

"Honesty Is the Best Policy." – March 12, 2017  
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Genesis 17:1-7 & 15-16

Last week started our Lenten journey by looking at the first of five spiritual dysfunctions, lack of trust, through the lens of the Hebrew Scriptures. Trust is the cornerstone of every relationship. Lack of trust denies vulnerability and relationships will not grow.

In the Book of Genesis, the creation story tells how humans, Adam and Eve, chose to distrust God. Later, their son Cain decided not to trust God when he became the first murderer, killing his brother Abel. God and Noah saved the day when, through a covenant or agreement, the world was rescued. This week we discover God taking the next step.

We find Abram and Sarai in the twelfth chapter of Genesis. God offers another covenant with this couple. If they will leave their home, trust and follow God, then God will make of them a humongous nation, with more land than they can walk, and more descendants than then can count. And, bye the bye, their blessing will be a blessing for the entire world.

In the fifteenth chapter, God jogs Abram's memory so that he has no reason to be fearful; God will be his protector, his reward, and his blessing will be enormous. *And yet.* Abram confronts God regarding the promise of children: "*I have no children*" he states, "*where are the multitudes you promised me?*" Abram is unafraid to be honest with God. He is willing to face God with his fears and doubts.

He trusted God enough to be honest about who he was, and what he expected in this relationship. And because of this, God takes their relationship to the next level.

The second dysfunction in a spiritual relationship is a fear of conflict. Because of a lack of trust, people are unwilling to be honest about what they believe or think. This results in the creation of a kind of 'insincere harmony,' where we pretend to be someone we are not. This is difficult, and we can only keep up this façade for so long.

When a relationship is built on trust, when people are honest about what they believe and think, then they are freed to join in 'good' conflict. There is open dialog and ideas, thoughts, fears, and joys are shared in an environment of safety and love. Here, relationships grow.

Abram honestly trusts God and God assures him that he will have his child and many more besides. Abram and Sarai become Abraham and Sarah, and within a year, Sarah is preggers with a son, the heir to the promises of God, and the relationship between humanity and God continues to grow.

As Abraham's trust in God has grown so has his ability to be honest with his questions, doubts, and fears. Now, where in your life is there "artificial harmony?" Can you locate in your life where you are afraid of conflict; where you have a fear of saying the wrong thing? Why are you still fearful that your relationship will be unable to go to the next level, as you share how you honestly feel? If you are fearful of being honest in a relationship, should you be in that relationship at all?

Are there boundaries in your relationship with God? Are you honest regarding your dreams, desires, fears, disappointments, and your love of God?

A willingness to be honest about who we are and the desire to begin working on the differences, is the beginning of growth in every relationship. Our Scripture lesson today confirms Abraham's readiness to question, even fight for the covenant with God. And the promises of God come, always more than we expect.

Abraham is known for his faith. Faith is not the absence of doubt or questions; more exactly it is the willingness to be truthful regarding who we are and what centers us, and to be receptive to where God may lead us.

Who is it you need, to be honest with today? Alleluia. Amen.