

INTERACTIVE TEACHING/LEARNING GUIDE

Week 6

SESSION TITLE: "Trust: Who Makes Us Prosper"

FOCAL PASSAGE: (Genesis 14:1-24)

Central Teaching/Learning Aim: To help the learner discover the depths of trust of Abram and determine to trust God for victory in his/her life.

I. Creating Interest in the Series (Hook)

A. Share the following true story:

For four hours he held the cylinder, waiting for rescue or an immediate death. After digging up what appeared to be an unexploded WWI bomb, David Page held on to it, afraid that letting go would detonate the device.

While holding the bomb, the terrified 40-year-old from Norfolk, England, called an emergency operator on his mobile phone. He even used the call to issue his last words for his family. "The woman police operator kept saying it would be okay," said Page, "but I kept saying to her, 'You're not the one holding the bomb.'"

First responders rushed to the work-yard in eastern England, and army bomb disposal experts finally arrived. But the drama came to an abrupt end when the "bomb" was identified. It was part of the hydraulic suspension system from a Citroen, a popular European car.

source: "'Bomb' of a Car Has Man Worried" *Reuters* (9-16-04)

State - So many times we are like David Page. We think we have to control the situation. It is all up to us. Although we believe in the power and protection of God we still take matters into our own hands.

It's a matter of trust.

Ask – In what areas of your life is it the most difficult to let go and let God have control? (Allow time for responses)

State - Today we are going to observe how Abram completely trusted in God for victory and how we must trust in God to experience victory in our lives as well.

B. Optional Method – Share the following true story:

Sally Robbins was a member of Australia's 2004 Olympic rowing team, competing in the women's eight final. With approximately 400 meters left in the race, the 23-year-old suddenly quit. Robbins slumped and let her oar dip into the water. Australia dropped from third to last place in the event.

"I just rowed my guts out in the first 1,500 and didn't have anything left, and that's all I could have done for today," Robbins explained.

Her teammates were not sympathetic, threatening to throw her into the water. In a country that takes its rowing seriously, the Sydney Daily Telegraph's headline read "Just Oarful" and asked readers to vote on whether she had cost the team a medal. Melbourne's newspaper headline read, "It's eight, mate, pull your weight," underscoring the fact that Robbins' actions had hurt her entire team.

Robbins was optimistic about her chances of returning to competition with her teammates.

"It'll be a long process, and I think that I will be back, and will be back with these girls again, eventually," she said. "Obviously, I have to earn their trust."

"Rower suffers Aussie Backlash," www.News.BBC.co.uk (8-25-04)

State – Sally Robbins obviously rowed in her own power and quit on her own accord. She did not consider her team when she abruptly stopped. Her team may not ever trust her again.

Ask – In whom or what do you trust? Why? Has God ever let you down? If you think so, how?

State - Today we are going to observe how Abram completely trusted in God for victory and how we must trust in God to experience victory in our lives as well.

C. Optional Method – Movie Clip “The Mask of Zorro”

Start: 51:00

Stop: 54:30

Synopsis: The younger Zorro (Antonio Banderas) finds himself in the middle of many Mexican soldiers. He single-handedly defeats them against incredible odds. Right before the scene concludes, he pauses to savor his victory, narrowly escaping a deadly explosion.

Ask – What mistake did the young Zorro make toward the end of this clip? What happens in our lives when we get over confident in our own abilities and fail to trust in God?

State - Today we are going to observe how Abram completely trusted in God for victory and how we must trust in God to experience victory in our lives as well.

II. Book

A. Utilize the discussion guide to examine the Scripture passages.

III. Look

A. Place members into groups and have them complete the case studies.

IV. Took

A. Movie Clip "The Truman Show"

Start: 1:31:30

Stop: 1:34:00

Synopsis: Truman (Jim Carey) lives in a fake town on an elaborate set for a 24-hour a day show that he unwittingly stars in. In this closing scene he discovers his fake world and desperately tries to make it to reality.

State – Just as Truman tried to escape the illusion he lived in and find victorious freedom so do we need to trust in the things of God not the fake things of this world. Let's live this week trusting in God for victory.

B. Optional Method – Share the following true story:

Evelyn Husband lost the love of her life, space shuttle commander Rick Husband, in a national tragedy. A year later, she shares her message about God's healing hand.

It's been nearly a year since Evelyn stood with the other families of the space shuttle Columbia's crew at the landing site in Cape Canaveral, Florida, waiting for her husband to return home. The shuttle was just minutes from landing when NASA's Mission Control lost contact with the shuttle crew. The next few moments were a blur of events: video images of Columbia breaking apart over the Texas skyline, NASA officials scrambling to move the family members away from view of television cameras. Evelyn remembers looking at the faces of her son, Matthew, and daughter, Laura, then 7 and 12.

