

## Leaving Well Enough Alone

*Then he said, "Let the Lord not be angry, and I will speak one more time. Suppose 10 are found there?" He answered, "I will not destroy [it] on account of 10." When the Lord had finished speaking with Abraham, He departed, and Abraham returned to his place. – Genesis 18:32-33 HCSB*

Abraham returned to his place? Why in the world did he do that? Why didn't he grab a horse or something and get to Sodom and warn them of the coming destruction? Why didn't he at least warn his relatives?

Instead, he haggled with the Lord, knowing full well the spiritual condition of his nephew Lot and when it seemed that he'd gotten God down as far as He was going to go, he shrugged his shoulders and headed home! Why was this man, a fighter who was willing to take on five kings simultaneously, suddenly so passive?

It has to do with verse 25. Abraham knew who he was dealing with. This was no ordinary man in front of him. This was not even an angel. This was the Judge of all the Earth. Who was he to try to do God's job? The prophet Jeremiah got it right when he said "*The heart is more deceitful than anything else and desperately sick—who can understand it?*"<sup>1</sup>

What if Abraham had gone to Sodom? What if he had knocked on doors and screamed out in the marketplace? What could he have done? Could he tell who the truly righteous and the mortally unrighteous were? Could he read the hearts and minds of these people? I don't think so.

Abraham was close enough to God to know when to speak up, when to put up and when to shut up. He did what he could and when he reached the limits of God's patience and his personal ability – he was smart enough to recognize where he was and stopped.

That is an unusual bit of wisdom. Very few of us know how to walk the fine line between confidence in God's love and hubris. We tend to either fall far short of where God is willing to take us or we go way overboard and end up hurting our relationship with Him. We focus entirely on Law or way too much on Grace. We don't witness enough or we badger everyone with a big KJV Family Bible.

Knowing when to grab God's sleeve and make an impassioned appeal, or when to drop our hand and step away requires an intimate knowledge of God's will, His character, His methods and approach. It comes from a lifetime of studying His love letter and years of kneeling in His presence. We need to know when to speak up, when to put up and when to shut up. We need to know when to leave well enough alone.

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<sup>1</sup> Jeremiah 17:9