finished speaking to Saul, the soul of Jonathan was knit to the soul of David, and Jonathan loved him as his own soul. 2 Saul took him that day, and would not let him go home to his father's house anymore. 3 Then Jonathan and David made a covenant, because he loved him as his own soul. 4 And Jonathan took off the robe that was on him and gave it to David, with his armor, even to his sword and his bow and his belt.

Each person would go through the full covenant process and show their total dedication to each other. This was done by going through a process of divine exchange.

What does it mean to 'Leave and Cleave?' (Genesis 2:24) Provide practical examples for each point made. Be ready to discuss this at greater length.

What is the difference between Independent, Co-dependent and Interdependence? List which one you tend to be and which one you desire to be. How do you believe one could achieve this correct balance?

Be ready to discuss in greater detail the four kinds of manipulations in class.



LIFE APPLICATIONS

What is your personal definition of a healthy relationship? Compare that with the definition provided in this text. Has your understanding on a healthy relationship changed in any way since completing this lesson? If so list the changes for further discussion and reflection.

List the three bible references listed in this study on healthy relationships and identify in each what made those relationships healthy.

What are the four potential attacks of Satan on healthy relationships?

What are the characteristics of Jezebel? Provide biblical references for each.

What are the characteristics of the Anti-Christ? Provide biblical references for each.

THE ABRAHAMIC COVENANT ESTABLISHED

Genesis 12:1

Now the LORD had said to Abram: "Get out of your country, From your family And from your father's house, To a land that I will show you. 2 I will make you a great nation; I will bless you And make your name great; And you shall be a blessing. 3 I will bless those who bless you, And I will curse him who curses you; And in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed."

OLD COVENANT AND NEW COVENANT

Matthew 26:26-29

And as they were eating, Jesus took bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to the disciples and said, "Take, eat; this is My body." 27 Then He took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, "Drink from it, all of you. 28 "For this is My blood of the new covenant, which is shed for many for the remission of sins. 29 "But I say to you, I will not drink of this fruit of the vine from now on until that day when I drink it new with you in My Father's kingdom."

Galatians 3:13-14

Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law, having become a curse for us (for it is written, "Cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree"), 14 that the blessing of Abraham might come upon the Gentiles in Christ Jesus, that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith.

MOSES'S CALL

Exodus 3:6-7 & 7-15

Moreover He said, "I am the God of your father -- the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob." And Moses hid his face, for he was afraid to look upon God. 7 And the LORD said: "I have surely seen the oppression of My people who are in Egypt, and have heard their cry because of their taskmasters, for I know their sorrows. 13 Then Moses said to God, "Indeed, when I come to the children of Israel and say to them, 'The God of your fathers has sent me to you,' and they say to me, 'What is His name?' what shall I say to them?" 14 And God said to Moses, "I AM WHO I AM." And He said, "Thus you shall say to the children of Israel, 'I AM has sent me to you.'" 15 Moreover God said to Moses, "Thus you shall say to the children of Israel: 'The LORD God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, has sent me to you. This is My name forever, and this is My memorial to all generations.'

Exodus 4:5

"that they may believe that the LORD God of their fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, has appeared to you."



HEARING ISRAEL'S CRY**Exodus 2:24-25**

So God heard their groaning, and God remembered His covenant with Abraham, with Isaac, and with Jacob. 25 And God looked upon the children of Israel, and God acknowledged them.

PRAYING ACCORDING TO THE COVENANT MOSES'S INTERCESSION**Exodus 32:12-14**

"Why should the Egyptians speak, and say, 'He brought them out to harm them, to kill them in the mountains, and to consume them from the face of the earth'? Turn from Your fierce wrath, and relent from this harm to Your people. 13 'Remember Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, Your servants, to whom You swore by Your own self, and said to them, 'I will multiply your descendants as the stars of heaven; and all this land that I have spoken of I give to your descendants, and they shall inherit it forever.' " 14 So the LORD relented from the harm which He said He would do to His people."

ELIJAH'S INTERCESSION**1 Kings 18:36-39**

And it came to pass, at the time of the offering of the evening sacrifice, that Elijah the prophet came near and said, "LORD God of Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, let it be known this day that You are God in Israel and I am Your servant, and that I have done all these things at Your word. 37 "Hear me, O LORD, hear me, that this people may know that You are the LORD God, and that You have turned their hearts back to You again." 38 Then the fire of the LORD fell and consumed the burnt sacrifice, and the wood and the stones and the dust, and it licked up the water that was in the trench. 39 Now when all the people saw it, they fell on their faces; and they said, "The LORD, He is God! The LORD, He is God!"

INTERCEEDING FOR MARRIAGES**Mark 10:6-9**

"But from the beginning of the creation, God 'made them male and female.' 7 'For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, 8 'and the two shall become one flesh'; so then they are no longer two, but one flesh. 9 "Therefore what God has joined together, let not man separate."

God moved mightily when a young man prayed according to the covenant.

Co-Dependence leads to excessive dependence on others:

Genesis 12:4

So Abram departed as the Lord had spoken to him, and Lot went with him.

Genesis 13:5-13

(11) Then Lot chose for himself all the plain of Jordan, and Lot journeyed east. And they separated from each other."

Inter-dependence is how God desires us to function, wherein we are a part of His body and need Him and each other in a healthy way.

1 Corinthians 12:12-27

"For as the body is one and has many members, but all the members of that one body, being many, are one body, so also is Christ. (14) For in fact the body is not one member but many. (27) Now you are the body of Christ, and members individually."

Esther 4:15-17

"Then Esther told them to reply to Mordecai: (16) "Go, gather all the Jews who are present in Shushan, and fast for me; neither eat nor drink for three days, night or day. My maids and I will fast likewise."

Manipulation can be defined as attempting to control people or circumstances through deceptive or indirect means.

FOUR KINDS OF MANIPULATORS

Active – Their goal is to maintain control at any cost. Not facing their own weaknesses and exalting their own strength. They always want to be "top dog." In this relationship, they come across as the strong ones and they capitalize on others. They have to win.

Passive – Their goal is not to offend. The passive manipulator often uses self-pity to win by losing and being the underdog. He gains relationship by seeming to be a loser.

Competitive – They win by whatever means, by being the top dog or underdog. All who are in relationship with him are his competitors.

