LET’S BEGIN HERE

Abraham’s life story flies in the face of modern-day conventions of safety. He pulled up roots with his family; abandoned his land, inheritance, and comfort; set out on a rugged journey at what we consider retirement age; and believed God for a miracle child even in his and Sarah’s old age. Abraham followed God and forsook comfort, predictability, and earthly logic in order to obey Him.

Abraham was quite a man of faith!

Don’t we want that kind of faith? Does it seem out of reach? Instead of being intimidated by the life of Abraham, we can extract principles from his story to apply to our own journey with the Lord. Famed apologist Ravi Zacharias talked with Chuck Swindoll about Abraham’s legacy of faith and principles of living.

LET’S DIG DEEPER

1. Faith in the Christian Life (Genesis 12:1–10)

   God has put enough into this world to make faith in Him a most reasonable thing, but He’s left enough out to make it impossible to live by sheer reason alone. There is always this interplay, the affirmation that comes, the rationality.

   — Ravi Zacharias

Abraham was not just journeying to a town; he was going toward “the city which has foundations, whose architect and builder is God” (Hebrews 11:10). His motivation? The relationship he had with the God in whom he trusted. Abraham’s devotion to God kept him going during difficult times.

However, Abraham wasn’t a flawless model of faith! In Genesis 12:10–20, Abram (Abraham) and his clan were hungry. Additionally, Abram was worried about the reception he’d receive from Pharaoh when Abram and his ravishing wife, Sarai, entered Egypt. He lied to the Egyptians, telling them that Sarai was his sister, which put both Sarai and the Egyptians in a precarious position.

What does Abram’s behavior say about failing in faith?

• The Bible never hides the scars of its heroes.
• God makes unpredictable choices in people—Jacob, Moses, Saul, and others—to use for His glory.

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• The Bible gives us the assurance that God calls flawed people. Human stumbling doesn't take God by surprise.
• You may be struggling with a family issue, a health issue, a financial issue. Let God walk you through it.

2. Staying Strong
How can a Christian stay strong during trials? Remember:

• Where there is love, there is freedom.
• Where there is freedom, there is the possibility of evil.
• Where there is evil, there is need for a Savior.
• Where there is a Savior, there is the possibility of redemption.

Even when evil threatens to overwhelm, the love of God, the redemption of His Son, and the counsel of His Spirit keep us. God always has our good and His glory at heart.

A CLOSER LOOK
Regarding Middle East Conflict
The God who lives in the eternal now doesn't just see that one entity. He looks out into the corridors of time and the future. There's this domino effect of choices.

—Ravi Zacharias

Abraham is said to be the “father” of Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. Though the three religions honor Abraham, they differ in the treatment of his sons. Judaism and Christianity treat Isaac as the son of promise, while Islam gives greater honor to Abraham's son with Hagar, Ishmael. Some see the unending battle in the Middle East as the perennial outcome of the feuding families of Abraham—Sarah and Isaac versus Hagar and Ishmael.

Is peace possible? What factors are at play in the Middle East?

There are two factors to consider when observing the conflict in the Middle East:

The Theological Factor. In the Middle East, there is a constant sense of revenge and avenging. Nobody wants to forgive. This starkly contrasts with Jesus on the cross. Among His last words were “Father, forgive them; for they do not know what they are doing” (Luke 23:34).

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The Methodological Factor.

It is very important that parents bring up their children in these cultures without anger, without hate. Until that happens, they will always be raised to avenge. The future is in the hands of families in how we raise our children to love and to talk, in spite of our differences, not to kill. And to forgive. Love the people, love those with whom we disagree, and ultimately the love of Christ will triumph and hearts will change.

—Ravi Zacharias

LET’S LIVE IT

Age is nothing but a number when it comes to being called by God. After all, Abraham was 75 years old when he began his journey. Prepare yourself to abide with God by prioritizing your life according to eternal standards.

Keep Your Priorities Straight

Nurture your most valued relationships. Maintain constant connection with your spouse, children, and loved ones.

Exercise. Honor the body that God gave you with regular exercise and healthful eating.

Give generously. Possessions are a gift and a trust. One of the greatest joys in life is in giving your time, resources, and ideas.

Use discernment in choosing leaders. It’s the team around you that is either your strength or your weakness.

Engage the mind. The expenditure of words without the income of ideas will lead to conceptual bankruptcy. Keep ideas flowing. Take seriously the privilege of learning. Devour history and literature—history is the story of a people, literature is the soul of a people.

Guard the heart.

• Remain humble. Your work, health, privileges, resources are all gifts from God. There is no such thing as a “self-made” person.
• Develop disciplines. Keep your ears and eyes away from things or people who will compromise your relationship with God and your spouse.
• Utilize integrity. Others trust you because you’ve been tested through experience. You’ve lived! Don’t waste your influence—when you see a problem, craft solutions. Participate. Innovate.
tools for digging deeper

Abraham: One Nomad's Amazing Journey of Faith
by Charles R. Swindoll and Insight for Living Ministries
Classic CD series and softcover Bible Companion

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