

Gleaning In The Fields Of Light

The Faith of Abraham AND Sarah

By Ken Woodley

What would happen if we walked away from everything we've ever known in life because we believed God told us to?

Suppose God said: "Go from your country and your kindred and your father's house to the land that I will show you...."

That's exactly what God *did* tell Abraham in Genesis.

What a terribly frightening decision. Yet, Abraham, and his wife, Sarah, had the courage to make the God-led choice.

Abraham's country, kindred and father's house were everything to him. His known universe. His life orbited constantly among his kindred, in and out of his father's house, forever in his own country. His place of comfort, safety and love. Sarah's too.

But God told him—told *them*—to leave all of that behind.

Every day of his life, Abraham had awoken in his own country, among his kindred and his father's house. He worked there. Laughed and cried there. He planted roots so deep that one can hardly imagine the effort required to pull them up and plant them somewhere else. Or, if the roots stayed put, the courage necessary to turn and leave them all behind.

But that is exactly what Abraham did, with Sarah, who must have had some definite say in the matter, patriarchal society or not. For too long we've given Abraham all of the credit for this leap of faith into an uprooting journey of faith. Sarah's role needs equal emphasis because anytime one spouse faces an extreme God-led decision, the other spouse faces it too.

We all know that to be true.

Few of us will ever have to endure the completely uprooting experience of Abraham and Sarah but there are times in our lives when it might have felt as if we'd left what had become our known universe behind. When we move to another community, or another state, when we change jobs, or feel God telling us to leave a job. There are many life experiences that are leaps of faith, that find us leaving our known universe and journeying to a totally new way of life. In effect, a new country.

Leaps of faith aren't straightforward journeys because they don't come with roadmaps. We can't Google or ask Siri for directions. We leap into the unknown.

Fortunately, however, we are hardly ever asked to make such leaps alone. Sarah journeyed with Abraham. I can totally relate, having made life journeys into the unknown with my wife, Kim, just as I have journeyed by her side.

But she has not been my only companion, nor I hers.

As all of us journey from one known universe to another, there may come a time when we question our ability to persevere. There surely must have been occasions when Abraham and Sarah thought to themselves—or spoke aloud—“Okay, God, you told us to leave everything behind: our country, our kindred and our father's house. We obeyed but now we feel lost. Where are you?”

Asking that question is no sin, nor is it a lack of faith. Asking a question allows God to answer. Asking a question demonstrates faith that God *will* answer.

The key to everything that happens next on the journey is the direction taken by our eyes—which means our mind, heart and soul—after we ask for help. Where do we look? If we look down all that we see is the mud and the rocky ground. But if, as described in Psalm 121, we raise them to the hills—that is, if we incline our mind and heart and soul to a new horizon—then we more clearly feel the presence of God by our side.

When we look with hope through the eyes of God's promise, ripples of light spread out into the darkness. We notice something we didn't sense before: God has been there the whole time.

“... *The Lord himself watches over you;*” Psalm 121 assures us.

the Lord is your shade at your right hand,

So that the sun shall not strike you by day,

nor the moon by night....

*The Lord shall watch over your coming out and your coming in,
from this time forth for evermore.”*

When we keep faith with God, God is able to keep faith with us. God is able to bless us and, crucially, make us a blessing to others. That was God's promise to Abraham and Sarah. That is God's promise to us. When we make a leap of a faith in response to God's call, a faithful landing awaits.

