

ABRAHAM: ONE NOMAD'S AMAZING JOURNEY OF FAITH

What a Way to Go!

Genesis 25:1–10

SEARCHING THE SCRIPTURES

STUDY



LET'S BEGIN HERE

Aging Abraham kept active right up to the end of his journey. In a season of life when many adults slip into neutral and glide toward the sunset, Abraham stayed engaged, remarrying after Sarah died, starting a new family, and generously using his resources to encourage the next generation.

Enthusiastic participation in life is exhilarating. It's the mundane that wears us out and shrinks our vision. When daily routine bores us silly, it's time to examine our priorities. Where do we *really* want to be at the end of our lives? Propped in a lounge with a Do Not Disturb sign on the door . . . or smack in the middle of exuberant existence?

Three mental sinkholes can impede our potential in our older years. Narcissism traps us in self-preoccupation: *I've paid my dues. I deserve to live for myself.* Pessimism drags us into self-pity: *I have nothing to offer. I'm too old.* And fatalism saps our will to live: *I've done all I can in life. All I can look forward to is the grave.*

What was Abraham's mind-set in his autumn years that safeguarded him from these pitfalls and kept him living well? Let's find out through our *Searching the Scriptures* study as we dig into Genesis 25:1–10.



YOUR TURN IN THE SCRIPTURES

According to Genesis 23:1, Sarah died at Hebron at age 127. Abraham was 137 years old when his dear wife passed and the light of his life went out. Heartbroken over the loss, "Abraham mourned and wept" (Genesis 23:2). Isaac was 37 years old when his mother died, and he married three years later at age 40 (25:20).

So without Sarah's companionship and Isaac out of the home, Abraham, probably around age 140, made three important choices that contributed to him being productive, purposeful, and fulfilled in his remaining years.

Quotable

*When you die,
what will be your
frame of mind?
Think about it.
How will you
be spending
your days
prior to your
breathing your last?*

— Charles R. Swindoll



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Observation: An Uncommon Example of Living Well

According to the *Searching the Scriptures* method of Bible study, observation is looking for verbs in the text that move the action forward, as well as names, places, and background information. Observing also prompts questions we need to explore.

Let's read the passage in three sections. We'll highlight three verbs that describe Abraham's life-enriching choices, make observations, and record questions as we go.

Abraham's New Wife—Genesis 25:1

What verb in Genesis 25:1 describes Abraham's first important choice in his old age, and what questions spark your curiosity about the situation?

Look up other references that mention the name *Keturah* by consulting a concordance, such as *The Strongest NASB Exhaustive Concordance*, or by going to biblegateway.com and entering *Keturah* in the search box. What do you discover about this woman?

Both Hagar and Keturah were Abraham's concubines. The term *concubine* was used to distinguish between Sarah, the wife whose child had full rights of inheritance, and the wives whose children did not have the same legal rights.

So Abraham's first life-enriching choice was to remarry. We'll examine what the Bible says about remarriage after the death of a spouse when we come to the interpretation section of our study, but for now, let's look at Abraham's second choice.



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Abraham's Second Family—Genesis 25:2–4

What do you observe in Genesis 25:2–4?

Keturah bore Abraham six sons! While many people in his stage of life would be dolefully poking at the embers of a waning fire, Abraham was tossing in six fresh pieces of wood! We applaud the Patriarch's undying zest for life and his desire to grow his family and pass on to others the blessings God had given him.

We might wonder, what happened to these sons and their families? We'll consider the significance of their lineage in a moment. In the meantime, let's observe Abraham's third choice that gave him meaning and purpose.

Abraham's Generous Inheritance—Genesis 25:5–10

What verbs do you see in Genesis 25:5–8? Why is it important that the author mentioned to whom Abraham distributed an inheritance?

Interestingly, Genesis 25:6 mentions the children of his "concubines" in the plural, indicating that the children Abraham blessed with gifts included not only the six children of Keturah but also Ishmael, the son of Hagar. Despite the conflict years earlier between Sarah and Hagar (Genesis 21:8–20), Abraham ensured that Ishmael also received a portion of the Patriarch's blessing.



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Interpretation: What Does It Mean?

