

LOVING GOD

Part one: Abraham— Love and obedience

(Genesis 12-23)

- What is the first thought that comes into your mind when you think of Abraham?
- Make a list of facts about the life and character of Abraham.
- Look at this list and discuss both the positive and negative aspects of Abraham's life and character.
- What are some of the life lessons you can learn from Abraham?

Congratulations, you have just completed what most people do when doing a biblical character study. Chances are that you will have also been measuring yourself up against Abraham. In some places you will be thinking that you are much better than him and in others you may feel like a failure. You then capture this theme and look for the New Testament parallel and then what Jesus had to say.

CONCLUSION:

Abraham was a man of great faith (Hebrews 11:8-19). Without faith it is impossible to please God (Heb 11:6). Faith is exercised by being obedient to God. Obedience to God is the evidence of loving God (John 14:15).

How well do you measure up as a person of faith who is loving God and being obedient to Him?

There is a significant error based on the methodology you have just followed.

The Biblical story is not about Abraham! It is a story of God at work in Abraham's (not so perfect) life. The key character in the story is God, not Abraham!

Reading the Bible is very much like looking at a family photograph. Whose photo do you look for first? You only see in the photo what you are looking for; yourself – for better or worse. The danger of this is that you miss the real story of the photograph. The story is not about you, it's about God's work in your (not so perfect) life.

TAKE TWO

Reread the story of Abraham but this time look for the activity of God in Abraham's life. What did Abraham do for God to ensure God's activity in his life? Nothing, absolutely NOTHING! If anything he was obstructive. In every incident God always made the first move.

1 John 4:10 "This is love: not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins."

In what ways did God love Abraham before Abraham could ever love God?

In what ways does God love you before you can ever love God? In what ways is God at work in your struggles of faith and imperfections of character?

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