Indifferent – This manipulator is totally different from the others. The indifferent manipulator is neither top dog nor underdog. They seem not to care, but they really do and this destroys relationships.



JOB'S WIFE AND COMFORTERS ILLUSTRATE THE POWER THAT COUNSEL CAN HAVE ON OUR LIVES

Job 2:9

"His wife said to him, "Do you still hold fast to your integrity? Curse God and die!"

ABSOLOM AND REHOBOAM WERE LED ASTRAY BY FALSE COUNSEL

2 Samuel 16:18-23

"(21) And Ahithophel said to Absalom, "Go in to your father's concubines, whom he has left to keep the house; and all Israel will hear that you are abhorred by your father."

2 Chronicles 10:1-6

Then King Rehoboam consulted the elders who stood before his father Solomon while he still lived, saying, "How do you advise me to answer these people?"

INDEPENDENT, CO-DEPENDENT OR INTERDEPENDENT

Independence leads to reliance on ourselves and not enough trust in God.

Exodus 18:13-27

"And so it was, on the next day, that Moses sat to judge the people; and the people stood before Moses from morning until evening. (19) Listen now to my voice; I will give you counsel, and God will be with you: Stand before God for the people, so that you may bring the difficulties to God. (20) And you shall teach them the statutes and the laws, and show them the way in which they must walk and the work they must do. (21) Moreover you shall select from all the people able men, such as fear God, men of truth, hating covetousness; and place such over them to be rulers of thousands, rulers of hundreds, rulers of fifties, and rulers of tens. (22) And let them judge the people at all times. Then it will be that every great matter they shall bring to you, but every small matter they themselves shall judge. So it will be easier for you, for they will bear the burden with you. If you do this thing, and God so commands you, then you will be able to endure, and all this."

1 Kings 19:1-4

"(2) Then Jezebel sent a messenger to Elijah, saying, "So let the gods do to me, and more also, if I do not make your life as the life of one of them by tomorrow about this time.""

LIFE APPLICATIONS

How can being in right standing with God be a potential help for others? (See **Genesis 14**)

What are some of the vital lessons learnt from the following scriptures: **Joshua 9** & **1 Chronicles 15**

What importance and provision does **Genesis 15:9-21** highlight? How can this be practically applied for you today?

List two examples where covenants are affirmed in the Old and New Testament.

Do you believe that Moses' and Elijah's intercession differed in approach? Explain your answer.





What do you believe are the kinds of things that one can intercede for? Provide at least five examples.

If someone was to ask you what they could intercede for you in your life, what would it be?

Do you have any particular issue that you believe God has laid upon your heart to intercede for? Write it out and state what you believe the areas of weakness are and what God's heart is on this issue.

You if You will fall down and worship me." (10) Then Jesus said to him, "Away with you, Satan! For it is written, 'You shall worship the Lord your God, and Him only you shall serve.'"

HERODIAS CONTROLLED HER DAUGHTER

Matthew 14:4-11

"(8) So she, having been prompted by her mother, said, "Give me John the Baptist's head here on a platter.""

PETER TRIED TO CONTROL THE LORD'S DESTINY

Matthew 16:21-23

"(22) Then Peter took Him aside and began to rebuke Him, saying, "Far be it from You, Lord; this shall not happen to You!" (23) But He turned and said to Peter, "Get behind Me, Satan! You are an offense to Me, for you are not mindful of the things of God, but the things of men.""

UNDERSTANDING LEAVING AND CLEAVING

In Genesis, God shows how He desires a husband and wife to be.

Genesis 2:24

"Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and they shall become one flesh."

God creates this kind of godly cleaving so that we can form relationships and bond with each other and with Him. We tend to bond to any authority figures in our lives as we submit to them. This is good, but there can very easily become a fine line between submission and the fear of God, versus idolatry and natural fear. There is the danger when you have gotten to close to people of becoming co-dependant and relying too much on them. If we do not recognize this in time, it can lead to many problems, as these people will begin to have so much influence that we listen to them rather than to God.

COUNSEL IN RELATIONSHIPS – IN THE MULTITUDE OF COUNSELORS THERE IS WISDOM

Proverbs 24:6

"For by wise counsel you will wage your own war, And in a multitude of counselors there is safety."

When we have just one counselor, they can lead us astray, but when we have many counselors and friends, it protects us from falling into this trap.



REBELS AGAINST GOD'S ORDER**Ephesians 5:18-6:9**

"And do not be drunk with wine, in which is dissipation; but be filled with the Spirit, (21) submitting to one another in the fear of God. (22) Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord. (25) Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her, (6:1) Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. (2) Honor your father and mother," which is the first commandment with promise: (3) "that it may be well with you and you may live long on the earth.

(4) And you, fathers, do not provoke your children to wrath, but bring them up in the training and admonition of the Lord. (5) Bondservants, be obedient to those who are your masters according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, in sincerity of heart, as to Christ; (9) And you, masters, do the same things to them, giving up threatening, knowing that your own Master also is in heaven, and there is no partiality with Him."

In all areas of relationship, Anti-Christ tries to get us to rebel.

CONTROL AND POSSESSIVENESS

Sometimes we are so blessed by a person's gifting that we do not check out their character:

Joshua 9:3-14

"But when the inhabitants of Gibeon heard what Joshua had done to Jericho and Ai, (4) they worked craftily, and went and pretended to be ambassadors. (14) Then the men of Israel took some of their provisions; but they did not ask counsel of the Lord."

Simeon and Levi deceived the Shechemites because of their possessiveness over their sister:

Genesis 34:30

"Then Jacob said to Simeon and Levi, "You have troubled me by making me obnoxious among the inhabitants of the land.

Job's wife tried to get him to curse God:

Job 2:9

"His wife said to him, "Do you still hold fast to your integrity? Curse God and die!""

SATAN TRIED TO CONTROL JESUS' DESTINY**Matthew 4:1-11**

"(8) Again, the devil took Him up on an exceedingly high mountain, and showed Him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory. (9) And he said to Him, "All these things I will give

COVENANT CONFIRMED

VITAL LESSONS TO BE LEARNED

It is often in our times of prayer and intercession that the Lord is able to encourage us as we hear from Him.

1 Corinthians 14:3

But he who prophesies speaks edification and exhortation and comfort to men.

The Lord reasons together with us as we enter into prayer and intercession with Him.

