



+ **YOU**

**Sermon Series: Walking in Confidence**

**To be used with:** Confidence in the Face of Fear

**Sermon Title Possibilities:** Facing Fear

**Scripture:** Genesis 12:10-13,17–13:4

**Connection with Unit Theme:** To complement the small group study “Walking in Confidence,” this sermon focuses on the tension created when God’s promises cause you to encounter conflict. Conflict for Abram was created because of fear which made it comfortable for him to tell a lie. Our depravity as human beings can cause us to respond to conflict like Abram. However, together we can learn how to manage and change our responses to trust God’s promises in conflict.

**Introduction:**

After twice encountering God (vv. 1,7) and building an altar to God at Bethel, Abram and his family experience a famine. Because of this, Abram took his family, including his wife Sarai, and decided to go to Egypt. He told Sarai to tell the Egyptians that they were brother and sister, instead of husband and wife. While this is not a complete lie, because Sarai was his half-sister, it raised a moral dilemma that revealed a much deeper issue with Abram. Abram exhibited a lack of confidence in God’s promise. In 12:1-3, God promised to make Abram a great nation, but Abram could not see on the other side of a famine.

The good news is that God makes promises to His children. The issue is holding on to the promises even when faced with adversity. God knew what Abram could do, but Abram was not yet ready to handle God’s mission. Abram’s faith was still growing. But God used this situation to show Abram how to face his fear with confidence without lying, manipulation, and self-depreciation.

**1. Get to the Table Before You Talk About What’s at the Table (vv. 10-14)**

Have you ever heard someone talk about someone else’s food before tasting it? They have an opinion informed by other’s opinions instead of their own. Sadly, those opinions can be wrong and harmful. Making a poor decision is what Abram did. Verse 14 tells us that Abram and Sarai entered Egypt. Before that, Abram had a plan based on partial truths because of fearful assumptions about how the pharaoh would treat him.

Do not allow assumptions to drive your decision-making. Get to the table before you talk about what’s on the table. Abram’s assumptions caused him to lie and operate in fear, causing Sarai to live through his lies. Remember, God promised Abram that he would be a blessing to others and have abundant offspring. His

fears contradicted the promises of God. God would never place His people on a path that leads away from what He has promised.

## **2. Create Community Instead of Casualties (vv. 17-19)**

Every decision has consequences, whether positive or negative. While Abram gained the protection of Pharaoh from the famine and Sarai was respected and taken into the inner circle of Pharaoh, the decision Abram made before entering Egypt had long-lasting effects on those around him. Pharaoh and his household began to experience plagues because of Abram and Sarai (v. 17).

While Abram was concerned that disaster would come on him before entering Egypt, his decision to lie caused disaster in Pharaoh's household. When God called Abram, He told Abram that He would bless him and be a blessing to others, in essence, Abram would build a community. However, in Egypt, Abram caused casualties. His reputation, Sarai's integrity, and the God that Abram stood for were all in question because of Abram and his deception.

Fear untamed creates casualties. Who are casualties of our fear? Are you a casualty of your own fear? What places are you scared to go back to because of a story you decided to tell that was not the actual story?

## **3. You Have Enough to Be Enough (vv. 20; 13:4)**

The good news of the gospel is that God equips us for the work we were created to do. For example, Abram departed Pharaoh's house while keeping the wealth he accrued in famine. How excellent is the favor of God! Abram had secured wealth in a famine, so that he could travel, and go back to Bethel. God always gives his people enough, no matter what.

The beauty of grace and mercy is God's heart and love. Regardless of Abram's poor decision, God did not take away the promise He had made to him. No matter what decisions you have made that may have caused casualties, God will not strip you of the promises He has made. Rejoice! You have enough to be secure in your travels!

## **Conclusion:**

Our decisions can sometimes have consequences that can hurt others. But God always provides. Abram's experience with these truths ought to give all of us hope. Your response to a conflict will not always be perfect, but we can learn from them and move forward. How do you usually respond to conflict? Next time, know you are enough, build community, and refrain from your assumptions. God has a promise over your life, so rejoice and face fear well.

*Author Bio:* Rev. Justin Lester serves as the pastor of Congdon Street Baptist Church in Providence, Rhode Island. The church serves it's body of believers and the community through personal, spiritual, and financial development. Justin has earned a M.Div. from Vanderbilt University and a D.Min. from Boston University. Most Importantly, Justin is married to the most beautiful woman in the world, Courtney Lester, and is the father to his "little man," Camden.