

## PERSONAL APPLICATION

DON'T HAVE TO HIT ALL THREE QUESTIONS DURING DISCUSSION TIME. BUT ENCOURAGE THEM TO TAKE TIME DURING THE WEEK TO GO THROUGH THEM AND TO TAKE SERIOUSLY ANY ACTION STEPS. THE POINT IS TO SEE OUR LIVES BE CHANGED BY THE WISDOM THAT COMES FROM OUR DISCUSSION OF SCRIPTURE. NOT TO JUST GAIN MORE INFORMATION.

- Are there any areas of your life where you are compromising your beliefs, values, or integrity, even if well-intended? What steps do you need to take this week in order to end the compromise?
- Where in your life do you need to show some courage? What act of courage will you commit to do this week?
- Who do you know that needs mercy? Is there someone you need to reconcile with or show grace toward? What step can you take toward grace and mercy this week?

## PRAYER

LIKE THE APPLICATION POINTS, YOU DON'T HAVE TO HIT THEM ALL. IN FACT, YOU CAN JUST ENCOURAGE THEM TO TAKE THESE TO GOD IN PRAYER DURING THE WEEK. MIGHT BE BEST DURING GROUP TIME TO ASK PEOPLE FOR PRAYER REQUESTS.

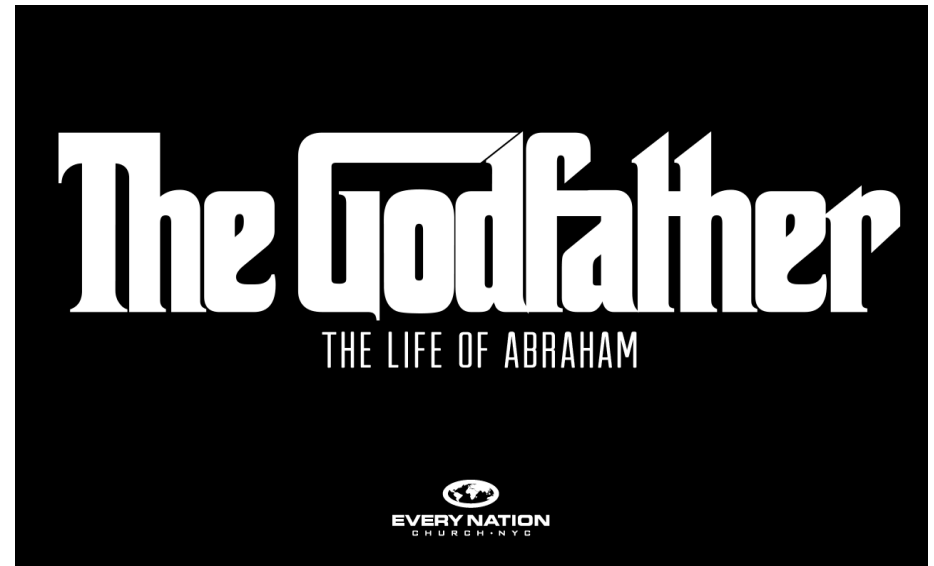
- Thank God for the people and relationships he has brought into your life. Ask Him to help you view people the way he does.
- Ask God to give you discernment in your relationship and to give you the faith to not compromise what is right just to gain favor with people.
- Ask God for the courage and grace to stand up for the people in your life who are being mistreated and to remove any apathetic attitudes you may have towards people you don't know.

## NOTES

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## The Godfather - Relationships

### CONNECT

CAN JUST CHOOSE 1 OR 2 QUESTIONS AS TIME ALLOWS. GIVE EVERYONE A CHANCE TO SHARE. NO RIGHT/WRONG ANSWERS.

- Who are the people in your life that you share your hopes and dreams with?
- How do you handle conflict in close relationships?
- Are there any broken relationships in your life that you would like to be restored?

### THOUGHT

EMPHASIZE THAT ABRAHAM IS AN INCREDIBLY IMPORTANT FIGURE IN WORLD HISTORY – FATHER TO 54% OF ALL RELIGIOUS PEOPLES IN THE WORLD: JEWS, CHRISTIANS, MUSLIMS. WHAT CAN WE LEARN FROM HIM.

