

May 4/5, 2002

Study Questions
By Faith We Live: A Study of the Life of Abraham
Faith and Works
Genesis 24:1-67

Opening Discussion

1. What is the relationship between faith and works? How do you know what part is God's part and what part is your part?
2. How do you distinguish between taking great steps of faith trusting God to provide, and presuming upon God and His goodness?
3. How do you know when to move out by faith and trust God to lead you along the way, versus the times when you need to wait on God for His leading?
4. Have there been times when you thought you were stepping out by faith, only to later realize you had made a bad choice? Have there been times when you stepped out by faith and God obviously rewarded that step of faith? What made the difference between the two situations?

Bible Study

1. Read Genesis 24:1-67. This is the longest chapter in the book of Genesis.
2. Abraham is "advanced in age" and it's time to pass the faith torch to Isaac and his family. To do this, Isaac needs a wife. Why is Abraham concerned about Isaac marrying a Canaanite woman; and why is Abraham so adamant about Isaac not leaving the land of promise to go back to Ur?
3. How do you balance Abraham's great faith related to Isaac (ch. 22) and his belief that God will provide a wife (24:7) with his "practical" advice about who to marry and not wanting Isaac to leave the land?

Was Abraham's determination to keep Isaac from going back to Ur a lack of faith?
Why or why not?

4. Genesis 24:12-14 records the first prayer in the Bible (other than Abraham's conversation with God about Sodom). What do we learn about faith and works from the servant's prayer?

Is this a good pattern for us? Why or why not?

5. Why do you suppose the servant went back through all the details of the story for Rebekah's family?

How did they respond?

How did these details of God orchestrating the circumstances affect Rebekah and her family? The servant was asking a young teenage daughter to leave her family (likely they would not see each other again) to travel 400 miles to live in the desert and marry a man she'd never met. How responsive do you think Rebekah or her family would have been, had they not heard how God orchestrated the events?

How does this help us process the "rightness" or "wrongness" of the servant's prayer in verses 12-14?

6. Notice the story ends with no mention of Abraham, even though Abraham was the main character in the opening scene. Why is this?
7. In this story, the torch of faith revealing God's plan is being passed from Abraham to Isaac. As this critical transition is highlighted, the writer wants us to know something about faith and works on our own journey of faith. To highlight this, try to identify all the references to God and His part in this story and all the proactive steps taken by Abraham and his servant in the story. What does this teach us about faith and works?

Application

1. Write in a sentence or two what you believe to be the relationship between faith and works.

What does this mean for you on a daily basis?

2. What practical daily things are necessary to know God's part and your part in your journey of faith? See if you can list three.

How important are these if you want to be a person of faith? Why?

3. Spend time in prayer asking God to help you better understand how to live by faith.