

# Your Worst Enemy

## READING

Genesis 20

Numbers 22

Romans 5

James 4

*Do you have any idea how your life would have been if God had let you do those things you wish you had done?*

In Genesis 20 we read the story of when Abraham moved south. He was worried that the king, Abimelech, would kill him to take his wife, Sarah, for himself. So he convinced her to go along with a plan to tell a half-truth and say that she was his sister. (She was his half-sister, so, kinda true. But what kind of husband would rather have someone else sleep with his wife than risk his own life?)

It didn't go great. Abimelech did in fact take her to be his wife. (She's 90 remember). But then God appears to him in a dream and tells him "You're a dead man because of what you've done". Abimelech gets sick, his wife, (the one he already had), stops being able to have children. All his female servants stop being able to have children.

Abimelech, rightly, pleads ignorance because he had been told that Sarah was unmarried, and that they were only brother and sister. But God already knew that, and still brought this judgement of death on him.

But Yahweh says something very interesting. "Yes, that's why I stopped you sleeping with her". But then he gave Abimelech the choice... restore her to her husband, ... or die.

Abimelech restores her. And gives Abraham gifts and land as recompense for the wrong he had done him. (Which in itself is kind of odd, since really Abraham was the one who brought death to Abimelech by his lie).

And, by the way, it seems Abimelech was honourable and wouldn't have taken Sarah if he had known she was Abraham's wife in the first place. So his fear was misplaced and the lie was unnecessary.

As I get older I sometimes look back at lost opportunities. Things I almost did, but somehow didn't or couldn't. Some of them weren't glaringly sinful. Some were.

Sometimes I fantasise about what might have been.

But what if that was just God protecting me?

What if those things I was close to doing but was somehow blocked from going through with... what if they would have ruined my life somehow?

I'm not smart enough to know the full consequences of my choices. I live pretty short term compared to God. My understanding of consequences only extends a short time into the future compared with his knowledge and wisdom.

What if my frustration at not achieving what I wanted, or wishing I had done certain things all those years ago, what if that was all under God's control and would have cost me my life, and he was protecting me from that?

Some of them might have taken me down a different path and I might never have become a Christian, never have been saved. What an awful thought.

You too?

Like Balaam, when he was angrily beating his donkey for disobeying him three times and it suddenly talked back, saying, "You idiot, I was saving your life". Is it time for you to realise that your frustration with your life is actually just you not realising what God has been doing for you all these years?

Are you actually angry with God?

Do you have any idea how your life would have been if he had let you do those things you wish you had done? Do you realise how ruined you would be?

Abraham was worried about Abimelech and what he would do. But it was Abraham who caused the problem for himself. He was his own worst enemy, being anxious about things that would never have happened, trying to manipulate the future to protect himself from harm that was never coming.

But God protected him too.

What if all these years, God has been protecting you. From yourself.

Protecting you from making bad choices.

Protecting you from sinning, from ruining your life, and the lives of others.

What if your worst enemy is not the person you thought it was?

What if it's not even Satan?

What if your worst enemy looks back at you whenever you look in a mirror?

What if it's you?