Small Group Guide

Genesis 20

How to Use This Guide

This guide is designed to help your group move from hearing the Word to living it out. Work through the discussion questions at a pace that fits your group, and do not feel pressured to cover every question in a single session. The goal is honest conversation and genuine application, not simply completing a list.

Key Takeaways from the Sermon

1. Fear is an enemy to faith, but it can become an opportunity for faith. Abraham made a decision rooted in fear rather than trust. When we take our eyes off God and fix them on the threat in front of us, we make the threat bigger than God. Fear distorts our perspective.

2. God remains faithful even when we are faithless. Abraham's failure did not derail God's plan. God protected Sarah, disciplined Abimelech, and preserved the promise. As 2 Timothy 2:13 reminds us, God cannot stop being who He is.

3. Sin is ultimately an offense against God. Whether it was Abimelech's near-adultery or David's confession in Psalm 51, Scripture consistently frames sin as being against God first. Keeping that perspective is one of the most powerful motivations to remain obedient.

4. Intercession is a powerful and often neglected ministry. Abraham prayed for an unrighteous king and God healed him, his wife, and his household. The ministry of intercession extends beyond the righteous to those who are lost and far from God.

5. God will vindicate His people. We do not need to manage our own reputations or defend ourselves at every turn. God sees, God knows, and God acts on behalf of those who trust Him.

Discussion Questions

Opening (Choose one to get the conversation started)

1. Can you think of a time when a fear turned out to be completely unnecessary? What did that experience teach you about worry?

2. Have you ever made a decision based on what you assumed about a situation, only to find out your assumption was wrong? What happened?

Digging into the Text

3. Abraham had already made this same mistake with Pharaoh 25 years earlier (Genesis 12). Why do you think people tend to repeat the same patterns of sin or fear even after experiencing God's faithfulness? What does this reveal about how deeply ingrained habits can be?

4. God told Abimelech, "It was I who kept you from sinning against me" -- not Abimelech's own integrity. How does this challenge the way we think about our own moral strength? What is the difference between self-restraint and God-given protection?

5. Joseph, when tempted by Potiphar's wife, asked, "How then could I do this great wickedness and sin against God?" (Genesis 39:9). David, after his adultery and murder, prayed, "Against you, you only have I sinned" (Psalm 51:4). How does framing sin as an offense against God personally change the way you think about temptation?

6. God called Abraham a prophet -- the first person in the Bible to receive that title. Yet Abraham had just experienced a significant lapse of faith in front of the very people he was meant to influence. What does this tell us about how God uses imperfect people? How does Romans 2:21-24 speak to the responsibility that comes with being known as a person of faith?

7. The pastor noted that Abraham made man much bigger in his mind than God in that moment. He said, "Fear makes anything that we are afraid of much bigger than God." Where in your own life do you notice this happening? What practical steps help you reorient your perspective back to the size and power of God?

8. Abraham interceded for Lot, who was righteous, and then for Abimelech, who was not. First Timothy 2:1-4 instructs us to pray for all people, including kings and those in high positions, because God desires all people to be saved. Who in your life -- perhaps someone you find difficult to pray for -- needs you to intercede for them the way Abraham interceded for Abimelech?

Reflection Questions

9. The pastor asked: "Do you have any ingrained ways that still trip you up -- things from before you were a Christian or from your early faith that you made a habit?" Take a moment to reflect honestly. Is there a pattern in your life that belongs to the old self but has not yet been surrendered to the Lord?

10. God vindicated Sarah publicly through Abimelech's gift of silver. The pastor encouraged us to trust God with our reputations rather than defending ourselves. Is there a situation in your life right now where you are tempted to defend yourself or manage what others think of you? What would it look like to hand that over to God?

Practical Applications

This week, choose at least one of the following to put into practice:

- **Identify the fear.** Write down one specific fear or worry that has been driving your decisions or stealing your peace. Bring it before the Lord in prayer and cast it on Him, trusting that He cares for you (1 Peter 5:7).

- **Pray for the unrighteous.** Think of one person in your life who does not know the Lord -- perhaps someone you find difficult or even someone in a position of authority over you. Commit to praying for them by name every day this week.

- **Examine an ingrained habit.** Ask the Lord in prayer: "Is there anything in me from the old life that I have not yet surrendered to you?" Sit quietly and listen. If something comes to mind, bring it to a trusted brother or sister in Christ.

- **Make God bigger.** Find one passage of Scripture this week that speaks to the power, faithfulness, or greatness of God. Write it down and return to it every time a specific fear or worry surfaces.

- **Intercede specifically.** Rather than praying general prayers for others, choose one person or situation and pray with specific, faith-filled requests. Trust that the prayer of a righteous person has great power (James 5:16).

Closing Prayer Focus

Close your group time by praying together with these themes in mind:

- Confess any areas where fear has replaced faith
- Thank God for His faithfulness even in your failures
- Intercede specifically for people in your lives who are far from God
- Ask for the courage to fear God more than people

This guide accompanies the sermon on Genesis 20. For the five-day devotional and additional resources, see the description of the sermon video.