The story of Abraham is the story of relationships. Beginning with his relationship with God which we discussed last week. Today we are going to look at how his relationship with God affected his relationships with others. In particular we are going to focus on Lot, one of his nephew and the only relative from his extended family which he took with him on his journey with God. We'll discover how our relationship with God has an impact on those around and and how the kind of relationships we engage in and build with those around us affect our ability to walk in obedience and faith towards the purposes and destinations God wants us to reach.

**WORD**

So Abram said to Lot, "Please let there be no strife between you and me, nor between my herdsmen and your herdsmen, for we are brothers. "Is not the whole land before you? Please separate from me; if to the left, then I will go to the right; or if to the right, then I will go to the left."

*Genesis 13: 8-9 (NIV)*

POINT HERE IS THAT FOR GOOD REASONS OR BAD, WE CAN GET INTO RELATIONSHIPS OR CONDUCT OUR RELATIONSHIPS IN WAYS THAT COMPROMISE OUR INTEGRITY AND HARM OUR LIVES. NO CORRECT ANSWER TO THE FIRST QUESTION OF WHY ABRAHAM TOOK LOT. JUST WANT PEOPLE TO ENGAGE IMAGINATION AND INTERACT WITH BIBLE. DON'T PRESSURE PEOPLE TO ANSWER THE SECOND QUESTION.

**1. COMPROMISE**

*"The LORD had said to Abram, "Go from your country, your people and your father's household to the land I will show you."* **Genesis 12:1 (NIV)**

*"So Abram left, as the LORD had told him; and Lot went with him."* **Genesis 12:4 (NIV)**

God had clearly told Abraham to leave his people and those in his father's household and go to the land God would show him. Abraham left immediately but took his nephew Lot with him. Lot ended up being nothing but trouble for Abraham. It's clear from God's promise to Abraham – 'every family on earth will be blessed through you' that Abraham was to be a blessing to others. But sometimes doing the 'right thing' costs us 'good things' such as relationships with others. Why do you think Abraham took Lot? What compromises are you making in your relationships that need to stop?

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MAIN POINT HERE IS THAT COURAGE IS REQUIRED IN HEALTHY RELATIONSHIPS EVEN WHEN IT ISN'T EASY. GREAT IF YOU OR ONE OF YOUR ASSISTANTS CAN HAVE PERSONAL STORY OF COURAGE READY.

**2. COURAGE**

*"When Abram heard that his relative had been taken captive, he led out his trained men, born in his house, three hundred and eighteen, and went in pursuit..."* **Genesis 14:14-16 (NIV)**

As soon as Abraham heard that Lot was taken captive, he went to rescue him, even though it meant fighting the combined armies of 4 kings! The people in our lives need us to be courageous even when it's inconvenient. Have you ever felt compelled to do the right thing when it seemed like all odds were against you? What was the outcome? What are some ways you need to be courageous for those around you?

MAIN POINT IS THAT GOD LOVE'S EACH ONE. 2 ILLUSTRATIONS: LOST SHEEP, LUKE 15:1-7, JESUS LEAVES 99 SAFE AND GOES FOR 1 LOST. LIKE A FAMILY WITH MANY KIDS, PARENTS CONCERN/FOCUS WILL BE THE ONE THAT GETS LOST, NOT THE OTHERS WHO ARE SAFE. THIS IS WHERE YOU CAN HIT SALVATION. JESUS DIED FOR EACH ONE OF US.

**3. ADVOCACY**

<sup>23</sup>Then Abraham approached him and said: "Will you sweep away the righteous with the wicked?"...<sup>32</sup>Then he said, "May the Lord not be angry, but let me speak just once more. What if only ten can be found there?" He answered, "For the sake of ten, I will not destroy it." **Genesis 18:23, 32 (NIV)**

Abraham went to God six times to plead Lot's case, each time asking God for little more leniency. Each time, God said yes to mercy. God loves to show mercy, as Jesus pointed out in Matthew 9:13, "I desire mercy, not sacrifice.' For I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners." Do you think God would have spared Lot's city for just one righteous person if Abraham had asked him to? Is there anywhere in your life where you could show mercy to someone who needs it or reconcile with people you've had conflict with? What would it look like to show grace rather than judgment?

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