

WEEKLY REFLECTION

Though Abram chose to worship God as He received God's promise to him (Gen. 12:7), his story in Genesis 12 ends disappointingly. Not only does he ask his wife Sarai to lie to Pharaoh by telling him she's his sister, not his wife (v.11-13), he also effectively sells her into Pharaoh's harem as Pharaoh gifts him various livestock and servants. (v.16) By God's grace, Abram's deception is revealed, but Pharaoh acts more righteously than Abram did as he simply sends them away with all he has given them. (v.20)

In Genesis 13-14, we see Abram undergoing a major shift. Not only does he graciously offer his nephew Lot his pick of the land when their households fight over a lack of resources. (Gen. 13:5-7) He continues to trust God in the midst of uncertainty and responds to God's promise of providence and abundance by worshipping Him. (v.18)

When Lot is kidnapped by Chedorlaomer king of Elam and his coalition of kings, Abram even rises to the occasion by leading 318 of his trained men to rescue Lot and his household. (Gen. 14:12-16) This is in stark contrast to how Abram behaved when confronted by Pharaoh in Genesis 12. Like the first man Adam before him, Abram remained silent when faced with what he had done, but here we see Abram courageously going forth to defeat Chedorlaomer and the kings with him.

After Abram's return and victory, King Melchizedek (whose name means "king of righteousness") of Salem (derived from the Hebrew root word "shalom") and King Bera (meaning "son of evil" or "in evil") of Sodom go out to greet him. (v.17-18) Abram's next choice here reveals what he's put his trust in: to the priestly king Melchizedek, Abram gladly gives a tenth of everything as he acknowledges the part that God played in the battle. (v.18-20) With Bera, Abram refuses what is offered to him, trusting instead that God alone will provide. (v.21-24)

QUESTIONS

QUESTION ONE:

What is something that you were looking forward to (whether it's dinner at a trendy restaurant, a brand-new tech gadget, or a new job etc.), but once you "received it", it turned out to be a big disappointment or even a source of stress? What about it got you excited, and how did you handle the disappointment afterwards?

QUESTION TWO:

Both Lot and Abram had choices to make in Genesis 13-14: Lot chose to trust in his own wisdom, which ultimately led to him and his household being taken hostage. Abram, on the other hand, trusts in God's provision as he allows Lot to have first pick of the land. Later on, he rejects Bera's offer for him to keep his possessions, trusting in God to provide as he refuses to let Bera take the credit for any wealth he amasses.

What are some signs that we might be relying on our own wisdom instead of trusting in God as we seek to take hold of what's in front of us? How can we follow in Abram's footsteps to trust in and depend on God, despite the temptation to compromise for worldly gain?

QUESTION THREE:

If you were to make an honest assessment of your life right now, in what areas have you been treating God with the same kind of entitlement that Bera showed Abraham, despite God's salvation for you? How can you repent by laying aside your ego and your need for control to trust Him with whatever's going on?