That was the beginning of Evelyn's efforts to deliver a powerful message: Even in the midst of intense suffering, God is faithful.

"Deep inside, I knew God was going to walk me through this somehow," she says. "I knew it because he'd walked with me through other crises earlier in my life."

"Finding Purpose in Pain," *Today's Christian Woman* (Jan/Feb 2004)

Ask – Do you trust God only in the good times? Do you trust God for victory even in times of tragedy?

State – Let's remember all of the victories that God has provided in our lives to help us through in the hard times.

**DISCUSSION GUIDE
(Teacher's Copy)**

1. The northeastern kings attacked the southern kings after being subject to them for 12 years, how did patience pay off for them?
(They defeated the southern kings and seized all of their goods and food.)
2. Why did Abram decide to pursue the 4 victorious kings? (Gen. 14:14)
(Because Lot was a relative of Abrams and he decided to recover him and the goods of the people.)
3. How many warriors did Abram "call out" to pursue Lot? (v. 14)
(318 trained men.)
4. Look at the following passages to trace the downward spiral of Lot.
 - a. (Gen. 13:5) **Moving about with Abram.**
 - b. (13:8) **Trouble between Lot and Abram.**
 - c. (13:10) **Looking toward Zoar.**
 - d. (13:12) **Placing a tent near Sodom.**
 - e. (14:12) **Living in Sodom**
5. Is your life in a downward spiral or a continuous faith journey?
6. If you feel like you are spiraling away from God, what could be done to reverse the process?
7. Outline the strategy Abram used to defeat the kings. (vs. 15-16)
 - a. **He attacked during the night.**
 - b. **He divided his men.**
 - c. **He routed them and pursued them as far as Hobab.**
 - d. **He recovers all the goods, possessions, Lot and others.**
8. What strategy should a believer employ to defeat the schemes of the devil?
9. Who was Melchizedek? (v. 18)
(He was the King of Salem and a priest of God Most High.)
10. What are the characteristics of Melchizedek found in (Hebrews 7:2-3)?
 - a. **He was the King of Salem, which is king of peace.**
 - b. **Without father, mother or genealogy.**
 - c. **He had no beginning or end of life.**
 - d. **He was made like the Son of God.**
11. Why did Abram give Melchizedek a title? (v. 19)
(Melchizedek was greater than Abram so he honored him. Christ is greater than all of the Levitical Priests.)
12. Why did Abram refuse the goods offered him by the King of Sodom? (vs. 21-24)
(He did not want it said that the King of Sodom made him rich.)
13. How did Abram's refusal testify of his trust in God?
14. What victories has God bestowed on you recently? How did you acknowledge Him?

DISCUSSION GUIDE
(Student's Copy)

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Case Study #1

Jim is one of your best friends. You go to games with him, fish with him and even go on family vacations with his family. You are concerned because everywhere you go with him he is constantly pointing out other ladies and commenting on their appearance. He seems to be in a constant state of lust. How could you help Jim conquer his temptation? What would be your strategy to impact him? What strategy could you suggest to help him find victory?

Case Study #2

Roger and Mary are good friends but they seem to be competing with you over the accumulation of material things. Every time you get a new car, they get a new car. Every time you book a vacation, they book a vacation, etc. etc. How can Abram's example provide a good lesson for both of you? Discuss how you trust God to provide for your needs.

Case Study #3

Jennifer is a Christian but never seems to have the joy of Christ. She is constantly depressed and hurting. You are a good friend and want to help her. How could you help her find victory in her life? What is a good strategy for victorious, joyful living?

Case Study #4

You have two good friends at church unfortunately they are not speaking to each other due to a business relationship that went bad. You want to see them make amends. How could you help them reconcile? What strategy would you use to help them achieve victory? How can you guard significant relationships to keep them based on Christ?

THE Word For The Week

Genesis 16:1-16 “Failure: When We Take Charge”

Monday – Read Genesis 12:10-20

- Why did Abram go to Egypt?
- Do you think his choice demonstrated sound judgment or a lack of faith?
- How was Abram deceitful?
- How do these actions demonstrate a lack of faith in God’s ability to protect?
- Consider how his decision affected Sarai. How do you think this impacted their marriage?
- How do you think it impacted Abram’s ability to provide future spiritual leadership to Sarai?
- Consider times that you may have used logic and rationalization, rather than depending on God.

Tuesday – Read Genesis 16:1-3

- How did Hagar become the servant of Sarai? (Genesis 16:1-3)
- Why did Sarai give Hagar to Abram?
- Why do you think Abram complied with Sarai’s request? Do you think he considered the potential ramifications of his decision?
- Consider how Abram’s earlier choices in Egypt continued to impact his life.
- Today, think about some situations where you may be trying to “help God,” by being self-reliant and providing your own solutions, rather than waiting for His?

