

Our Ability to Mess Up and God's Ability to Rescue

Genesis 20

Genesis 20 contains four principles that will help believers avoid faith reversals in their lives.

- **Principle #1: OUR FAITH JOURNEY REQUIRES CONSISTENT FAITH CHOICES.**

From there Abraham journeyed toward the territory of the Negeb and lived between Kadesh and Shur; and he sojourned in Gerar. ²And Abraham said of Sarah his wife, "She is my sister." And Abimelech king of Gerar sent and took Sarah.

Genesis 20:1-2 (English Standard Version)

- "Faith choice" = choices that reflect trust in, reliance upon and obedience to God.

- God's kids need to walk by faith.

. . . walk in the footsteps of the faith that our father Abraham had . . .
Romans 4:12b (ESV)

. . . for we walk by faith, not by sight. 2 Corinthians 5:7 (ESV)

- **Principle #2: WHEN FEAR OF LOSS DICTATES OUR CHOICES, WE JEOPARDIZE GOD'S BEST FOR OUR LIVES.**

And Abimelech said to Abraham, "What did you see, that you did this thing?" ¹¹Abraham said, "I did it because I thought, There is no fear of God at all in this place, and they will kill me because of my wife." Genesis 20:10-11 (ESV)

- What Abraham saw was more important than what he knew about God.

(See Genesis 17:1; 18:14; and, 1 Samuel 17:26, 45)

For whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for me will find it. Matthew 16:25 (New International Version)

- **Principle #3: GOD EXERCISES HIS OVERRULING PROVIDENCE TO ACCOMPLISH HIS PURPOSES.**

But God came to Abimelech in a dream one night and said to him, "You are as good as dead because of the woman you have taken; she is a married woman." ⁴Now Abimelech had not gone near her, so he said, "Lord, will you destroy an innocent nation? ⁵Did he not say to me, 'She is my sister,' and didn't she also say, 'He is my brother'? I have done this with a clear conscience and clean hands." ⁶Then God said to him in the dream, "Yes, I know you did this with a clear conscience, and so I have kept you from sinning against me. That is why I did not let you touch her. ⁷Now return the man's wife, for he is a prophet, and he will pray for you and you will live. But if you do not return her, you may be sure that you and all yours will die." Genesis 20:3-7 (NIV)

(See 1 Samuel 23:14; Psalm 73:26; Acts 3:15)

- **Principle #4: GOD GRACIOUSLY RESCUES AND RESTORES OUR LIVES.**

Then Abimelech took sheep and oxen, and male servants and female servants, and gave them to Abraham, and returned Sarah his wife to him. ¹⁵And Abimelech said, "Behold, my land is before you; dwell where it pleases you." ¹⁶To Sarah he said, "Behold, I have given your brother a thousand pieces of silver. It is a sign of your innocence in the eyes of all who are with you, and before everyone you are vindicated." ¹⁷Then Abraham prayed to God, and God healed Abimelech, and also healed his wife and female slaves so that they bore children. ¹⁸For the LORD had closed all the wombs of the house of Abimelech because of Sarah, Abraham's wife. Genesis 20:14-18 (ESV)

One definition of grace = an abundance of God's mercy in the face of our failure.

If I had cherished iniquity in my heart, the Lord would not have listened. ¹⁹But truly God has listened; he has attended to the voice of my prayer. Psalm 66:18-19 (ESV)

Now the LORD was gracious to Sarah as he had said, and the LORD did for Sarah what he had promised. ²Sarah became pregnant and bore a son to Abraham in his old age, at the very time God had promised him. ³Abraham gave the name Isaac to the son Sarah bore him. Genesis 21:1-3 (NIV)