

HEROES OF FAITH SERIES



DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- Heroes of the Bible: Abraham -

1. This week we studied the life of Abraham. When you think of Abraham, what comes to mind? With what aspects of his life do you most connect?
2. Abraham is celebrated for his faith. In Genesis chapter 12, God calls Abraham (then named Abram) to travel over 500 miles, and he obeys without question. God's calling of Abraham is an example of how God relates to us. In the sermon, I said God calls us to know him, grow to become more like him, and serve him in specific ways. Share an example of a time when God called you to something specific. What role do you believe that we have in hearing God's call on our lives? What is something specific that God is calling you to right now?
3. Although we think of Abraham as a hero of faith, he also had many failures in his life. One of his biggest failures was to take his wife's suggestion and have a child with her servant Hagar. This led to family chaos, and Abraham became estranged from his son. Commenting on this situation in the sermon, I said **Abraham settled for second best, attempting to fulfill God's plan his own way.** We too, often settle for second best, when we have a prayer time, but don't persist in God's presence. Or when we come to church, but don't allow the experience to touch our hearts. Or when we need God's peace, but choose just to distract ourselves. Or when we need to confront someone we love, but we prefer the comfort of silence instead. Do you think people today settle for second best instead of doing things God's way? In what ways in the past have you settled for second best? In what ways are you right now choosing this?

4. In the chaos of Abraham's blended family, Hagar twice leaves. The first time she is pregnant, the second time along with her young son. Both times God intervenes and comforts her. She is the ultimate outsider, but God shows her that He cares for her. In her amazement, she declares Him to be El Roi, **"You are the God who sees me."** She also said, **"Have I truly seen the One who sees me?"** (Genesis 16:13). What do you think about God reaching out to the Egyptian servant isolated in the desert?

In the sermon, I said; **"at the deepest level, God sees you and longs for you to know Him intimately"**. Do you agree? J. Oswald Sanders said, *"We are at this moment as close to God as we really choose to be. True, there are times when we would like to know a deeper intimacy, but when it comes to that point, we are not prepared to pay the price involved."* How might you take a step toward greater intimacy with God? Will you take that step?

5. Our study of Abraham ended dramatically: God tests him by asking him to sacrifice his beloved son, Isaac. This is a test of Abraham's loyalty to God. Our lives truly are best when God is first, our first love. If we put anything else in that place, it's called idolatry. Ultimately, God did not ask Abraham to sacrifice his son, but God did sacrifice his Son for us. When we accept Christ, we surrender our lives to Him, committing to keep Him as our first love. What does surrender to God mean to you? Tell the story of a time when you were fully surrendered to God. Do you connect with the phrase "first love"? What competes to be the first love in your life? How do you keep Christ as your first love?