Isaiah 1:18

"Come now, and let us reason together," Says the LORD, "Though your sins are like scarlet, They shall be as white as snow; Though they are red like crimson, They shall be as wool.

The Lord is faithful to confirm His word to us.

2 Corinthians 13:1

This will be the third time I am coming to you. "By the mouth of two or three witnesses every word shall be established."

Through the word of the Lord our faith is strengthened.

Romans 10:17

"So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God."

When God enters into covenant with us or us with each other there is a major war that takes place as we saw with Abraham. The enemy knows the power of a true covenant relationship. It is important for us to understand the process of entering into covenant to help us understand God's ways more fully and for us to be more effective in our prayer and intercession.

Genesis 16:1-2

Now Sarai, Abram's wife, had borne him no children. And she had an Egyptian maidservant whose name was Hagar. 2 So Sarai said to Abram, "See now, the LORD has restrained me from bearing children. Please, go in to my maid; perhaps I shall obtain children by her." And Abram heeded the voice of Sarai.

After this glorious time with the Lord Heath and Hades [which will be discussed when we look at principalities] comes to steal his blessings from him. He does not go to prayer over the advice given to him. As the priestly head of his family he does not submit the advice of his wife to the Lord.

Revelation 2:20

"Nevertheless I have a few things against you, because you allow that woman Jezebel, who calls herself a prophetess, to teach and seduce My servants."

BRIBES AND BETRAYS

Matthew 26:14-16

"What are you willing to give me if I deliver Him to you?" And they counted out to him thirty pieces of silver. (16) So from that time he sought opportunity to betray Him."

Matthew 26:59-66

"Now the chief priests, the elders, and all the council sought false testimony against Jesus to put Him to death, (65) Then the high priest tore his clothes, saying, "He has spoken blasphemy! What further need do we have of witnesses? Look, now you have heard His blasphemy! (66) What do you think?" They answered and said, "He is deserving of death. ""

WILL ERUPT INTO OUTBURSTS OR THREATS

Job 2:9

"His wife said to him, "Do you still hold fast to your integrity? Curse God and die!"

WILL DESPISE

2 Samuel 6:16

"Michal, Saul's daughter, looked through a window and saw King David leaping and whirling before the Lord; and she despised him in her heart."

ANTI CHRIST – REBELS & TRIES TO GET US TO BE GOD

Genesis 3:1-6

"Now the serpent was more cunning than any beast of the field which the LORD God had made. And he said to the woman, "Has God indeed said, 'You shall not eat of every tree of the garden'?" (5) For God knows that in the day you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil. ""

TRYS TO GET YOU TO BUILD YOUR RELATIONSHIPS WITHOUT GOD

Psalms 127:1

"Unless the Lord builds the house, they labor in vain who build it; unless the Lord guards the city, The watchman stays awake in vain."

Zechariah 13:6

"And one will say to him, 'What are these wounds between your arms?' Then he will answer, 'Those with which I was wounded in the house of my friends.'"

HEALTHY RELATIONSHIPS

Ruth had seen such a testimony in her mother in law that she was not willing to give it up or to let circumstances divide them.

Ruth 1:16-19

"Entreat me not to leave you, or to turn back from following after you; for wherever you go, I will go; and wherever you lodge, I will lodge; your people shall be my people, and your God, my God. (17) Where you die, I will die, and there will I be buried. The LORD do so to me, and more also, if anything but death parts you and me."

Daniel, Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego had a true close covenant relationship and it caused them to defy and defeat Babylon.

Daniel 3:16-18

"(17) If that is the case, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and He will deliver us from your hand, O king. (18) "But if not, let it be known to you, O king, that we do not serve your gods, nor will we worship the gold image which you have set up."

Jesus walked and talked with His disciples in such a way that, by the end of His life, He could call them His friends.

John 15:15

"No longer do I call you servants, for a servant does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all things that I heard from My Father I have made known to you."

THE ATTACK ON RELATIONSHIPS

Relationships are attacked by Jezebel, Anti-Christ, and Death and Hell:

JEZEBEL – ENTICES**Genesis 3:1-6**

"Now the serpent was more cunning than any beast of the field which the LORD God had made. And he said to the woman, 'Has God indeed said, 'You shall not eat of every tree of the garden'?" (4) Then the serpent said to the woman, 'You will not surely die. (5) For God knows that in the day you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.'"

Genesis 16:3-15

Then Sarai, Abram's wife, took Hagar her maid, the Egyptian, and gave her to her husband Abram to be his wife, after Abram had dwelt ten years in the land of Canaan. 4 So he went in to Hagar, and she conceived. And when she saw that she had conceived, her mistress became despised in her eyes. 5 Then Sarai said to Abram, "My wrong be upon you! I gave my maid into your embrace; and when she saw that she had conceived, I became despised in her eyes. The LORD judge between you and me." 6 So Abram said to Sarai, "Indeed your maid is in your hand; do to her as you please." And when Sarai dealt harshly with her, she fled from her presence. 7 Now the Angel of the LORD found her by a spring of water in the wilderness, by the spring on the way to Shur. 8 And He said, "Hagar, Sarai's maid, where have you come from, and where are you going?" She said, "I am fleeing from the presence of my mistress Sarai." 9 The Angel of the LORD said to her, "Return to your mistress, and submit yourself under her hand." 10 Then the Angel of the LORD said to her, "I will multiply your descendants exceedingly, so that they shall not be counted for multitude." 11 And the Angel of the LORD said to her: "Behold, you are with child, And you shall bear a son. You shall call his name Ishmael, Because the LORD has heard your affliction. 12 He shall be a wild man; His hand shall be against every man, And every man's hand against him. And he shall dwell in the presence of all his brethren." 13 Then she called the name of the LORD who spoke to her, You-Are-the-God-Who-Sees; for she said, "Have I also here seen Him who sees me?" 14 Therefore the well was called Beer Lahai Roi; observe, it is between Kadesh and Bered. 15 So Hagar bore Abram a son; and Abram named his son, whom Hagar bore, Ishmael."

By his lack of submission to the Lord and acting before consulting the Lord who he had reasoned together with earlier about the matter he allows conflict to arise.

Genesis 16:16

Abram was eighty-six years old when Hagar bore Ishmael to Abram.

This happens when he is 86 years old, 11 years after he has begun his walk of faith.

