



ABRAHAM

SESSION 3

- **Main Passage:** Genesis 20:1-13
 - **Supporting Passage:**
 - **Purpose:** To understand that we lay the foundation for our sin when we begin to trust ourselves more than God.
 - **Session Snapshot:** This session looks at a pretty wild encounter between Abraham and a Philistine king named Abimelech. This is not Abraham's finest moment. Far from it. But we've said all along that part of why we study the men of the Bible is because they are indeed REAL MEN. We see them in full view, warts and all. Our call as men is to learn from the right and the wrong things they do. This week will be the first time we encounter Abraham in a moment of sin. Our challenge is to look at from all sides so that we don't repeat the same mistake in our own lives.
-

GETTING STARTED

Kick-off your time together with a quick connection time or reviewing what you did in the last session.

FIRST, remind your group that this is week 3 of their video series on Abraham and that it's part of a larger study looking at the real men of the Bible.

THEN, if you want to start with asking men for prayer requests, checking in on how their weeks have gone, or any other housekeeping tasks, do so.

FINALLY, if there are no questions or other input, transition into the *Digging In* section of your leader's guide.

DIGGING IN

Jump into the session by watching this week's video.

FIRST, play the video. You can access the video by logging into your Iron Hill Press account.

THEN, when the video is over, lead men in a short discussion based on what Rick covered. Feel free to come up with your own questions, or consider asking some similar to those below:

- **Abraham faced a rough situation. Abraham feared the kings of the regions he passed through. Sarah was considered beautiful. Abraham feared that if these rulers knew he was Sarah's husband, they would take her as a concubine and kill him. He hatched a plot to say she was his sister, not so that they wouldn't still take Sarah, but so that they wouldn't kill him. What does this tell us about Abraham's character?**

- **What was Abraham’s sin? (HINT: There may be more than one way to answer this.)**
- **Abraham had a conversation with Sarah ahead of time where he essentially asked her to lie any time he needed her to. How does this sit with you? What do you think this did to Sarah’s view of Abraham’s leadership?**
- **We tend to think that our sins affect us alone. This couldn’t be further from the truth. When we fail to boldly lead as God expects us to, what impact does it have on the people with whom God has given us influence?**
- **List the character flaws Abraham demonstrated.**
 - **Now, let’s pause for a moment and think about what Abraham might have done differently. How might he have responded in a godly way to the challenges he faced, regardless of the consequences?**
 - **Look back at the character flaws you spotted in Abraham’s life. Let’s ask a difficult question: These aren’t uncommon flaws in men, are they? There may very well have been seasons in your life where you struggled with these very issues. What is it about us as men that causes us to stumble in these ways even as we strive to follow God?**
- **Proverbs 3:5–6 says, “Trust in the LORD with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make straight your paths.” The wisdom in these verses seems to fly in the face of how Abraham chose to deal with the problem he faced. How so?**

FINALLY, transition into the *Opening the Word* portion of your time together by saying something like the following:

- **One of the painful and yet most powerful truths about the Bible is that it does not sugarcoat the failures of the people depicted in its pages. It's painful because we watch godly men stumble. But it's powerful because God doesn't hide people's flaws from us. He lets us see their flaws because He wants us to learn from their example. We're going to do that throughout REAL MEN, and we'll start by looking back at the interaction between Abraham and Abimelech.**

OPENING THE WORD

Spend time going deeper into a specific concept Rick introduced in the video.

FIRST, explain that you’re going to take a more in-depth look at Genesis 20:1–13. But before you do, reviewing the context for the passage is important. Use the following bullet points to guide you:

- **Author:** While there’s no specific author named within the text, Moses is the accepted author for Genesis, with some editing and additions done after his death (such as the account of his death!).
- **Time frame:** It's difficult to establish with any certainty a date for the completion of the Pentateuch (a name for the first five books of the Bible—including Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy—of which Genesis is a part). Most of the material originated from Moses himself. Depending on the date of the Exodus (which is also not known for sure), that would make the date for the writing of Genesis sometime in the 1400s or the 1200s BC.
- **Purpose:** Genesis details the earliest history of our world, including creation and Adam and Eves' fall. It also focuses on the emergence of Israel, not only as God's people but as the group God would work through to bring redemption to the world.

