

# 8: THE GUIDE

## *Experiencing God*

God spoke when Abraham didn't know he should be listening. And from that day forward, *"Abraham believed God..."* (James 2:23, NKJV). Through time, trial, and error, Abraham would come to understand that God was not only committed to His Word, He was committed to him; every word spoken, He would perform. *"...And he was called the friend of God"* (James 2:23).

As with Abraham, our God has committed to communicate with us, but we must decide whether we will listen and obey. And like him, we will encounter hinderances, hang-ups, and hold-outs along the way. We will hear conflicting voices, both within and without, designed to keep us from heeding and receiving His promises. God will choose the methods, the means, and experiences necessary to perfect our faith and character. And when we are unsure of our steps, He will readily supply evidences of His presence and enablement, reaffirming His promises. If we, like Abraham, pursue God with purpose, we will be confident that our Story-Maker will guide us to His desired end.

Like Abraham, if we hear God, if we believe God, if we obey God, *we will experience God*, and be *"called the friends of God"*.

*"No longer do I call you servants, for a servant does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all things that I heard from My Father I have made known to you. You did not choose Me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit, and that your fruit should remain..."* (John 15:15-16).

## TRIED AND TRUE

At one hundred and forty years of age (25:20), his beloved wife dead and buried (23:2, 19), Abraham must do his part to see that God's promises are carried forth. In this passage, both divine providence and human responsibility work together to accomplish God's will.

Turn to Genesis 24 and read verses 1-9.

Does it appear that God has spoken to Abraham? What, then, seems to be guiding his decision to take a wife for his son? \_\_\_\_\_  
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For what reason is Abraham unwilling to take a wife from the daughters of the Canaanites? (Consider Exodus 34:15 and Deuteronomy 7:3.) \_\_\_\_\_  
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Following Abraham's instructions to his servant, what question arises? (Genesis 24:5) How can such inquiries foster doubt and encourage compromise? \_\_\_\_\_

Why is Abraham unwilling to allow Isaac to return to the land of his family? (Think on Genesis 12:1.) \_\_\_\_\_

Based on what you know of Abraham, how had he compromised in the past? (Think on Genesis 16:1-16 and 20:1-18.) What did it cost him? \_\_\_\_\_

What can we learn from his mistakes? \_\_\_\_\_

What does Abraham's present decision tell you about his relationship with God? \_\_\_\_\_

God guides us through the natural circumstances of life, but He will never require moral or spiritual compromise to bring about His will. If God is leading forward, His Word will not be negated in verse or principle, nor will He require us to "go back", digress, or return to our previous state.

With this knowledge, Abraham is unwilling to compromise; unwilling to settle for less than God's best.

According to verse 7, what had Abraham come to know and believe about God? \_\_\_\_\_

Why are these beliefs essential to one's faith and understanding of God's ways? \_\_\_\_\_

Count the following passages: Genesis 12:1-2, 13:14-17, 15:1-6, 18-21, 17:1-8, 22:17-18. How many times does God verbally assure Abraham that He would perform what He had spoken? \_\_\_\_\_

Why is He willing to go to such lengths? \_\_\_\_\_

Silently record what has God repeatedly impressed upon your heart and mind. \_\_\_\_\_

Return to Genesis 24. Does Abraham presume to know how God will perform what He has spoken? Why is it imperative that we remain unwavering regarding the promise, but flexible regarding the process? \_\_\_\_\_

Reread verse 8 of Genesis 24. Can our obedience be determined by another's willingness to follow? Explain. \_\_\_\_\_

With conviction, Abraham declares his confidence in God's character and abilities, and his certainty that He will perform what He has spoken.

## WAIT AND WATCH

Continue reading: Genesis 24:10-28.

How did Abraham's beliefs impact his servant? \_\_\_\_\_

Read Genesis 18:18-19. How was Abraham to influence his children and household? Had he been successful? \_\_\_\_\_

Abraham entrusted his son's future and all his goods to his servant (Genesis 24:10). Why is he so easily able to give this commission—a step toward the fulfillment of God's promise—to another? \_\_\_\_\_

Would this be difficult for you? Why or why not? \_\_\_\_\_

The man who trusts God with his life also trusts God with other's lives. Abraham knew and understood that God directed all men's steps and was conscience of the ways their lives affected his own.

With dowry in tow, Abraham's servant leaves for Mesopotamia in search of the city of Nahor, named after one of Abraham's two brothers. Approximately 400-500 miles, and two months travel time away, Abraham was required to wait and surrender the outcome to God.

At just the right time, Abraham's servant arrives in just the right place. Correlate Psalm 37:23, 31, 139:3 and Proverbs 16:9 with Genesis 24:11. \_\_\_\_\_

What immediate action does the servant take? \_\_\_\_\_

Why must we commit the matter to prayer before conferring with men? \_\_\_\_\_

Read Matthew 6:6, 8.

How does the servant address God? (v.12, 13a) What does this reveal about his understanding of God's nature, character, and ways? \_\_\_\_\_

Who is God according to Genesis 16:13? \_\_\_\_\_

Return to Genesis 24. Describe the nature of the servant's request. (v.14) \_\_\_\_\_

When we are seeking God's will, why must our requests be specific, simple, and orderly? \_\_\_\_\_

If God answers his prayer, to what has the servant committed himself? (v.14) \_\_\_\_\_

Why must obedience follow revelation? For what reasons do we fail to act after God has spoken? \_\_\_\_\_

What posture did the servant take in anticipation of God's answer? What posture must we take in order to discern God's answer? (See Hebrews 11:6 and James 1:5-8.) \_\_\_\_\_

Return to Genesis 24. What unfolds before the servant's eyes? (vv.15-20) \_\_\_\_\_

Compare verse 15 of Genesis 24 to Psalm 139:4 and Matthew 7:7-8. \_\_\_\_\_

In verse 15, the description of Rebekah provided by the author was unknown to the servant. Even so, how could the servant be assured that God had answered his request? \_\_\_\_\_

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Why are details important when we are seeking to discern God's will? \_\_\_\_\_

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After all that had occurred, how would you interpret the servant's thoughts and actions in verse 21? \_\_\_\_\_

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A statement of doubt? A crisis of faith? Patience? Wisdom? What doesn't he yet know? \_\_\_\_\_

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What can occur in the heart and mind in the moment between wonder and certainty? \_\_\_\_\_

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What must we do according to Philippians 4:6-7? \_\_\_\_\_

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Back to Genesis 24. With eyes fixed upon the young maiden, the servant waited for God to reveal the final and most important fact. Why is it imperative that we do not assume God's will based on partial information, even when it is prefaced with the miraculous? \_\_\_\_\_

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What response did God's providence evoke? (v.26) \_\_\_\_\_

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*"As for me, being on the way, the Lord led me"* (Genesis 24:27). Consider the account from beginning to end. "While one marvels at God's providence in this event"<sup>i</sup>, what responsibility was laid upon the servant? \_\_\_\_\_

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The servant was willing to carry out his master's assignment regardless of its outcome. He trusted that God would *"instruct [him] and teach [him] in the way [he] should go, guiding [him] with [His] eye"* (Psalm 32:8). He believed that God would answer his petition; he waited and watched for His answer. And when it came, he *"bowed his head and worshipped the Lord"* (Genesis 24:26).

God spoke... God swore... God sent His angel before him (Genesis 24:7) and he experienced God just as Abraham had.

In closing, read Philippians 1:6.

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<sup>1</sup> Ross, A. P. (1985). Genesis. In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 1, p. 68). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.