VITAL LESSONS TO BE LEARNED

Often after we have had a mountain top experience the enemy comes with Death and Hades to steal it from us and to challenge the word of the Lord, which we have received.

When we receive advice from man. This is part of God's plan. He shows us that with good advice we should wage war, and in the multitude of counselors there is wisdom. It should not mean that we do not seek God for His leading.

Proverbs 20:18

"Plans are established by counsel; By wise counsel wage war."

Proverbs 24:6

"For by wise counsel you will wage your own war, And in a multitude of counselors there is safety."

God confirms important words to us in the mouth of two or three witnesses (**2 Corinthians 13:1**) and until we receive that we should not proceed or act.

2 Corinthians 13:1

"This will be the third time I am coming to you. By the mouth of two or three witnesses every word shall be established."

When we do not seek God and stay at the altar of prayer it has a direct consequence on our relationship with those around us either for positive or negative.

This happened when Abram was growing in his walk of faith.

Genesis 17:1

When Abram was ninety-nine years old, the LORD appeared to Abram and said to him, "I am Almighty God; walk before Me and be blameless."

After Abram acted hastily in the flesh without being in prayer about an important matter in his life God did not speak to him for 13 years. When Sarai obeyed her husband's advice and tells a lie she is covered and protected. (Genesis 12:10-20 & 20:1-2) However when he as the high priest of his family simply acts on her advice but does not seek the counsel of the Lord he bears the consequences.

He is called to holiness and to walk before the Lord and not to be sidetracked by people.

Genesis 17:2-3

"And I will make My covenant between Me and you, and will multiply you exceedingly." 3 Then Abram fell on his face, and God talked with him, saying:

God allows these 13 years as well as the others real life experiences that He has allowed him to go through to develop humility in him.

notes

What sphere of influence do you see Jesus' authority covering?

List at least three practical ways in which the western society has diminished the office of fatherhood? (eg. Business taking away the time for 'father' time). Think outside the box on this one. Provide what you believe to be solutions to the problems highlighted.

This teaching is part of a series by Jim McNally and his book 'Sonship The path to fatherhood' can be ordered from harvestjim@aol.com

God allows him to start again having learnt and been strengthened by his mistakes. He encourages him in prayer by changing his name and confirming His covenant with him. This change of name spoke of the growth in character that He had allowed to be worked in Abraham's life.

Genesis 17:15-21

Then God said to Abraham, "As for Sarai your wife, you shall not call her name Sarai, but Sarah shall be her name. 16 "And I will bless her and also give you a son by her; then I will bless her, and she shall be a mother of nations; kings of peoples shall be from her." 17 Then Abraham fell on his face and laughed, and said in his heart, "Shall a child be born to a man who is one hundred years old? And shall Sarah, who is ninety years old, bear a child?" 18 And Abraham said to God, "Oh, that Ishmael might live before You!" 19 Then God said: "No, Sarah your wife shall bear you a son, and you shall call his name Isaac; I will establish My covenant with him for an everlasting covenant, and with his descendants after him. 20 "And as for Ishmael, I have heard you. Behold, I have blessed him, and will make him fruitful, and will multiply him exceedingly. He shall beget twelve princes, and I will make him a great nation.

21 "But My covenant I will establish with Isaac, whom Sarah shall bear to you at this set time next year."

God gives him a sign to confirm His covenant with him.

He is encouraged that Sarah will have a son and her name is changed to confirm His word to them. Sarah battles with unbelief as she looks at the circumstances which seem dead. She had tried to bring the vision to pass.

Abraham is totally obedient to the word of the Lord.

Genesis 17:22-27

Then He finished talking with him, and God went up from Abraham. 23 So Abraham took Ishmael his son, all who were born in his house and all who were bought with his money, every male among the men of Abraham's house, and circumcised the flesh of their foreskins that very same day, as God had said to him. 24 Abraham was ninety-nine years old when he was circumcised in the flesh of his foreskin. 25 And Ishmael his son was thirteen years old when he was circumcised in the flesh of his foreskin. 26 That very same day Abraham was circumcised, and his son Ishmael; 27 and all the men of his house, born in the house or bought with money from a foreigner, were circumcised with him.

notes

VITAL LESSONS TO BE LEARNED

There is a special responsibility placed on the father as head of the house. The Lord has given the woman to be there to give wisdom and advice, but it does not mean that the man is not to seek the word of the Lord for himself.

With growth and maturity there comes added responsibility and a call to holiness. God uses every experience that He allows us to go through for a reason.

Romans 8:28

"And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose."

God sees our character preparation including humility as a vital key in our lives and He will use certain experiences to help us to allow it to be developed.

Jesus showed that it was fruit that counted, not works and gifting.

Matthew 7:17-23

"Even so, every good tree bears good fruit, but a bad tree bears bad fruit. 18 'A good tree cannot bear bad fruit, nor can a bad tree bear good fruit. 19 'Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. 20 'Therefore by their fruits you will know them.' 21 'Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven. 22 'Many will say to Me in that day, 'Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name?' 23 'And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!'"

Jesus character was more important than gifting. This is the heart of a father clearly seen in:

Matthew 3:17

"And suddenly a voice came from heaven, saying, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased."

Father God blessed Him for who He was not for what He did. Yet later His Father blessed Him for who He was for what He was doing as a Father pleaser.

Matthew 17:5

"While he was still speaking, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them; and suddenly a voice came out of the cloud, saying, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. Hear Him!"

LIFE APPLICATIONS

What do you believe the importance of being transformed to be? Provide scriptural references.

"This is my beloved Son." What does this speak of? Provide four points.

"In whom I am well pleased." How does this speak of appreciation and how do you believe this element can be better expressed in today's world? Provide some practical ways in which you could practice this element in your day to day routine.

"Listen to Him." What does it mean to listen? What do you believe that term has come to mean in today's modern day society? Is there a justification for selective obedience? How much of subjective reasoning is used in putting to practice the instructions of Jesus?



4. Liberation – One of the great benefits of approbation, appreciation and acceptance is liberation. Since genuine fatherhood does not promote a performance orientation, we are free to be ourselves in Christ, recognized for who we are and not for what we do.

"Listen to Him"

Speaks of Being Authorized and Sent...