THEN, read or have a volunteer read Genesis 20:1–7. When the volunteer has finished, direct your group’s attention back to the beginning of the passage. Lead them in a brief discussion by asking something similar to the following:

- **Believe it or not, this is the second time Abraham has pulled the "she's not my wife, she's my sister" stunt. (he had previously done it in Genesis 12:10-20. And he will do it one more time in Genesis 26:1-33. What is it about sin that, once done, makes it easier to do again and again?**
 - Answers will vary.
- **Here’s an interesting question. Was Abimelech a God-follower? What does this interaction tell us about both God and Abimelech?**
 - *Answer:* First, God did and does interact and intervene with people who do not follow Him. God spoke to Abimelech in a dream, and Abimelech responded. Abimelech's response is interesting. Strangely, he, a non-follower of God, is more righteous in this moment than Abraham.
- **God says something profound to Abimelech in vs. 6. What did God say he did for Abimelech?**
 - *Answer:* God actively kept Abimelech from sinning with Sarah.
- **Why is it such a big deal that God intervened to keep Abimelech from having sexual relations with Sarah?**
 - *Answer:* From a very practical level, there couldn't be any doubt about who the father was of the child Abraham and Sarah would eventually have. But from a bigger picture, it's powerful that God is on record for saying that He intervenes in our lives to prevent us from sinning. This should give us a huge boost in our efforts to pursue holiness. We have the power of the Spirit, and we know that at least on some level and in some circumstances, God actively works to keep us righteous.

Explain that this is a remarkable passage in many ways. Here we see God intervening to lessen the effects of Abraham’s sin. We don’t tend to look for God’s grace in the Old Testament as readily as we do in the New Testament. But there is evidence of it throughout. Here, not only does God force a convicting confrontation between Abraham and Abimelech, one that would make Abraham face his sin head-on, He saves Abimelech from the results of Abraham's deception. This is a powerful glimpse into God's character and His desire to show both grace and justice.

NEXT, pick back up in verse 8 and read through 13. Lead your group in a discussion. Say something like:

- **Abimelech said, "You have done to me things that ought not to be done." What a fitting summation of what sin really is. To this, Abraham replied, "I did it because I thought . . ." Don't miss that. "I did it because I thought . . ." How does this sum up the root of Abraham’s problem?**
 - *Answer:* Abraham viewed the entire situation through the lens of his understanding and not the lens of faith in God. Abraham sinned because he relied too much on his own, flawed interpretation of his circumstances.
- **Share a time when you saw things one way only to discover that, in truth, the situation was very different. How did it make you feel?**
 - Answers will vary.
- **The ripple effects of Abraham's doubt of God's ability to provide for him went far and wide. It seems easy for us on this side of the story to say that if God had called Abraham, he would surely make a way for him. But in the moment, Abraham lost sight of this. What is one way that we can keep from falling into the same trap? In other words, how can we remind ourselves of God's perfect provision over our lives?**
 - Answer will vary. But "remembrance" was a big deal for the Israelites. Throughout Scripture, God's people called on one another to remember what God had done for them in the past. By doing so, it enabled them to have faith in the future. This is a good practice for us as well.

FINALLY, remind your group that we study the men of the Bible to apply the lessons they learned to our own lives. Ask if there are any questions about what you have discussed so far, then move to *Accepting the Challenge* so that you can begin applying what you've learned.

ACCEPTING THE CHALLENGE

Focus your group's attention on the takeaways from your time together.

FIRST, explain that you want to challenge the group to focus on the takeaways from this session. Consider starting this portion of your session by asking your group what they think are the main application points from your session. Allow discussion to go until there are no more suggestions.

Then, if necessary, supplement your discussion with the following application points. Say something like:

- **One of the main takeaways from this lesson is that we would be men who trust implicitly in God's ability to safely lead us where He calls us.**
 - This week, challenge yourself to stop and recall specific times where God interacted with you in a powerful or meaningful way. Write this down. If you can think of a few times, write them all down. And then ask God to help you draw on His past faithfulness in order to be bolder in following where He is calling you.
- **Rick introduced the idea of self-centeredness versus self-sacrifice. For many of us, this may have been a wake-up call.**
 - Consider the picture Rick painted. Do you operate like a tyrant in your family? Does everything revolve around your schedule, needs, and hobbies? Or do you love your wife and kids sacrificially? If you need to make changes to begin to put others' needs above your own, don't wait. Begin now to be the kind of father and husband your family expects.
- **Rick hands the final challenge to us on a silver platter at the end of the video. Rick asks us to consider those areas of our lives where, though we claim to be men of faith, we demonstrate very little.**
 - Do some soul searching. Ask God to reveal places in your life where your faith is weak, and your actions show it. Do the work alongside the Holy Spirit to address this area of your faith.

If it feels appropriate, allow some discussion about the kind of processing they find themselves doing.

FINALLY, encourage men to continue to marinate on these points in the week to come. Challenge them to listen to what God is trying to tell them and to respond accordingly. If there are no more questions or input, close your time together in prayer.