

Lesson 4: Genesis 20
Abraham's Little White Lie

Lesson 4: Genesis 20

Abraham's Little White Lie

Introduction

Is there ever a time it is okay to tell a little white lie? There was a time Abraham thought it was. In Genesis 20, we see that Abraham struggles with maintaining his faith and belief in God and His protection. We will see that even when Abraham makes a mistake, God is still watching over him to be sure he is safe and will be able to fulfill the promise He made to Abraham.

Progression of Events

Abraham journeys toward the south country and enters into Gerar. Sarah is a very beautiful woman and her beauty is renowned in the area. Because Abraham fears King Abimelech will desire Sarah because of her beauty and kill Abraham in order to have her, he decides that everyone should say Sarah was his sister. This is a half-truth since Sarah was his half sister. This is not the first time Abraham has used this "half-truth."

Sometimes in life, we consider telling a "half-truth" just like Abraham. It is important to know that a "half-truth" is the same thing as a lie and does not make God happy. God even tells us in the Ten Commandments that He does not want us to do such things. People sometimes lie because they are afraid to tell the truth. It is important to tell the truth in all

situations. If you are scared to tell the truth, ask God for His help in doing so. He will provide you with the courage you need to be truthful.

When King Abimelech saw Sarah, he did fall in love with her and took her to become his wife. That night, while

Abimelech slept, God came to him in a dream. God said to Abimelech "You are a dead man for the woman that you have taken is another man's wife." Fortunately, Abimelech had not already taken Sarah for his wife and he told God he did not realize Sarah was married to Abraham because Abraham had said she was his sister and Sarah herself had said Abraham was her brother. Abimelech appealed to God claiming his innocence. God did agree Abimelech had integrity in his heart. Because God had intervened Abimelech had not taken Sarah for a wife. God commanded Abimelech to restore Sarah to Abraham. God states that Abraham is a prophet and if he prays for Abimelech, then he will live. If Abimelech decides to keep Sarah and have her for a wife, he will surely die.

The next day, Abimelech rose early and told his servants about the dream and his discussion with God. All of the men were very afraid. Abimelech sent for Abraham.

When Abraham arrived, Abimelech asked Abraham why he had done such a thing to him. Abraham confessed he did not believe anyone in the country feared God so he was afraid they would kill him and take Sarah to be the king's wife. This is one of those times when Abraham should have not been afraid. He should have asked God to help him have courage to face this situation and to protect him in his time of need. Abraham explains to

Abimelech that Sarah is his half sister because they have the same father so it is a half-truth. Abraham further explains it was his idea and he compelled Sarah to please say he was her brother for the sake of his life. It was good of Abraham to confess his fault to Abimelech. When it came down to it, Abraham admitted his mistake and told the truth. This is how we should all be. Honest, truth-telling people.

Abimelech took sheep, oxen, men and women servants and restored Sarah to Abraham. He also told Abraham that all of his land lay before Abraham and he could dwell where he liked. Abraham and Abimelech made an oath to live peacefully and have no guile between them.

Abraham then prayed to God that He would heal Abimelech. God listened to Abraham because he had realized his mistake. God did heal Abimelech and his household so that they were able to have children again. God had closed up all of the wombs' in the house of Abimelech because of Sarah. Now, they were healed also.

Just as God was waiting to hear Abraham admit his mistake, He is always waiting to listen to us when we lack faith, tell a lie, or do something wrong. It is important to talk to God when you do something like this and ask for His forgiveness.

Faith grows under pressure. There is no doubt Jesus is with us in our time of great need or suffering. Knowing Christ will return one day and put an end to all pain helps us to grow strong in our faith.

Questions for Discussion

1. Why was Abraham saying that Sarah was his sister instead of his wife?
2. Why did King Abimelech desire Sarah to be his wife?
3. How did King Abimelech discover that Sarah was Abraham's sister?
4. What did God command Abimelech do so that he may live?
5. How did God feel about Abraham telling a "half-truth?"
6. How should Abraham have handled this situation?
7. Should we tell half-truths or lies?
8. What should we do when we're afraid?

Memory Verse

"So Abraham prayed unto God: and God healed Abimelech and his wife, and his maidservants; and they were able to have children."
(Genesis 20:17)

JUST FOR TEENS!

Today the teens will work in small groups to discuss the morality of half-truths and how they affect life. Begin by having a whole group discussion around the following two questions:

1. Is there such a thing as a half truth?
2. Why is it important to tell the truth?

Now break the students into small groups. Each group will get a situation card (see next page). The situation card describes someone who tells “a little white lie” or a “half-truth.” The small group will discuss the situation and argue whether or not God would be pleased by the action of the individuals involved.

After the small groups have had a chance to discuss their situation, they will present the situation to the whole group and describe their thoughts on it. Anyone may then comment on the situation and together come to a whole group understanding of the situation. At the end of this sharing time, come to a consensus about what God expects from us in terms of being truthful. Be sure to talk about the long term ramifications for being dishonest and how it affects your character and reputation. Our Christian life is about building Godly character to be much like our Creator. Although being dishonest may get you out of a sticky situation, it isn't developing the kind of character God wants.

Teens may want to complete the magnet craft in order to have something to take back and hang on a school locker or in their bedroom to remind them of the importance of being truthful.

Situation Cards

Group #1

Your friends are going out and you want to go with them. Unfortunately, they are going to a place that your mom and dad have told you they don't want you to go. When you ask for permission to go out, your parents ask where you are going. You respond by telling them you are going to the mall. This is partly true because you and your friends will stop at the mall on the way to the other location. You are just deleting the part your parents will disagree with. Are you justified?

Group #2

Your friends ask you to go to a party where you know there may be drinking. Rather than tell your friends you don't want to be around that kind of thing, you tell them you have a family dinner to go to that night. This is partly true because you always have dinner with your family. You just don't feel like getting into a big discussion about drinking with your friends and you don't want to put yourself in a situation that makes you uncomfortable. Are you justified?

Group #3

It's 3rd period and your teacher asks you to turn in your homework assignment. You feel a sudden dread. How could you have forgotten? You always do your homework! You tell the teacher you left your things in your dad's car. This is partly true. You did leave your IPOD in your dad's car. Your teacher gives you an extension and you go home and get the assignment done. Are you justified?

Group #4

Your friend just bought a new top at the mall. She sees you at school first thing in the morning and asks you how you like it. The top is terrible and doesn't flatter her at all. To spare her feelings you tell her she looks good. Are you justified?

God Loves Truth Magnet

What You Need:

- Heart shaped wood cut outs (sold in craft stores)
- Acrylic paint in a variety of colors
- Glitter glue pens
- Sticky magnet strips
- Hot glue gun

How To Make It:

- Pass out one heart wood cut out to each student.
- Students will use the paints to paint the heart in any design or color they like.
- Older students can then use the glitter glue pens to write "God Loves Truth" on the heart.
- Younger students can glue the attached heart shape sign (see below) to their magnet.
- Lastly, attach the magnet to the back of the heart. You may want to use a hot glue gun for faster adhesion.