1. Elevation – Conscientious fathers will look to provide a platform of expression for their children. Having the opportunity to be heard gives us status among others. Elevation also is experienced through promotion. All legitimate promotion comes from those over us.

2. Affirmation – We are affirmed when people feel we have something worthy of hearing. Fathers are responsible to supply this opportunity for expression. Being heard affirms our position in the family and the church.

3. Authorization – The words, "Listen to Him", authorized Jesus as a spokesman. Jesus warned some by saying, "Depart from me you who work lawlessly; I never knew (or better yet) approved of you." Since clearly God knows everyone, we must assume that He was not saying, "I don't know you," but rather, "I never approved of you or authorized you." Going without being sent is a critical problem in ministry today. In John's Gospel, Jesus speaks at least ten times of "being sent".

Matthew quotes Jesus as saying, "Many (not just a few) will say, "Doesn't our gift and ministry authorize us?"

Matthew 7:20-23

"So then, you will know them by their fruits. Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven; but he who does the will of My Father who is in heaven. Many will say to Me on that day, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in Your name, and in Your name cast out demons, and in Your name perform many miracles?' And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew (approved of) you: depart from me, you who practice lawlessness.'"

Notice that the ministries Jesus mentions here are charismatic in nature.

4. Spheres – Authorization is the process that helps us to know our spheres of influence and responsibility. Since promotion comes from above, those whom we look to for oversight should help us define our sphere of authority and responsibility. Jockeying for position, power struggles, jealousy, and competition are minimized when our spheres are defined.

Samson had a great gift, which was given to him from birth.

Judges 13:5

"For behold, you shall conceive and bear a son. And no razor shall come upon his head, for the child shall be a Nazirite to God from the womb; and he shall begin to deliver Israel out of the hand of the Philistines."

The gift Samson had did not affect his character in any way and he ended up having his eyes plucked out and becoming the laughing stock of his enemies.

Judges 16:21 &25

Then the Philistines took him and put out his eyes, and brought him down to Gaza. 25 So it happened, when their hearts were merry, that they said, "Call for Samson, that he may perform for us." So they called for Samson from the prison, and he performed for them. And they stationed him between the pillars.

Absalom had a great gift and much beauty

2 Samuel 14:25

"Now in all Israel there was no one who was praised as much as Absalom for his good looks. From the sole of his foot to the crown of his head there was no blemish in him."

Yet this gift did not help his character instead it caused him to rebel and steal the hearts of the people in a subtle way.

2 Samuel 15:5-6

"And so it was, whenever anyone came near to bow down to him, that he would put out his hand and take him and kiss him. In this manner Absalom acted toward all Israel who came to the king for judgment. So Absalom stole the hearts of the men of Israel."

His rebellion and misuse of his gift led to his death even though his father loved him to the end.

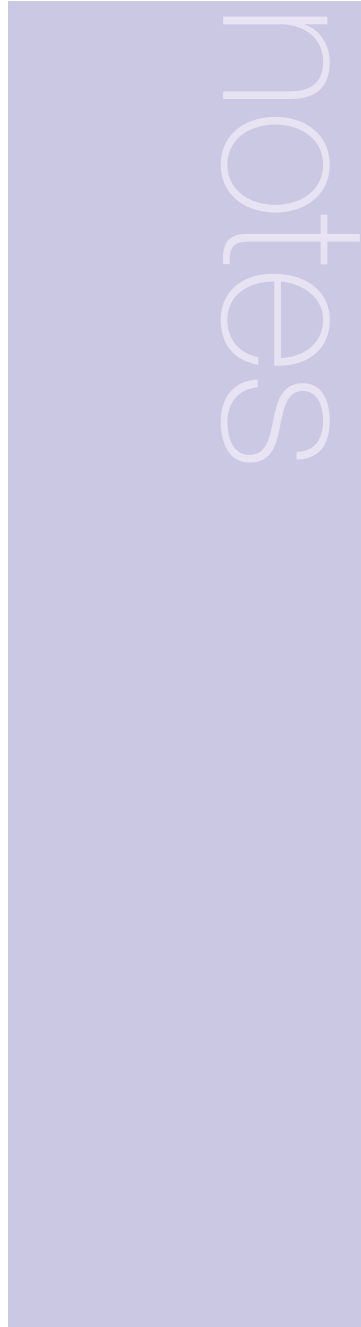
2 Samuel 18:9

Then Absalom met the servants of David. Absalom rode on a mule. The mule went under the thick boughs of a great terebinth tree, and his head caught in the terebinth; so he was left hanging between heaven and earth. And the mule which was under him went on."

God does not condemn us for our failures and falls. Instead He uses them to His glory if we will allow Him to.

Romans 8:1-2

There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit. 2 For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made me free from the law of sin and death.



He allows us to start again having learnt some vital lessons in the process.

His gifts or callings on our lives are not taken away when we miss it and make a mistake. Instead they are strengthened through our trails and tribulations. He takes what we see as stumbling blocks and uses them as building blocks if we will allow Him to.

God encourages us and proves that His word is true in spite of our unbelief. It is only after we have completely died to the vision that He resurrects it in His way and time.

LIFE APPLICATIONS

What do we learn in this chapter about being in right relationship with God? Quote the blessing that Melchizedek pronounces on Abram (v. 20).

What do we need to enable us to know the motives of man?

How does God encourage Abram in this chapter?

Quote [Isaiah 1:18](#). How does this relate to what we do in intercession?

What is a definition for intercession and how do you understand that?

Why do we need to be on guard when we enter into true covenant relationship?

gangs searching for an identity. In most instances the result has been frustration, disillusionment and anger. Identity relies heavily on being validated. Validation comes from being recognized and accepted as a member of a family. Unfortunately, in the church many people are attempting to find their identity through their ministry, gifts or calling. This creates a serious problem. True identity should come out of our relationships. We must be clear as to who we are. In order to do this we must be willing to recognize that identity comes from our natural and/or spiritual family. Jesus found His identity in the clarity of His relationship with His father.

Ephesians 1:3-5

"Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ, just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before Him. In love He predestined us to adoption as sons through Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the kind intention of His will ..."

4. Security – The result of receiving recognition, proper male affection and a sense of identity is security. Security is the foundation for peace and a sense of well being. We feel safe in this atmosphere. I have found that the most insecure people tend to be the most domineering.

"In whom I am well pleased"

Speaks of Being Tested and Approved...

