



THE BIBLE LAB

YES, NO & MAYBE

03

1. Instruction manuals are for dweebs. I never read them.
2. When I'm asked to do something for the first time, I prefer detailed, step-by-step instructions.
3. Once you accept God's calling, everything in your life begins to make sense.
4. God wants you to figure out ways to overcome the obstacles in the path of your life purpose.
5. If you step away from God's purpose, He will not intervene.

DIG DEEP

READ: Genesis 12:10-20 (NIV)

10 Now there was a famine in the land, and Abram went down to Egypt to live there for a while because the famine was severe. 11 As he was about to enter Egypt, he said to his wife Sarai, "I know what a beautiful woman you are. 12 When the Egyptians see you, they will say, 'This is his wife.' Then they will kill me but will let you live. 13 Say you are my sister, so that I will be treated well for your sake and my life will be spared because of you."

14 When Abram came to Egypt, the Egyptians saw that Sarai was a very beautiful woman. 15 And when Pharaoh's officials saw her, they praised her to Pharaoh, and she was taken into his palace. 16 He treated Abram well for her sake, and Abram acquired sheep and cattle, male and female donkeys, male and female servants, and camels.

17 But the Lord inflicted serious diseases on Pharaoh and his household because of Abram's wife Sarai. 18 So Pharaoh summoned Abram. "What have you done to me?" he said. "Why didn't you tell me she was your wife? 19 Why did you say, 'She is my sister,' so that I took her to be my wife? Now then, here is your wife. Take her and go!" 20 Then Pharaoh gave orders about Abram to his men, and they sent him on his way, with his wife and everything he had.

∞ This first episode after the promise speaks not of security, rest, and joy, but of danger, deception, and disease. What does it say about the character of God that He would choose to bless people who are self-reliant, manipulative and conniving?

» **vs 10 Abram went down to Egypt to live there for a while:** "To live there for a while" translates the term *gûr*, meaning "sojourn," which usually describes a temporary residence. However, the same language describes the ten-year sojourn of Naomi's family in Moab (Ruth 1:1, 4). Abraham later identified himself as an "alien [*gêr*] and a stranger" (23:4; cp. 17:8) as did Isaac and Jacob (28:4; 35:27). The importance of the stranger in patriarchal history is illustrated best in chaps. 18-20, where the custom of hospitality plays a central role. A "sojourner" (*gêr*) is a person who lives among a population with whom he usually has no family affiliation (but cp. 32:4) and does not have full citizenship rights. Later, special protections are afforded for aliens living among Israel on the basis that Israel once had been sojourners in Egypt (e.g., Deut 16:9-12; Gen 15:13).

» How does life remain puzzling even after you receive God's promise?

» **Fratriarchy:** Those who imagine that Abram knowingly was risking Sarai fail to understand that posing as brother and sister was designed to buy time so they could escape. Abram was playing off the well-known custom of fratriarchy, as Nahum Sarna has explained: "Where there is no father, the

How
GOD
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DIG DEEP...CONTINUED

brother assumes legal guardianship of his sister, particularly with respect to obligations and responsibilities in arranging marriage on her behalf. Therefore, whoever wished to take Sarai to wife would have to negotiate with her 'brother.' In this way, Abram could gain time to plan escape."

« Abram devised a scheme that would have worked in most situations, but he found himself in the one exceptional circumstance when the Pharaoh claimed Sarai.

° Does God expect us to figure out how to solve our big problems, or not?

» vs 17 The Lord inflicted serious diseases on Pharaoh and his household:

Literally, Yahweh inflicted great plagues on Pharaoh and his household. The Hebrew construction stresses the severity of the plagues; so we understand that Pharaoh's household was overwhelmed by them. But Sarai was untouched. The word translated "plagues" often refers to skin diseases. So possibly the Egyptian court suffered from something akin to a plague of boils (cf. Exodus 9:9).

« God doesn't punish Abram for this, instead he punishes Pharaoh and his household. What does this say about God?

» **vs 19 Now then, here is your wife. Take her and go!**: The concluding line is staccato—just four Hebrew words: "Here ... wife ... take ... go." Such disdain. Pharaoh assumed the moral high ground. Abram appeared the sinner, Pharaoh the saint. In spite of the trouble Abram caused for himself, God was faithful to His word and did not let the foolishness of this man throw His plan into jeopardy. Abram probably felt that the easiest way out of danger was to manipulate deceptively. But such scheming put him in danger and jeopardized the promise.

« I what areas of ministry do we need to figure out better methods of connecting people with God?

‡ What does it say about God's character that He doesn't dictate our every move--and He fixes our mistakes--when we accept His plan for our life?

NOTES

TALK WITH GOD THIS WEEK ABOUT...

1. How am I allowing the "famines" in my life to discourage me from my calling?
2. In what areas of my life am I being conniving in order to get ahead?
3. What do I see more clearly about the character of God this week?



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