Wednesday – Read Genesis 16:4-5

- Why do you think Sarai became angry, even though things worked out just as she had planned?
- Why do you think she blamed Abram for this situation?
- Describe Sarai and Hagar and each woman’s relationship with Abram. With whom do you most sympathize? Why?
- Consider times when you have been dissatisfied with the results of a plan that you made without God’s guidance? Who did you blame?

Thursday – Read Genesis 16:6-9

- Why do you think Sarai mistreated Hagar?
- Abram had long anticipated the promise of a child. Why do you think he allowed Sarai to abuse Hagar, while she was carrying his child?
- In what ways did Hagar demonstrate more faith than either Abram or Sarai?
- Pray today that God will reveal to you if there is anyone in your life that you may not be treating well.

Friday – Read Genesis 16:10-16

- Consider how God dealt with Hagar. What does this teach you about God?
- Do you think the promise made to Hagar in Gen. 16:10 was intended as a blessing for her or a consequence for Abram?
- How did Abram’s decision impact his descendants?
- How is his choice still impacting our world today?
- Today, pray for the missionaries who are ministering to the Muslim world.

Ancient/Future - A Journey through Genesis
"Trust: Who Makes Us Prosper"
Genesis 14:1-24

(Exegetical . . . What it meant to Israel back THEN)
ABRAM'S RESPONSE TO THE TWO KINGS
[receiving a blessing from and paying a tithe to Melchizedek,
priest of "God Most High" while
vowing to trust in the Lord "God Most High" to bless him and
rejecting the king of Sodom's offer of the spoils of war
so that no one could say they had made him (Abram) rich]
**SIGNIFIED HIS TRUST IN THE LORD "GOD MOST HIGH" ALONE
TO BLESS HIM AS PROMISED.**

NOTE: In Genesis 14 God revealed Himself to Abram. Abram had worshipped other God's before hearing and obeying the call of YHWH. Abram had moved into the land of the Canaanites. This was "The Land of Promise." After he and his nephew, Lot, had settled in, war overwhelmed the land. Lot was taken captive by the enemy alliance.

Abram rescued Lot along with the people and possessions of the local kings. As Abram came back in triumph he was met by the King of Sodom (Bera) and the King of Salem (Melchizedek), who was also priest of "El-Elyon." Abram acknowledged YHWH as El-Elyon, "God Most High," Possessor (Creator) of Heaven and Earth. When Abram was offered the spoils of war, he refused. Instead, he paid a tithe to Melchizedek, indicating his trust in YHWH to provide.

Moses, in recounting this episode, wanted Israel to understand that YHWH alone could make them prosper as they entered into the Promised Land.

I. The response of the five rebellious kings of the land into which Abram had settled (Canaan) to the threat of the four overlords/kings from outside the land was to come out to war against them in the valley of the Salt Sea, (1-9).

Note: In Abram's day it was common for "kings" to rule over city-states. If a king could gain greater military power, he would conquer weaker city-states and force the king and people to pay a tax of produce, livestock, silver, and gold. If a weaker city-state could build an alliance with other kings in the region they could possibly rebel against their oppressors and be free again.

II. A result of the ensuing battle was that Lot, Abram's nephew who was living in Sodom (chapter 13), was carried off by the over lording and victorious kings from outside the land, (10-12).

III. The response of Abram, the Hebrew, to the report given by a Canaanite fugitive that Lot had been taken captive was to take three hundred and eighteen of his men in pursuit of the enemy kings, to defeat them in a nighttime attack, and to bring back not only Lot, but also the people and possessions of the Canaanite city-states, (13-16).

Note: The structure of the next section. 17-24 follows a chiastic development:

A - The King of Sodom Met Abram, (17).

B - The King of Salem Met Abram, (18).

B' - The King of Salem Blessed (big "B") Abram, (19-20).

A' - The King of Sodom Proposed a (small "b") "blessing," (21-24).

- IV. Abram's victorious return was met by the king of Sodom and the king of Salem (Jerusalem), Melchizedek, priest of "God Most High," who brought out bread and wine for him, (17-18).

Note: At Abram's return two kings went out to meet him. First, the king of Sodom, Bera, (17) and then, the king of Jerusalem, Melchizedek, (18). These two kings could not have been more different. We already know the reputation of Sodom (13:13); and shortly that city would be judged and destroyed by the Lord, (chapters 18-19). Sodom's king was a wicked man ruling a wicked people. He was happy to see Abram because he wanted his people back.