1. Approbation – Many people in the world are seeking approval from those who admire them. But this is upside down. The very nature of leadership requires that one's back is turned to those who are following. Jesus did not look for approval from those who followed Him, but rather sought and received approval from His father.

2. Appreciation – In today's society, performance has become the rule of law for appreciation. The remedy is to be appreciated for who we are instead of what we do. We live in a world that is addicted to performance. When we are only appreciated for what we do, it will cause us to become "human doings" instead of human beings.

3. Acceptance – If rejection is one of the most destructive forces in the earth, then acceptance could have the opposite effect. At the baptism of Jesus, before He had done any public ministry, the father spoke these words. "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." His Father was expressing a relationship between Him and His Son. We must always remember that our acceptance as Christians is based not on what we have done, but upon what He has done!



POWER TO TRANSFORM OUR CHILDREN

Jesus was transfigured.

In Matthew 17, we find Jesus with His three main disciples, Peter, James, and John on a mountain. As Jesus was transfigured before their very eyes, Moses and Elijah appeared. Moses would represent the law, and Elijah would represent the prophets. The Scriptures reveal to us that Jesus was the fulfillment of the law and the prophets. Peter, insensitive to the moment, decided to speak. He suggested that the three be enshrined there and then. However, the Father, spoke in an audible voice three powerful and significant phrases interrupting Peter in his "good" intention. Here is what He said. "This is my Beloved Son, in whom I am well-pleased, listen to Him." I suggest that the Father's blessing embodied in these three statements addresses some of the most critical needs faced by people today. Jesus lived and died to hear these words.

Matthew 17:5

"While he was still speaking, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them; and behold, a voice out of the cloud, saying, 'This is My beloved Son, with whom I am well-pleased; listen to Him!'"

Let us examine these three phrases more closely.

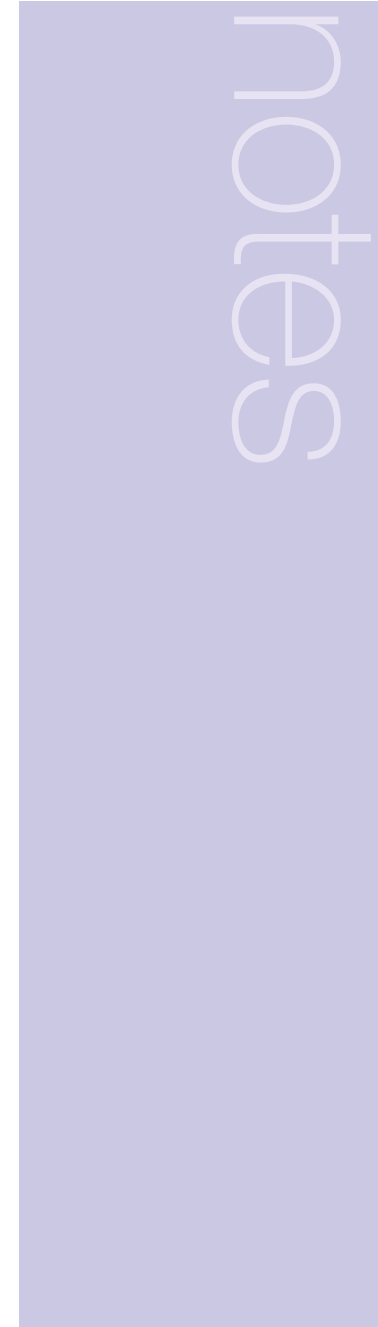
"This is my beloved Son"

Speaks of Relationship and Worth...

1. Recognition – This is my son has to do with recognition. Every child needs recognition, since this relates to our self worth. We gain self worth when we are singled out and honored by those whom we love and respect. A father has the ability to give recognition to his children.

2. Affection – This is my beloved son has to do with affection. The desire for affection is a normal appetite. Legitimate male affection should come from a father. Countless men have told me that their fathers never hugged them or told them they loved them. Fathers who withhold affection can cause their children to search for it in illegitimate ways. A major cause of sexual exploration and experimentation among youth is an illegitimate search for affection.

3. Identity – Having identity is one of the most significant effects of fatherhood. These five words (this is my beloved son) have the potential to give us identity. Jesus had a clear sense of identity. He said, "I know who I am and I know who sent me." Today, due to a lack of fatherhood, millions of youth are in an "identity crisis." Many have joined athletic teams, clubs, fraternal organizations, cults, or even street



What happens so often after a mountain top experience?

If **Proverbs 20:18** tells us that in a multitude of counsellors there is wisdom, why do we then still need to seek God' for His leading for ourselves?

What do we expose ourselves to when we don't seek God and stay at the altar of prayer?

Quote from verse **Genesis 17:10** to see what were the conditions of the covenant that God made with Abraham.

Quote **Romans 8:28** and recall an instance in your life where this was applicable.

What are signs of grown and maturity in our lives?

What is the role of men as the head of the home?

What is the role of women in the decision making process?

INTERCESSION**Genesis 18:1-8**

Then the LORD appeared to him by the terebinth trees of Mamre, as he was sitting in the tent door in the heat of the day. 2 So he lifted his eyes and looked, and behold, three men were standing by him; and when he saw them, he ran from the tent door to meet them, and bowed himself to the ground, 3 and said, "My Lord, if I have now found favor in Your sight, do not pass on by Your servant. 4 "Please let a little water be brought, and wash your feet, and rest yourselves under the tree. 5 "And I will bring a morsel of bread, that you may refresh your hearts. After that you may pass by, inasmuch as you have come to your servant." They said, "Do as you have said." 6 So Abraham hurried into the tent to Sarah and said, "Quickly, make ready three measures of fine meal; knead it and make cakes." 7 And Abraham ran to the herd, took a tender and good calf, gave it to a young man, and he hastened to prepare it. 8 So he took butter and milk and the calf which he had prepared, and set it before them; and he stood by them under the tree as they ate.

His humility and having servant's heart is seen. These are two important characteristics God desires to see in our lives.

