



Too Soon to Quit by Warren W. Wiersbe

“Abraham the Outsider” Page 11

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I. Abraham and Sarah: An Unexpected Choice

- A. To begin with, society today is obsessed with numbers, and for God to choose just two people seems a dangerous gamble.
 - 1. From our viewpoint God would have been wiser to use the big crowd that built the tower of Babel.
 - 2. God said of Abraham, *“When I called him he was only one man, and I blessed him and made him many”* (Isa. 51:2).

- B. Society is also obsessed with Youth!
 - 1. The Bible teaches us that God used Abraham and Sarah, who were old in age.
 - 2. Scripture says, the Lord is *“the one who gives life to the dead and calls into being things that were not”* (Romans 4:17);
 - 3. Our God is the God of the impossible.

- C. Another thing people are focused on today is speed- automobiles, airplanes, emails, etc, yet God waited twenty-five years before giving Abraham and Sarah their son Isaac. And then Isaac had to grow up.
 - 1. It was centuries before Mary was born and given the privilege of bringing the Son of God into the world.
 - 2. It doesn't appear that God is in a hurry, but we must remember that His ways are not our ways.

- D. The Modern world is also fascinated with innovation but scornful of Tradition.
 - 1. Like the Athenians of Paul's day, many do nothing but involve themselves in the newest fashions (Acts 17:21).
 - 2. Innovation is progress but God used some very traditional methods: men and women fell in love, had children as the Bible genealogies make it clear. Very traditional!
 - 3. It was only when Jesus Christ as conceived by the Holy Spirit in Mary's womb did God break tradition and performed a miracle.

- E. Finally our world is caught up in celebrity worship.
 - 1. The American humorist Fred Allen defined a celebrity as “a person who works hard . . . to become well known, then wears dark glasses to avoid being recognized.”
 - 2. But Abraham and Sarah were not celebrities!
 - 3. Let’s agree that the Lord did the right thing when He called Abraham and Sarah.
 - 4. And let’s not forget that their most important responsibility was to obey God and remain outsiders, separated from the godlessness around them, but not isolated from the people they needed to reach with the truth.

II. Called Out Of Paganism

A. Abraham and Sarah worshipped Pagan Idols and gods.

“The God of glory appeared to our father Abraham,” Stephen tells us, and the God of the Word spoke to him (Acts 7:1–3).

- 1. Once Abraham saw God’s glory, the pagan gods became ugly, and when Abraham heard the Lord speak to him, the mute idols became worthless.
- 2. The Lord said, “Go from your country, your people and your father’s household to the land I will show you” (Gen. 12:1).
- 3. That first step of faith in the true and living God had changed their citizenship.
- 4. Outlook determines outcome, and their outlook was really an upward look.

B. The most important thing about Abraham and Sarah is that they became outsiders, and as long as they remained outsiders, they enjoyed God’s blessing.

- 1. Their blessing was attached to their ability to stay outsiders.
- 2. God’s work is not accomplished by the compromising insiders or by the isolated outsiders.
- 3. It’s done by the **separated outsiders**, who know how to walk with God in this world and have contact with sinners without participating in their sins.

III. Called To Obedience

- 1. *“Go from your country, your people and your father’s household to the land I will show you” (Gen. 12:1)*
- 2. Was God’s command to Abraham, words easy to understand obey?
- 3. Abraham made two serious mistakes as he began his faith journey: he took with him his father Terah and his nephew Lot, and when the party arrived at Haran, Abraham stopped being a traveler and became a settler (Gen. 11:22–32).
- 4. It wasn’t until his father died that Abraham resumed the pilgrim journey.

IV. Called to Be a Pilgrim

A. After burying his father, Abraham led the party south and they stopped at Shechem (Gen. 12:6), a lovely area in a green valley with orchards, gardens and springs, not unlike the land around Ur.

5. Then he moved between Bethel (“house of God”) and Ai (“heap of ruins”) and set up his camp.
 6. Can you see in Abraham and Sarah a picture of Christian believers today?
 7. He admitted he was an outsider (Gen. 23:4) and they knew he lived in a tent.
- B. But then something unexpected happened: there was a famine in the land to which God had called Abraham (Gen. 12:10–20).
1. They probably thought Canaan was their safe Haven;
 2. If we are walking by faith, we commit ourselves to the Lord and wait for His next assignment, trusting Him to provide what we need.
 3. Abraham chose **Plan B**, fled to Egypt, lied about his wife and almost lost her.
- C. Outsiders will make some mistakes but when you make them, own them and go back where you belong.
1. The Scottish preacher George H. Morrison said, “The victorious Christian life is a series of new beginnings.”
 2. Outsiders can become backsliders, but they won’t stay that way very long.
 3. Many individual believers and entire congregations have imitated Abraham and “run to Egypt” to get help. (Using worldly means for spiritual things)
 4. Consider what Paul wrote in First Thessalonians 2:1–7 and take it to heart.

V. Learning To Obey the Hard Way

- A. When you read Abraham’s life, you discover that, while he consistently moved in the right direction, occasionally he stumbled.
5. After ten years on the faith trail, Abraham and Sarah were still childless, so Sarah suggested that her husband marry her maid Hagar and have a child by her (Gen. 16).
 6. This kind of marriage was perfectly legal in that day, but many things that are legal are not necessarily the will of God.
- B. What Abraham brought with him out of Egypt only got him into trouble!
1. The wealth he acquired (“atonement money” from Pharaoh) would create problems between him and Lot (Gen. 13), and Hagar would bring Ishmael—Abraham’s firstborn son—into the world and threaten the home.
 2. Again, Abraham and Sarah made a fresh beginning, and God kept His promise and gave them a son (Gen. 21).
 3. Then God asked Abraham to give that son back to Him! (See Genesis 22.)