

Growth

Genesis 20

(black Bibles page 14; Children's Bibles page 35)

Are there signs of growth in Abraham? Let's read.

20:1-2: *Déjà vu*. Yes, Abraham makes the same mistake again in calling Sarah his sister to protect his own neck. Remember Genesis 12:10-20?

- And get this—his son Isaac will do it, too. See Genesis 25:6-11.

20:3-7: The Lord intervenes to prevent disaster

- But note how God includes Abraham in the solution: “for he is a prophet, so that he will pray for you, and you shall live” (20:7).

20:8-13: Why no sign of growth in Abraham?

- An enormous temptation that we all can understand: to save your own life through a half-truth.
- Welcome to the perils of a semi-nomadic lifestyle, when you don't know how you'll be received where you pitch your tent next.

20:14-18: God makes Abraham grow (-even if it's only a little bit)

- Abraham already admitted his wrongdoing that his actions endangered Abimelech (20:13). A *confession* forced by circumstance, but a confession nonetheless.
 - Me apologizing for missing golf league events
- Abraham prays as God instructed, and many are healed. In effect, Abraham is making *restitution* for the harm he has caused.

“I planted, Apollos watered, but **God gave the growth**. So neither he who plants nor he who waters is anything, but only **God who gives the growth.**” (1 Cor 3:6-7)

Three signs of God-caused growth in Abraham: Confession, Restitution, Mission.

- *Confession, Restitution*. We've discussed these already.
- *Mission*. Don't forget: Abraham is to be a blessing to the nations (12:3). After endangering this nation, God allows Abraham to be a small blessing to it, reversing the damage done!

And mission is exactly where we grow. Life is not a game. There is work to be done, a mission to others in Christ's name (Matt 28:18-20). And often it is mission that works as the God-given *catalyst* for our own transformation, our own **growth**. While we are serving and reaching others, we ourselves are changed.

For Further Thought and Discussion:

- 1) Abraham didn't exactly do the best thing whenever he feared for his life. How does this compare to Jesus' life story?
- 2) Would you do the wrong thing to save your own life? This may be a time to reflect and pray on what matters most.
- 3) Confession of sin, and restitution to others for your sin against them. Share a story of growth in your life, which resulted in difficult acts of confession and restitution.
- 4) How have you been changed while on Christ's mission?