The interpretation phase seeks to understand meaning, initially, for the Hebrews entering the Promised Land—the original readers. Then, we draw principles that apply to modern-day readers.

What meaning would the Hebrews have gathered from knowing about the Patriarch's remarriage and family line through Keturah? Thomas L. Constable's chart of Abraham's family tree gives us insight into the lineage of Abraham's sons, other than Isaac, and his nephews. Examine this [chart](#) on page 205 of the pdf document. In the space below, write down the Semitic tribes listed and how they related to Abraham, the Patriarch of the Israelites.

What would have been the significance of this knowledge to the Israelites who were surrounded by other tribes included in Abraham's family tree? And why was it important for them to know about the distribution of Abraham's inheritance?



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Correlation: Remarriage after the Death of a Spouse

Widows and widowers often wonder what the Bible says about remarriage. Look up the following verses, and write down the principles you discover.

Romans 7:2–3

1 Corinthians 7:8–9

What do you conclude from these verses?

What principles and applications can modern-day readers draw from Abraham's remarriage, family, and generosity? We can appreciate the importance of having an enriching and meaningful life in our older years. What do you learn from Abraham's example?



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Read the following verses. What principles about living well in your older years can you draw from the description of Abraham's death and burial?

Abraham lived for 175 years, and he died at a ripe old age, having lived a long and satisfying life. He breathed his last and joined his ancestors in death. His sons Isaac and Ishmael buried him in the cave of Machpelah, near Mamre, in the field of Ephron son of Zohar the Hittite. This was the field Abraham had purchased from the Hittites and where he had buried his wife Sarah. (Genesis 25:7–10)

Abraham “lived a long and *satisfying* life” (25:8, emphasis added). The Hebrew word for *satisfying* literally means “to be full.” Abraham was content—full of peace, knowing he had passed a legacy of faith to his children and the generations after them.



Application: Two Valuable Secrets to Finishing Well

Chuck Swindoll draws two vital applications from Abraham's example of finishing well:

The first secret: *faithfully remember that each day offers opportunities for staying young at heart. . . .*

The Lord has granted you a genuine stake in what the day holds. Choose a positive attitude. Choose to seek out and focus on the good things. Choose to face your opportunities with eager anticipation. Choose to set aside your own expectations, and then embrace what God chooses to do. Choose to live in a constant state of surprise by laying aside your will and letting the Lord's will unfold.¹



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What choices can you make today to take full advantage of the opportunities for staying young at heart?

He continues:

The second secret: *diligently refuse to give up.*

Determine that you will never stop living until someone puts a mirror under your nose and there's no fog. Never stop. Never give up.²

Have the traps of narcissism, pessimism, and fatalism snared your hopeful attitude? What can you do, practically, to apply to your outlook Abraham's tonic of enthusiasm for life?

It's a matter of intentionality. You can choose your attitudes. You can choose how to invest your time—in reading widely and wisely, in helping others, in planning enriching activities. You can choose to be involved, to have a sense of humor, to spend less time wishing for more, to be *satisfied*, and to pass a legacy of faith to future generations.



A FINAL PRAYER

Father, deliver me from the self-pity of our day and the bad-news pessimism that often accompanies old age. Raise me up to take life by the throat and live it to the full. Help me to be generous. Give me the joy of releasing what I think I can't live without so that I can cling more tightly to what's most important: my relationship with You. Thank You for filling me up and making me completely satisfied. Amen.

ENDNOTES

1. Charles R. Swindoll, *Abraham: One Nomad's Amazing Journey of Faith* (Carol Stream, Ill.: Tyndale House, 2014), 244.
2. Swindoll, *Abraham*, 245.



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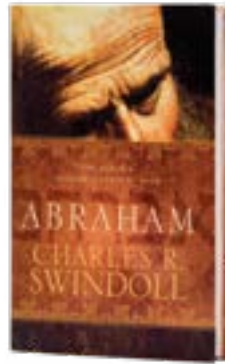
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For the 2017–2018 broadcasts, this *Searching the Scriptures* study was developed by Bryce Klabunde, executive vice president of Searching the Scriptures Ministries, based upon the original outlines, charts, and sermon transcripts of Charles R. Swindoll's messages.



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