

Are You Moving Ahead Without God?

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Genesis 12:10-20

When Abraham first encountered God in Genesis 12:1, he received a challenging instruction, “*Get out of your country, from your family and from your father’s house.*” God then promised Abraham in Genesis 12:2, that He would do three things for him if he would obey: first, God promised to make Abraham a great nation; second, God promised to bless him; and third, God promised to make his name great.

God followed these three great promises with a statement that would reveal the purpose behind the promises; “*And you shall be a blessing. 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*” (Genesis 12:2-3). Simply stated, the purpose behind the promises was to make Abraham a blessing to the people around him. You shouldn’t be surprised by this as this has always been the heart of God for His people. All of the blessings He so generously gives us are designed to make us a blessing to those around us.

Are You Willing to Move without God's Direction?

Shortly after arriving in Canaan and setting up his new home, a famine swept across the land. I have no doubt that Abraham immediately sought God to address his need for provision. However, the record of Scripture tells us that Abraham became impatient and was no longer willing to wait on God to address his needs.

Abraham chose to take matters into his own hands and he began a journey towards Egypt in search of provision. This southward journey would literally take him out of the will of God. It is important to remember that going to Egypt was Abraham’s idea ... not God’s! God didn’t make the journey with Abraham because it wasn’t His plan for him. Abraham moved forward without God’s presence guiding him, and without God’s presence protecting him. While residing in Egypt, Abraham learned a great life-lesson ... *it is better to endure discomfort in the place of God’s appointment, than to enjoy a multitude of comforts in a place that God has not sent you.*

Don’t be too quick to judge Abraham for not waiting on God to solve his problems. We can remember those times that we have been guilty of not waiting on God’s direction. We sometimes take matters into our own hands. We presume that God is “slow-on-the-draw” and needs our help in determining our future. Like Abraham, we realize that it is a big and costly mistake not to wait on God’s direction!

Do You Have The Illusion of Self-Provision?

Abraham did indeed find provision in Egypt; however, he paid a very high price in the process. He found a way to solve his provision problem, but he also found himself in deep trouble. Abraham was quick to realize that his wife Sarah was going to be an issue in this new country they had moved too. Sarah was a very attractive woman and he was afraid that if Pharaoh knew that he was her husband, he would kill him. Then, with Abraham out of the way, Pharaoh would simply add Sarah to his collection of wives if Abraham was out of the way. He then hatched a plan for his self-preservation that was based on a lie. Abraham wanted Sarah to tell Pharaoh, or anyone who asked for that matter, that she was his sister so that his life would be spared; *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. 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. Please say you are my sister, that it may be well with me for your sake, and that I may live because of you” (Genesis 12:11-13).

We must realize that living in the will of God will never require us to lie about anything ... *ever!* The moment Abraham gave birth to his plan to lie, he lost his moral integrity. Abraham's lie also negated what God had purposed for his life ... to make him a blessing to the nations. God had called Abraham to be a prototype of someone who was not like anyone else on the face of the earth with regards to his moral integrity. Abraham's lie made it impossible for him to be a blessing to the people around him because he had compromised his character. He had adopted the mentality of “do whatever it takes to get what you want.” Abraham wrongly assumed that “the end would justify the means.”

Abraham's lie also put Sarah at grave risk. Underneath the spoken request for Sarah to lie, was a treacherous unspoken statement ... “Sarah, I'm willing to put your honor and your virtue at risk to get what I want. Play along, and don't mess up my plans.” In asking Sarah to lie, he failed as her spiritual leader and covering.

Abraham had become trapped in the illusion of self-provision. No one can argue that Abraham's plan made him rich as we read in Genesis 12:14-16, *So it was, when Abram came into Egypt, that the Egyptians saw the woman, that she was very beautiful. The princes of Pharaoh also saw her and commended her to Pharaoh. And the woman was taken to Pharaoh's house. He treated Abram well for her sake. He had sheep, oxen, male donkeys, male and female servants, female donkeys, and camels.* Abraham looked at his rapidly multiplying wealth and assumed that God was endorsing his means of acquisition and blessing his decisions. We have the same problem today as many look at the end result of compromise and automatically assume that the blessings actually came from God. They also assume that God endorses any means by which achievements are made.

God makes it very clear that Abraham's plan was not what He desired. Genesis 12:17 tells us the plan had a downside, *But the LORD plagued Pharaoh and his house with great plagues because of Sarai, Abram's wife.* Abraham was supposed to be a blessing to Pharaoh; instead, he brought a curse on him. I believe that the result of Abraham's self-willed plan gives us irrefutable evidence that he was out of the will of God in Egypt.

Are You a Blessing to Others as God Intended?

God has always intended for his people to be a blessing to others. Zechariah 8:13 tells us, *It shall come to pass that just as you were a curse among the nations, O house of Judah and house of Israel, so I will save you, and you shall be a blessing.* When we walk in God's will, and do things God's way, we will always bear spiritual fruit that will be a blessing to others.

The Psalmist David proclaims this promise in Psalm 1:1-3, *Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor stands in the path of sinners, nor sits in the seat of the scornful; But his delight is in the law of the LORD, and in His law he meditates day and night. He shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water that brings forth its fruit in its season, whose leaf also shall not wither; and whatever he does shall prosper.* Please understand that the fruit mentioned in this passage of Scripture was not for the benefit of the tree. The fruit of a tree is always intended to be a blessing to those who pass by the tree. When we are outside of the will of God, we will become spiritually barren. There will be no spiritual fruit evident in our lives that will be a blessing to others. Walking outside of the will of God will also make us like a dry well. We may look good on the outside; but, we are dry within. If anyone dips their bucket of need into our lives, they will draw the bucket up, and it will be dry and dusty.

We would do well to remember that the presence of problems in our lives is not proof that we are out of the will of God. It is spiritual dryness and barrenness that gives evidence to our being outside God's will. The converse is also true; prosperity is not proof that we are in the will of God. The presence of spiritual fruit is evidence that we are centered in God's will.

It is not hard to imagine that Abraham must have assumed his multiplied blessings were the result of God's endorsement of his plan ... nothing could be further from the truth. It is also not hard to imagine that Abraham must have had a problem with his conscience as Abraham was becoming increasingly familiar with God and His ways. I have no doubt that deep inside his heart, Abraham was troubled over asking Sarah to lie about their relationship as husband and wife; thereby, putting her at risk. Then there is the little matter of bringing a plague to Pharaoh ... God's design was Abraham to be a blessing.

We can all relate to Abraham's plight. We all, at various times in our lives, find ourselves compromising our convictions to get something we want. We then end up wrestling within our conscience. We work overtime trying to convince ourselves that "the end justifies the means" but our heart simply won't let us win the argument.

What Should You Do When Faced with Adversity?

When you are faced with adversity, don't run from where God has purposed you to be. If you do run, realize you will be trying to solve problems that are bigger than you without God's help. Instead of running ... pray! Choose to believe the promises of God's Word and wait on God to answer. Sink your roots deep into the soil of God's appointed place for you. The fruit of His blessings will always come in His perfect time. The end result of your obedience, and faithful trust in God, will be that He will make you a blessing to everyone around you.

BE HONEST WITH YOURSELF ...

Are you firmly planted where God has purposed you to be in life?

Are you wandering around in self-will trying to get what you want?

Are you putting the people you love at risk to achieve personal goals?

Are you a dry well, spiritually speaking, with nothing to offer anyone?

Are you a blessing to others, or do they just endure your presence?