

Series: God & Abraham #1185

Title: Genesis 14.14

Abram Is Prepared, Courageous, and Brave

Thank you for joining me today from wherever you are and by however you listen as we meet together coast-to-coast here in the United States and all the way around the world. As we come to Friday I want to continue our discussion on how God ministered in Abram's life such that he became a man of godly character. God is the One who shapes this man Abram. I give God credit for Abram's character, because we see in the Bible how the Lord chose him and molded him into a man of such exuberant faith. God and Abraham have a very personal relationship. The Book of James tells us Abraham was called the friend of God. And as friends, we can be certain the two spent time together. The heavenly Father working in the life of one of his children.

And we have been looking at how Genesis 14, verse 14 and the action taken therein is reflective of Abram's character. Let me get the verse back on your mind, then I will remind you of my first insight and we will move onto my second one. This is God's Word. Genesis 14.14, **"When Abram heard that his relative had been taken captive, he led out his trained men, born in his house, three hundred and eighteen, and went in pursuit as far as Dan."** I said that **God shaped Abram's character so that he is, first, the leader of his household.** We highlighted, in this verse, that despite the way they had separated, Abram still considered Lot his nephew and therefore part of his household. And Abram, as leader of his household, he had trained the men under his leadership, those "born in his house."

Second, God shaped Abram's character so that he is prepared. To be prepared for trouble, in advance of receiving the trouble, that is wise. War had not yet come to Abram. In fact, the war of the kings had passed him and his allies by. Still, he took the time and the effort to intentionally train his men for battle. This is what we call having foresight. It was Abram's nature to be a man of peace. We see that in his life. He did not have a combative personality. And yet even though he was a person of peace, still, he prepared these men in his household for war.

Being prepared, I believe, is a trait we find in people of godly character. In the Gospels Jesus speaks regularly of preparation. Regarding being ready and prepared for Him, listen to Matthew chapter 24, verses 42-43. **"42 Therefore be on the alert, for you do not know which day your Lord is coming. 43 But be sure of this, that if the head of the house had known at what time of the night the thief was coming, he would have been on the alert and would not have allowed his house to be broken into. 44 For this reason you also must be ready; for the Son of Man is coming at an hour when you do not think He will."** (Matthew chapter 24, verses 42-43.)

And the Proverbs speak repeatedly of being prepared. Here are a few to take note of on this Friday. Proverbs 22, verse 3, **"The prudent sees the evil and hides himself, but the naive go on, and are punished for it."** In Proverbs 6 we are told to be prepared like an...ant! Not like an aunt (your Mom's sister), but an ant – that tiny little creature racing along the ground. I am reading Proverbs chapter 6, verses 6-11, **"6 Go to the ant, O sluggard, observe her ways and be wise, 7 which, having no chief, officer or ruler, 8 prepares her food in the summer and gathers her provision in the harvest. 9 How long will you lie down, O sluggard? When will you arise from your sleep? 10 'A little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to rest' — 11 Your poverty will come in like a vagabond and your need like an armed man."** The message there could not be clearer: work hard at being prepared! (Proverbs 6, verses 6-11 and the analogy of the ant.)

Picture Abram, outside his tents and he has again called for these young men to join him. They might have rolled their eyes and they may have wanted to pull the covers over their faces and go back to sleep in their tents, but here was the master of the household calling for them to come train. One young man may have had the courage to object, "But Abram, sir, why should we train so much when there is no sign of war?" And we can imagine Abram, being patient with the boy, and explaining that God wants them all to be disciplined, fit, ready, and very well prepared for when conflict does come. "Now run another lap, lad," maybe Abram have said as the other boys shook their heads, glad that they had not spoken.

Now here some of you may object. But God is the God of peace, and we are commanded to be peacemakers and to love others. Why all this talk of people of *godly* character being prepared to do combat? I like what Matthew Henry wrote in his commentary on this passage. He says (quote), "Though

our holy religion teaches us to be for peace, yet it does not forbid us to provide for war.” Well said by Henry. Read the Bible, friends, and you will read of war. And God sometimes commands it, requiring His people to be ready to go to battle.

In His sovereignty and by His providence God knows how to get us prepared. And God always knows what is coming. He knows everything. He sees the future perfectly. And we will be wise to be on the alert, to plan ahead, and to get ready. Often Christians are not well prepared. We get caught off guard. We’ve been too busy fiddling around with things that do not matter. We really need to come back to God, to humble ourselves before Him, to create space in our schedule for our heavenly Father and to invite Him to build preparedness into our character. Friends, God *will* transform our character from one that is *unprepared* to one that is well prepared for the future. Seek the Lord, ask His help with this, and receive His wonder-working power in your life to be prepared.

God shaped Abram’s character so that he is, first, the leader of his household. Second, God shaped Abram’s character so that he is prepared. And now **third, God shaped Abram’s character so that he is courageous and brave.** Genesis 14, verse 14 continues, “Abram... led out his trained men, born in his house, three hundred and eighteen, and went in pursuit as far as Dan.” Abram, who is *not* a young man by the way, leads his trained men in pursuit of Lot and they go a long distance, as far as Dan. Unlike what we usually find in war, Abram did not engage in this battle because he was a prideful man. No. This was an unselfish act. He is doing this on behalf of his nephew!

How rare. Here, the great theologian Martin Luther *contrasts* the motive of Abram with the motive of the Greek military commander Alexander the Great and the Roman military commander Scipio. Both of those men moved out in sweeping conquests, driven by their pride and arrogance. These were not humble men partaking in unselfish conquests. Remember the vast territory that Alexander quickly controlled prior to his death in Babylon at only the age of 32. And Scipio, taking on and beating Carthage in the Second Punic War. Many scholars consider him to be the best military strategist ever, including his epic take down of Hannibal in the Battle of Zama, 202 BC. The victory, in Africa, actually gave Scipio the surname *Africanus*.

The world has made heroes of these men, but the Bible makes a hero of God, as He builds up the character of Abram into being a bold, courageous, and brave commander.

Where does Abram get his courage and bravery from? He gets it from *God*! The Bible makes clear that God’s people are to be fearless people. Oh, there is so much in Scripture about this. Here are just a few examples from both Testaments. I will start with my favorite as it pertains to the scene here in Genesis 14. I am thinking of Proverbs 28, verse 1, **“The wicked flee when no one is pursuing, but the righteous are bold as a lion.”** Let that sink in. This is *very* true. Proverbs 28, verse 1, **“The wicked flee when no one is pursuing, but the righteous are bold as a lion.”**

In other words, wicked people are skittish that even when no one is pursuing they are cowards running here, there and everywhere like chickens with their heads cut off. *But*, the righteous are bold like lions. God is with us, and wearing the righteousness of Christ, we fear nothing. Abram roared!

In Isaiah 41, verse 10 God says, **“Do not fear, for I am with you; do not anxiously look about you, for I am your God. I will strengthen you, surely I will help you, surely I will uphold you with My righteous right hand.”** And then listen to Psalm 118, verse 6, **“The Lord is for me; I will not fear; what can man do to me?”** (Psalm 118, verse 6.)

In the Gospels, I think of the numerous times Jesus said, “Take courage; do not be afraid.” And there is 2 Timothy chapter 1 and verse 7, **“For God has not given us a spirit of timidity (or fear), but of power and love and discipline.”** And we could go on and on all weekend! The point is when God develops our character, as He did with Abram, we are fearless people, as Abram was fearless. Next week we are going to see Abram’s courage and bravery in action as Genesis 14 continues. So, I hope you will be with us for that. For now, I leave you with these insights. God shaping Abram’s character. Wow. Join us again on Monday for God Is!

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