

March 23/24, 2002

## Study Questions

*By Faith We Live: A Study of the Life of Abraham*

### Faith and Fear... Again

Genesis 20:1-18

#### Opening Discussion

1. What comes to mind when you think of failure? What would you consider to be one of your worst failures? Why did you fail?
2. What do you think is the relationship between faith and fear? Can the two coexist in our hearts? Why or why not?
3. How often are our failures due to our fears? Why is that?
4. Have you ever failed spiritually to the extent that you wondered if God could ever use you again? Do you still wonder that? If not, what convinced you otherwise?

#### Bible Study

1. Review the highlights of Abraham's story from Genesis 12-19. What have been his great triumphs and what have been his failures? Do you notice any patterns?
2. What has transpired in Genesis 17-19? If you didn't know the story, what would you expect from Abraham in chapter 20?

How could he experience what he's experienced with God, then fail so miserably with what seemed like such a small test in comparison?

3. Abraham and Sarah had not only been promised a son, but the due date was even established. How could Abraham and Sarah know all this and still fail to trust God by faith? Had God not stepped in, they would have forfeited all God had promised.

Do we ever behave the same way, considering all the promises God has given us? Give some examples? Why do we do this?

4. Notice Abraham's reason for his deception in verse 11. In what ways do we allow others' lack of fear of God" affect our behavior?

We compromise when our fear of others is greater than our faith in God. Can you think of times when you compromised or failed to take a stand because your fear was greater than your faith?

Would you fail in the same way if God were there at your side, as He was present with Abraham in Genesis 18? Why or why not?

5. If we have the indwelling Spirit of Jesus in us at all times as believers, how is that different from what Abraham experienced in Genesis 18?

Compare how the disciples lived when Jesus was at their side, versus how they responded when they were separated from Him.

Read John 16:5-15. Jesus said it was to our advantage that He go away and send His Spirit. Why is that?

What do we have today as believers that Abraham did not have? How can this help us stand when we are pressured to compromise?

6. Even though Abimelech seems to be a person of integrity in this story and Abraham acts deceitfully, God clearly demonstrates a commitment to Abraham that He doesn't have with Abimelech. Why is that?

Abraham's question in chapter 18 was whether or not God treats the righteous and the wicked alike. Does He? Does His commitment to us depend on our performance?

How does God's commitment to Abraham in this story reflect what He promised in chapter 15?

What do we learn about God and His commitment to us in times of failure from this story?

Does God's commitment to you make you want to be more careless or to be more faithful? Why?

## **Application**

1. What area of life creates in you the most fear? What specific area of faith does that fear test? What practical things can you do to gain victory in this area? Name three.
2. What one specific thing did you learn about God in this story that will help you to stand strong the next time you are tempted to compromise because of fear?
3. Spend time praying for one another's weaknesses. Pray for faith in those areas where you struggle with fear.