

THE REFERENCE POINT

“Now there was a famine in the land, and Abram went down to Egypt to live there for a while because the famine was severe.”

—*GENESIS 12:10*

Many Christians will testify to the fact they have been caught up in a situation that has caused them to panic. From a practical, realistic standpoint, there seemed no way out, and devastating loss was pending. What is the answer to situations like this? How do we get through them?

There is a fine line between faith and fear. This is clearly evident in Abraham’s life when he had sidelined God, and took it upon himself to resolve his threatening situation. Abraham was on a divine mission, orchestrated by God in which he was led to the land of Canaan. When he first arrived, he built an altar to the Lord at Shechem, and then between Bethel and Ai, he pitched his tent and built another altar to the Lord. In so doing, he was acknowledging that this was God’s business and it was God who had brought him there.

But when a severe famine suddenly hit Canaan, Abraham panicked. He turned from acting in dependence upon God to acting in independence of God, and in the process, made the transition from a man of faith to a man of fear. The fine line between faith and fear lies between keeping our eyes on God, regardless of what is happening, or trying to figure out a solution ourselves. In doing the latter, our faith turns to fear.

Abraham made the mistake of looking at God through the famine instead of looking at the famine through God. What we look through becomes our reference point and determines the direction we take. If Abraham

had looked at the famine through God, God would have been his reference point, which would have fed his faith. But he looked at God through the famine, and the famine was his reference point, which fed his fear. So Abraham bolted to what he thought would be a safe refuge in Egypt. Once we yield to fear, we rely on our own resources, which usually opens the door to selfishness, disobedience, manipulation and deceit. Abraham abandoned God's mission, and while in Egypt, gained more wealth through deceitful means, allowing Pharaoh to believe his wife was his sister.

Regardless of what famine we face, whether it's food, shelter, love, finances, work or any other area of lack, if we remain rooted in God, our security remains intact. Our circumstances vary, of course, but God is utterly consistent and a secure reference point in our turmoil. Whatever befalls us, let us keep our focus on God.

PRAYER: Dear Father, grant me a fearless faith, one that is always trusting and dependent upon You, regardless of situations that threaten me. Thank You, Lord.

TO REFLECT UPON: Has fear overridden my faith in choices I've made? If so, what has been the outcome?