

## Relationship Problems in Your Faith Journey?

### Think Test!

Christian's trials = testing of gold in a furnace (1 Peter 1:7)

*But he knows the way that I take; when he has tested me, I will come forth as gold.*  
Job 23:10 (New International Version)

In Genesis 13, Abraham demonstrates **four decisions** that will help faith function in the midst of a relational test.

- **Decision #1: RENEW YOUR RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD.**

*So Abram went up from Egypt to the Negev, with his wife and everything he had, and Lot went with him. <sup>2</sup>Abram had become very wealthy in livestock and in silver and gold. <sup>3</sup>From the Negev he went from place to place until he came to Bethel, to the place between Bethel and Ai where his tent had been earlier <sup>4</sup>and where he had first built an altar. There Abram called on the name of the LORD.* Genesis 13:1-4 (NIV)

Altar = a place of sacrifice and worship, and also a place of remembrance

#### When believers go back to where they "first built an altar," they go either:

- To repent

*So I strive always to keep my conscience clear before God and man.*  
Acts 24:16 (NIV)

Repentance = a heartfelt sorrow for my sin toward God, and a sincere commitment to leave that sin and walk in obedience to Him

*I am afraid that when I come again my God will humble me before you, and I will be grieved over many who have sinned earlier and have not repented of the impurity, sexual sin and debauchery in which they have indulged.* 2 Corinthians 12:21 (NIV)

- To recenter (Realign your relationship with God and His priorities)

- To refresh

*The LORD is my shepherd, I shall not be in want. <sup>2</sup>He makes me lie down in green pastures, he leads me beside quiet waters, <sup>3</sup>he restores my soul. He guides me in paths of righteousness for his name's sake.* Psalm 23:1-3 (NIV)

- **Decision #2: HANDLE THE RELATIONSHIP ISSUE BY USING BIBLICAL PRINCIPLES.**

*And Lot, who went with Abram, also had flocks and herds and tents, <sup>6</sup>so that the land could not support both of them dwelling together; for their possessions were so great that they could not dwell together, <sup>7</sup>and there was strife between the herdsmen of Abram's livestock and the herdsmen of Lot's livestock. At that time the Canaanites and the Perizzites were dwelling in the land. <sup>8</sup>Then Abram said to Lot, "Let there be no strife between you and me, and between your herdsmen and my herdsmen, for we are kinsmen.* Genesis 13:5-8 (English Standard Version)

#### Godly conflict principles demonstrated by Abraham:

- When a problem arises, take the initiative, before it escalates.

*So if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother has something against you, <sup>24</sup>leave your gift there before the altar and go. First be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift.* Matthew 5:23-24 (ESV)

- Take a wise approach by owning the problem.

- Keep your motives right.

- **Decision #3: TRUST GOD PROTECT YOUR INTERESTS.** (Genesis 13:9-13)

*Is not the whole land before you? Let's part company. If you go to the left, I'll go to the right; if you go to the right, I'll go to the left."* <sup>10</sup>Lot looked up and saw that the whole plain of the Jordan was well watered, like the garden of the LORD, like the land of Egypt, toward Zoar. (This was before the LORD destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah.) <sup>11</sup>So Lot chose for himself the whole plain of the Jordan and set out toward the east. The two men parted company: <sup>12</sup>Abram lived in the land of Canaan, while Lot lived among the cities of the plain and pitched his tents near Sodom. <sup>13</sup>Now the men of Sodom were wicked and were sinning greatly against the LORD. Genesis 13:9-13 (NIV)