



# **Facing the Unknown**

LifeCare Memos® - Messages of Compassion

## ***Facing a Future with Question Marks***

Facing an unknown future is common to everyone. When we begin school we no longer spend our days at home with mom, family and friends. We move from one unknown to another, from grade school to junior high to high school and then college or work. Unknowns seem bigger as the years go by. There are work and career choices. We change jobs or are without a job. We get married and begin a family. We get older and discover wrinkles (“That person in the mirror can’t be me!”). Our eyesight changes and it becomes increasingly more difficult to get out of bed. We ask, “Where did that gray hair come from?” Or, “Where did my hair go?” Our health declines and getting out of a chair becomes a workout.

Eventually we find that the home we built can no longer be retained. Things we collected need to be reevaluated as we determine what to keep. Feelings of hopelessness, uselessness, helplessness and fear come into our lives as we look into an unknown future. We are loosening our grip on all that once seemed certain. Giving up and withdrawing from the world seems to be the only way to cope with or protect us from all the unexpected and unwanted changes. Yet, remember that while the future can be filled with unknowns, our future is not in free fall or at the whim of present circumstances. It can be safe, secure and filled with meaning and purpose.

## ***A Journey – Not a Destination***

**GOD** called Abraham out of Ur of the Chaldees (which is now modern day Iraq) to begin a nation and to live a faith that was totally different from the one in which he was raised (Genesis 12). He asked Abraham to act on faith. Today, **GOD** calls us to follow Him by faith into a future that we must trust into His hands. Abraham had grown up in a land that worshipped idols, a place not far from the Tower of Babel (Genesis 11). It was a metropolitan area that had algebra, indoor plumbing, and mathematics that developed into our concept of time. Due to invaders attacking Ur, Abraham’s father moved his family to a nearby city (Genesis 11). So, Abraham was already facing an unknown future, even before **GOD** called him. He was being taken from his home and friends, away from the place of comfort and security which he had enjoyed.

**GOD's** call to Abraham was to leave family, friends, his religion and home. If he would follow, **GOD** would abundantly bless his future. Abraham's response was to trust **GOD** and go forward by faith in **GOD**. This earned him the title of "friend of **GOD**." With **GOD** as our "friend" we can face the emotions of an unknown future that are often filled with feelings of hopelessness, helplessness, uselessness and fear.

**Abraham had feelings of hopelessness.** Yet, through trials and testing he learned he could hope in **GOD** rather than in his own efforts. We have all faced feelings of hopelessness when we felt that the future we had planned was being taken away from us. We live in a world that focuses on things, possessions and personal abilities. If we, like Abraham, learn to place our hope in **GOD** and His promises, then we have a firm foundation that cannot be touched or destroyed by a fickle world. Our hope is not in a "what" but in a "Whom."

**Abraham struggled with feelings of helplessness.** His livelihood was dependent on nature providing water and grasses for his herds and people to care for them. We, too, may find ourselves dependent on others. Others may determine when we eat, what we eat, when we bathe, and when we take our medications. We may even find ourselves depending on others to help with the most intimate of daily needs. Abraham learned to depend on others so he could learn that his help came from the **LORD**. We too, may need the help of staff, family, and friends. **GOD** brings others into our lives so we can benefit from accepting **GOD's** help as offered through them.

**Abraham had feelings of uselessness.** He had a difficult time influencing his own family. He could not get Lot to move from the Valley of Sodom and Gomorrah (Genesis 13) and he couldn't influence Sarah to circumvent **GOD's** plan for giving them a child (Genesis 16). Abraham came to understand that his usefulness or value was not determined by his own efforts or standards or actions of others. Usefulness is determined by our willingness to be used by **GOD** and does not depend on what we have, or talents and abilities. Our value and usefulness to **GOD** is determined by our obedience of faith to His leading. No matter what physical condition, location, economic ability or skillset a person may have, a faithful, obedient heart can move mountains for **GOD**.

**Abraham had feelings of fear.** He feared world leaders so much he lied about Sarah being his wife (Genesis 12). Fear of the unknown paralyzes the best of us. We can learn from Abraham and see that faith can be a great neutralizer of fear. He found that living by **GOD's** truth was far more powerful than living by fear.

## **Concluding Thoughts**

We have before us a **GOD** of Hope, Help, Usefulness and Courage. Even when we fall we can find hope. When Abraham fell, he turned to **GOD** for restoration and built altars to commemorate those times. It has been said that it is “at the altar that one’s life is altered.”

We must have faith in **GOD** and know that with faith comes testing. Testing is essential to improving our faith. When tested we may feel alone. Remember: during a test the teacher is often silent; not because there is no guidance but because guidance has been given by the teacher beforehand. The future is now testing us to see if we have learned from our Teacher, the **LORD** Jesus Christ. He is present and ready to help us. Our advantage is that our Teacher loves us so much that He sent His only begotten Son to die for us and raised Him from the grave to give us hope (John 3:16). That sounds like someone who has our best interests in mind. Trust the **LORD**. Follow Him and know that in His hands your future is assured, no matter how dark it looks.

*“Trust in the **LORD** with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make your paths straight” (Proverbs 3:5-6)*

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### **LifeCare Memos<sup>®</sup>**

When experiencing the stresses of life, people need support. The Psalmist needed that support and found it when he turned to **GOD**. He said, *“Look to my right and see; no one is concerned for me. I have no refuge; no one **cares for my life**. I cry to You, O **LORD**; I say, ‘You are my refuge, my portion in the land of the living’” (Psalm 142:4-5).*

**LifeCare Memos** are designed as messages of compassion that integrate biblical guidelines for emotional and spiritual well-being. Topics focus on various life-care issues and address them from the perspective of Scripture.