Melchizedek was different. He was priest of "God Most High," (18). He was a man of more advanced standing before God than Abraham; he was a priest and he BLESSED Abram, (19). Twice in verse 19 this key covenant term appeared, "And he BLESSED him and said, 'BLESSED be Abram.'" Melchizedek was reminding Abram of God's Promise from Genesis 12:2-3. Then, after blessing Abram this King/Priest BLESSED "God Most High," (20).

- V. Abram's response to Melchizedek's blessing him in the name of "God Most High – Possessor of heaven and earth" and blessing "God Most High," who had delivered Abram's enemies into his hand, was to give Melchizedek a tithe, (19-20).

Note: What was met to catch Israel's attention, along with this mysterious priest and his covenant blessing, was the revelation of the Name/Title of his God. Melchizedek was a priest of El-Elyon, "God Most High." He pronounced a blessing upon Abram from El-Elyon, "God Most High." And he blessed El-Elyon, "God Most High." Within seconds Abram was vowing before YHWH, identifying Him as El-Elyon, "God Most High," (22). This revelation reminded/revealed to Abram that the Lord who had called him was Lord ABOVE the kings and priests of this world. He was God ABOVE their gods.

Along with the revelation of the Name/Title of El-Elyon, "God Most High" came the basis for the name. (1) El-Elyon was possessor of Heaven and Earth (19 & 22); and (2) El-Elyon had delivered Abram's enemies into his hands, (20). Abram's God truly possessed and controlled His creation. He could and would make good on His promise to bless Abram . . . and Israel.

- VI. Abram's response to the king of Sodom's offer that he (Abram) keep all the spoils of war, except for his (Bera's) people, was to testify of his vow to "YHWH, God Most High – Possessor of heaven and earth," that he would take nothing of the spoils, except what his soldiers had consumed, so that no one (no human being) could say, "I have made Abram rich," (21-24).

Note: The question was, "Where would Abram turn . . . Whom would he trust for blessing?" Abram's response was (1) to give a tenth (a tithe) and (2) to vow to El-Elyon, "God Most High." Abram vowed to take nothing from anyone except His God so that none could say they had made Abram rich. Abram would DEPEND on El-Elyon, "God Most High" alone. His tithe was a sign of dependent trust and his refusal of Bera's offer was also a sign of dependent trust. Essentially Abram said, "Take your rewards, bribes, sweet deals, and blessings; I'll trust God to take care of, protect and provide for, and

bless me." Moses sought to instill the same attitude in Israel. How would Israel prosper in the land of promise? By trusting in YHWH El-Elyon alone.

(Theological . . . What it means to believers ALWAYS)
EXPERIENCING THE LORD'S BLESSING
(His promise, deliverance, and provision)
PREPARES BELIEVERS FOR NEW CHALLENGES OF FAITH.
[The Lord alone makes His people prosper.]

- I. People of faith do not escape conflict in this world, (1-12).
- II. Those who separate themselves from people of faith miss the Lord's blessing, (12).
- III. Those who align themselves with people of faith share in the Lord's blessing, (14-16, 24).
- IV. Israel's Most High God – possessor of creation – delivers and provides for His people [as promised], (18-20a).
- V. Those who trust in the Lord alone for provision receive all they need from Him, (20b-23).

(Pedagogical . . . What it means to us NOW)
TRUST THE LORD ALONE TO PROSPER YOU.

- I. God's people face conflict, just like everybody else, (1-12).
 - A. Abram's nephew was kidnapped.
 - B. You face physical, financial, relational, spiritual, etc. conflicts.
- II. Moving away from God while in crisis makes you miss His blessing, (12).
 - A. Lot had moved away from God in chapter 13 and got kidnapped.
 - B. Many miss God's blessing because they abandon Him in crisis.
(examples: _____, _____, _____)
- III. Staying close to God while in crisis ensures you get His blessing, (14-16).
 - A. Abram won the battle against the odds.
 - B. Many people of faith defeat their earthly/spiritual enemies.
(examples: _____, _____, _____)
- IV. "God Most High" has promised to see His people through, (18-20a).
 - A. Melchizedek reminded Abram that "God Most High" was his blessing.
 - B. This passage is your reminder that "God Most High" is your blessing.
- V. **TRUST THE LORD ALONE TO PROSPER YOU**, (20b-23).
 - A. Abram's tithe and testimony exposed his trust in God alone.
 - B. Your "giving back" to God and your "taking in" the untainted blessing of God both proves and increases your faith.
 1. Become a giving person (you have it to give away).
 2. Reject lying, cheating, stealing, bribing, conning, etc. as ways to "get ahead" (i.e., don't "bless yourself").
 - C. **TRUST THE LORD ALONE TO PROSPER YOU.**