



Abraham's Costly Detours

Genesis 12-16, 20

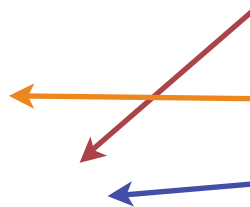
Avoiding life's pitfalls

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❖ *Haven't we all made some bad decisions in life?*

Now the LORD said to Abram,

"Go forth **from** your country,
And **from** your relatives
And **from** your father's house,
To the land which I will show you
And I will make you a great nation."



A. Place Detour (Genesis 12)

Went where he wasn't supposed to.

B. Person Detour (Genesis 13-14)

Stayed with those he shouldn't

C. Procedure Detour (Genesis 16)

Did things in ways he shouldn't

A.) Place Detour (Genesis 12:10-20, 20)

Is it God's will to go to such and such a place?

- 1) Where did the Lord originally want you to go and why?
- 2) Has He asked you to go elsewhere?

a) Abram went down to Egypt (Genesis 12:10).
Watch where your stomach might lead you!

b) Abraham settled between Kadesh and Shur; then he lived in Gerar (Genesis 20:1). Notice the step by step procedure.
Watch where your resentment might lead you!



Disobedience -> Insecurity -> fears -> Immoral decisions

Obedience -> Trust -> Peace -> Good decisions



*When God speaks, listen carefully. Pay attention to details.
They might not make sense for awhile, but they are important.*

B.) Person Detour (Genesis 13-14)

Being with those you shouldn't

- 1) Abram and Lot's Workmen. (Genesis 13)

The first problem was over Abram and Lot's workmen.

- 2) Abram's Rescue of Lot (Genesis 14)

The second problem of having Lot nearby led to getting caught in a risky fight.

Application

God clearly does not want us to associate with certain people.

- He doesn't want us to date or court non-Christians.
- He is not pleased when we marry people our parents do not approve of.
- He doesn't want us to hang around those given to anger.
- He doesn't want us to listen to gossip and backbiters.

C.) Procedure Detour (Genesis 16-17)

Doing things in ways you shouldn't

- 1) **The difficulty**

The problem and the temptation are seen in Genesis 16:1, "Now Sarai, Abram's wife had borne him no children, and she had an Egyptian maid whose name was Hagar."

The real quality of endurance is not waiting to the point when the fulfillment would almost come but right up to when the full time had come. The real quality of endurance is not waiting to the point when the fulfillment would almost come but right up to when the full time had come.

2) The detour

There was a common practice in those parts recorded in ancient records found by Haran. If there was infertility, then it was legal and acceptable for the husband to impregnate his wife’s slave girl.

“And after Abram had lived ten years in the land of Canaan, Abram’s wife Sarai took Hagar the Egyptian, her maid, and gave her to her husband Abram as his wife. And he went in to Hagar, and she conceived; and when she saw that she had conceived, her mistress was despised in her sight.” (Genesis 16:3-4)

Time tests our faith

➔ Application

- Don’t always follow the advice of your wife.
- The husband is responsible to do the right thing.
- Respect God’s hand in fertility.
- Remember it is God Himself who makes our situation harder at times.

3) The consequences: Self-reliance is our biggest problem.

- Ishmael’s descendants became a major threat to Israel (of Isaac the Promised son).
- Further difficulties in Abraham and Sarah’s marriage (cf. Genesis 16).
- Unable to prove God’s faithfulness in his own life.
- Poor testimony to the world. (“I didn’t think there was such a God.”)
- For the flesh sets its desire against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; for these are in opposition to one another, so that you may not do the things that you please. (Galatians 5:17)

4) God’s solution

God of course wants us to endure the test and withstand the enemy’s testing. It is good to summarize some of the suggestions of the world and compare them to what the Lord says. This incident with Hagar and Ishmael highlight these differences.

EVALUATING DETOURS		
The World	The Lord	Proof
World’s ways best	World’s ways never best	Bad consequences
Seems compelling	Not urgent	Waited 14 more years
Self-reliant	God-dependent	Isaac -miracle!
Prideful	Exalts God	God supplied
Relativistic	God’s principles	Abraham’s marriage
Lives by senses	Lives by faith	Abraham’s faith

Application:

1. List a spiritual crisis that you have or are now experiencing. Identify what the actual temptation was. How was your faith tested? Did you endure through the testing? What was God trying to teach you?
2. Temptation (detours) become sin if we fail to trust God. When we fall, we need to get up right away. How long have you been a Christian? How has the time from which you fall and the time you repent and confess your sins changed. If you before took two days, is it now shorter?
3. Explain the principle of flesh versus the spirit. How is it important to a Christian who walks in the Spirit?