Genesis 18: 9-15

9 Then they said to him, "Where is Sarah your wife?" So he said, "Here, in the tent." 10 And He said, "I will certainly return to you according to the time of life, and behold, Sarah your wife shall have a son." (Sarah was listening in the tent door which was behind him.) 11 Now Abraham and Sarah were old, well advanced in age; and Sarah had passed the age of childbearing. 12 Therefore Sarah laughed within herself, saying, "After I have grown old, shall I have pleasure, my lord being old also?" 13 And the LORD said to Abraham, "Why did Sarah laugh, saying,

'Shall I surely bear a child, since I am old?'

14 "Is anything too hard for the LORD? At the appointed time I will return to you, according to the time of life, and Sarah shall have a son." 15 But Sarah denied it, saying, "I did not laugh," for she was afraid. And He said, "No, but you did laugh!"

His character has been molded and he has been allowed to pass through many trials. The Lord brings further encouragement and tells him exactly when His word will be fulfilled.

What is one of the ways that man tries to cover up his mistakes?

What do we see about the grace of God for the second time here?

LIFE APPLICATIONS

Does the Lord always answer us when we intercede in the way we want Him to?

Because Abraham again lies about Sarah for the second time, what does he allow to enter into his family line?

What is the root problem behind the iniquity of deception in this case?

Why do you think God protected Sarah in the midst of this deception?

What do you see about prophetic prayer from this chapter?

GENESIS 18:17-19

And the LORD said, "Shall I hide from Abraham what I am doing, 18 "since Abraham shall surely become a great and mighty nation, and all the nations of the earth shall be blessed in him? 19 "For I have known him, in order that he may command his children and his household after him, that they keep the way of the LORD, to do righteousness and justice, that the LORD may bring to Abraham what He has spoken to him."

God desires to invest Himself in men (fathers) so that they can impact future generations and bring their families into their God given destinies.

GENESIS 18:16-33

He enters into intercession and shows the character of one that enters into a session with God:

1) God shares His burden with intercessors

Then the men rose from there and looked toward Sodom, and Abraham went with them to send them on the way. 17 And the LORD said, "Shall I hide from Abraham what I am doing, 18 "since Abraham shall surely become a great and mighty nation, and all the nations of the earth shall be blessed in him? 19 "For I have known him, in order that he may command his children and his household after him, that they keep the way of the LORD, to do righteousness and justice, that the LORD may bring to Abraham what He has spoken to him."

20 And the LORD said, "Because the outcry against Sodom and Gomorrah is great, and because their sin is very grave, 21 "I will go down now and see whether they have done altogether according to the outcry against it that has come to Me; and if not, I will know."

2) Intercessors draw near to God

22 Then the men turned away from there and went toward Sodom, but Abraham still stood before the LORD.

3) Intercessors plead with the Lord for the righteous

23 And Abraham came near and said, "Would You also destroy the righteous with the wicked? 24 "Suppose there were fifty righteous within the city; would You also destroy the place and not spare it for the fifty righteous that were in it? 25 "Far be it from You to do such a thing as this, to slay the righteous with the wicked, so that the righteous should be as the wicked; far be it from You! Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?"

4) Intercessors know God's way and character

23 And Abraham came near and said, "Would You also destroy the righteous with the wicked? 25 "Far be it from You to do such a thing as this, to slay the righteous with the wicked, so that the righteous should be as the wicked; far be it from You! Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?"

5) Intercessors are humble

27 Then Abraham answered and said, "Indeed now, I who am but dust and ashes have taken it upon myself to speak to the Lord:

6) Intercessors are bold and persistent

28 "Suppose there were five less than the fifty righteous; would You destroy all of the city for lack of five?" So He said, "If I find there forty-five, I will not destroy it." 29 And he spoke to Him yet again and said, "Suppose there should be forty found there?"

So He said, "I will not do it for the sake of forty." 30 Then he said, "Let not the Lord be angry, and I will speak: Suppose thirty should be found there?" So He said, "I will not do it if I find thirty there." 31 And he said, "Indeed now, I have taken it upon myself to speak to the Lord: Suppose twenty should be found there?" So He said, "I will not destroy it for the sake of twenty." 32 Then he said, "Let not the Lord be angry, and I will speak but once more: Suppose ten should be found there?" And He said, "I will not destroy it for the sake of ten."

7) Intercessors receive answers from the Lord

32 Then he said, "Let not the Lord be angry, and I will speak but once more: Suppose ten should be found there?" And He said, "I will not destroy it for the sake of ten."

8) Intercessors become God's friend.

33 So the LORD went His way as soon as He had finished speaking with Abraham; and Abraham returned to his place.

VITAL LESSONS LEARNED

The Lord invests much time in character preparation if we will allow Him to and we do not give up.

When He knows that we are ready only then does He give us what He has promised. He has not withheld what He has promised to punish us but because He knows that our character was not yet strong enough to support His gift and calling upon our lives.

Humility and servant hood are important keys in the Kingdom. God will go to endless lengths to invest Himself and His father's heart in His servants so that they can raise up children of character (justice and judgment) who will impact the world. He desires fathers to be able to impart His destiny to their children.

9 Then they came to the place of which God had told him. And Abraham built an altar there and placed the wood in order; and he bound Isaac his son and laid him on the altar, upon the wood. 10 And Abraham stretched out his hand and took the knife to slay his son. 11 But the Angel of the LORD called to him from heaven and said, "Abraham, Abraham!" So he said, "Here I am." 12 And He said, "Do not lay your hand on the lad, or do anything to him; for now I know that you fear God, since you have not withheld your son, your only son, from Me." 13 Then Abraham lifted his eyes and looked, and there behind him was a ram caught in a thicket by its horns. So Abraham went and took the ram, and offered it up for a burnt offering instead of his son. 14 And Abraham called the name of the place, The-LORD-Will-Provide; as it is said to this day, "In the Mount of The LORD it shall be provided." 15 Then the Angel of the LORD called to Abraham a second time out of heaven, 16 and said: "By Myself I have sworn, says the LORD, because you have done this thing, and have not withheld your son, your only son – 17 "blessing I will bless you, and multiplying I will multiply your descendants as the stars of the heaven and as the sand which is on the seashore; and your descendants shall possess the gate of their enemies. 18 "In your seed all the nations of the earth shall be blessed, because you have obeyed My voice."

We see total obedience to God.

In verse 5 worship is used for the first time. It was seen as giving up his son to God. This was an exact picture of what Jesus would do.

God seals his destiny with an oath.

VITAL LESSONS LEARNED

Abraham obeyed because he was His friend. God blesses our obedience.

In **Romans 12:1-2** Paul shows us worship is giving ourselves sacrificially to God. This helps us to get victory over the our minds

Romans 12:1

Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God-- this is your spiritual act of worship. 2 Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is – his good, pleasing and perfect will.

The fruits of total obedience is an incredible blessing and many rewards.

VITAL LESSONS LEARNED

We see how fear can be a door opener for iniquity to come into our families.

We see how God's grace covers Abraham and Sarah who was totally submitted to Abraham.

God can use us in spite of our weaknesses and mistakes.

How easily we can try to defend ourselves and try to cover up our mistakes. Especially when we have become a worker of iniquity.

We see how God can use us to pray prophetically.

God answers in His way. He is a God of mercy.

Genesis 21

And the LORD visited Sarah as He had said, and the LORD did for Sarah as He had spoken. 2 For Sarah conceived and bore Abraham a son in his old age, at the set time of which God had spoken to him.

The son came at the set time ordained by God

The vision is resurrected in God's perfect time.

VITAL LESSONS LEARNED

We need to be patient and persistent.

If we have been faithful God will bring His promises to pass.

God will do what He has promised in His perfect time.

Genesis 22:1-18

Now it came to pass after these things that God tested Abraham, and said to him, "Abraham!" And he said, "Here I am." 2 Then He said, "Take now your son, your only son Isaac, whom you love, and go to the land of Moriah, and offer him there as a burnt offering on one of the mountains of which I shall tell you." 3 So Abraham rose early in the morning and saddled his donkey, and took two of his young men with him, and Isaac his son; and he split the wood for the burnt offering, and arose and went to the place of which God had told him. 4 Then on the third day Abraham lifted his eyes and saw the place afar off. 5 And Abraham said to his young men, "Stay here with the donkey; the lad and I will go yonder and worship, and we will come back to you." 6 So Abraham took the wood of the burnt offering and laid it on Isaac his son; and he took the fire in his hand, and a knife, and the two of them went together. 7 But Isaac spoke to Abraham his father and said, "My father!" And he said, "Here I am, my son." Then he said, "Look, the fire and the wood, but where is the lamb for a burnt offering?" 8 And Abraham said, "My son, God will provide for Himself the lamb for a burnt offering." So the two of them went together.

LIFE APPLICATIONS

What two qualities are highlighted in Abraham's response to the Lord revealing Himself to Abraham? Provide scriptural reference.

How is character tested? Can you identify times in your life where your character was tested?

How would you define what true friendship is? Provide three different sources for a definition, the bible being one of the sources.

Compare and contrast how Abraham's journey with God starts and finishes. Why do you believe this to be the case?

What do you believe is revealed when we enter into intercession and reasoning with God? Why do you believe it important to be tested?

INTERCESSION CONTINUES

VITAL LESSONS LEARNED

Only after years of preparation in the school of real life experiences does God allow Abraham to enter into a session (intercession) with Him.

Our true character and heart is revealed as we intercede and reason together with God.

Our intercession should come out of a deep friendship with Him.

John 15:15

No longer do I call you servants, for a servant does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all things that I heard from My Father I have made known to you.

Genesis 19

We see the love and mercy of God who calls Lot and his family out and does not destroy the righteous with the wicked.

Iniquity is full and complete therefore God judged the city, but answers Abraham's prayer.

Genesis 20:1-2

And Abraham journeyed from there to the South, and dwelt between Kadesh and Shur, and stayed in Gerar. 2 Now Abraham said of Sarah his wife, "She is my sister." And Abimelech king of Gerar sent and took Sarah.

Abraham again lies about Sarah and allows the iniquity of deception to come in which was going to carry on down his family line.

We see this iniquity goes down the family line due to fear of man.

We need to recognize and deal with iniquity.

Genesis 20:3-10

But God came to Abimelech in a dream by night, and said to him, "Indeed you are a dead man because of the woman whom you have taken, for she is a man's wife." 4 But Abimelech had not come near her; and he said, "Lord, will You slay a righteous nation also? 5 "Did he not say to me, 'She is my sister'? And she, even she herself said, 'He is my brother.' In the integrity of my heart and innocence of my hands I have done this." 6 And God said to him in a dream, "Yes, I know that you did this in the integrity of your heart. For I also withheld you from sinning against Me; therefore I did not let you touch her. 7 "Now therefore, restore the man's wife; for he is a prophet, and he will pray for you and you shall live. But if you do not restore her, know that you

shall surely die, you and all who are yours." 8 So Abimelech rose early in the morning, called all his servants, and told all these things in their hearing; and the men were very much afraid. 9 And Abimelech called Abraham and said to him, "What have you done to us? How have I offended you, that you have brought on me and on my kingdom a great sin? You have done deeds to me that ought not to be done." 10 Then Abimelech said to Abraham, "What did you have in view, that you have done this thing?"

God saves the situation again, but He deals with the problem more severely. In verse 7 He calls Abraham a prophet. This is the first mention of the word prophet. There is a greater level of responsibility.

Genesis 20:11-13

And Abraham said, "Because I thought, surely the fear of God is not in this place; and they will kill me on account of my wife. 12 "But indeed she is truly my sister. She is the daughter of my father, but not the daughter of my mother; and she became my wife. 13 "And it came to pass, when God caused me to wander from my father's house, that I said to her, 'This is your kindness that you should do for me: in every place, wherever we go, say of me, "He is my brother."'

Abraham defends his point and we see how fear is at the root of his problem. We need help to see our blind spots and the root of our problems. We all face different fears.

Genesis 20: 14-16

Then Abimelech took sheep, oxen, and male and female servants, and gave them to Abraham; and he restored Sarah his wife to him. 15 And Abimelech said, "See, my land is before you; dwell where it pleases you." 16 Then to Sarah he said, "Behold, I have given your brother a thousand pieces of silver; indeed this vindicates you before all who are with you and before everybody." Thus she was rebuked.

Abimelech blesses Abraham and restores Sarah to him. God can use us even when we have fear or iniquity in our lives.

Genesis 20:17-18

So Abraham prayed to God; and God healed Abimelech, his wife, and his female servants. Then they bore children; 18 for the LORD had closed up all the wombs of the house of Abimelech because of Sarah, Abraham's wife.

Abraham prays for Abimelech and God brought healing to him and his family.