

Bible Devotions: Lock Stock & Barrel
Devotional Reading for Outdoorsmen
(Old Testament)

Genesis 21:15-18

Far Removed or Face to Face?

And the water in the skin was used up, and she placed the boy under one of the shrubs. Then she went and sat down across from him at a distance of about a bowshot; for she said to herself, "Let me not see the death of the boy." So she sat opposite him, and lifted up her voice and wept. And God heard the voice of the lad. Then the angel of God called to Hagar out of heaven, and said to her, "What ails you, Hagar? Fear not, for God has heard the voice of the lad where he is. Arise, lift up the lad and hold him with your hand, for I will make him a great nation."

I remember my first dove hunt on public land. As a friend and I positioned ourselves on the edge of a good looking field, we noticed a few other hunters moving in much too close for comfort. Sure enough, one of the hunters let go a shot at a low flying dove. I was mostly behind a tree but right in the line of fire. A number of pellets ricocheted around me; a few of them bounced off of my hunting coat.

Mine was a voluntary decision to be out there in the line of fire. Well, to be out there at least. I would have preferred to have not been in the line of fire as it were. In contrast, Hagar didn't have a choice in the matter. Abraham had sent her and Ishmael away at Sarah's insistence and God's direction.

When the water was gone and death was eminent, Hagar placed the young boy under a shrub and removed herself a bowshot distance away so she would not see him die. Depending on the size of bow you shoot, that could be quite a distance. My son and I discovered that a 30 pound long bow, the size typically used at some children's camps, can fling an arrow over 130 yards. But that's not the point. The point is: the kid was going to die and Hagar couldn't bear to watch.

Today, there are people sitting under the shadow of sin who need to know Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord. Their cries go unheard. Their needs unmet. That's where we come in. Or rather, that's where we go out.

Our going into all the world means that we'll travel into places where arrows are flung and shots are fired. These are the fiery darts of the wicked one (Ephesians 6:16). Shots fired to stop us. Only the shield of faith can quench the hellish arrows or deflect the bruising pellets. In the line of this type of fire, only God's children can bear that shield.

Just like God sent His angel to Hagar, so He sends His faithful followers to lost people who drain hope from empty water skins. In order to rescue these people, Genesis 21:18 reminds us that we must arise, lift them up, and hold them with our hands. This means that the action is ours to take. The world will either die and go to hell because we do nothing; or the world will hear from us the good news of salvation and make the decision for themselves whether or not they wish to stay under the shrub of rejecting God's Son.

God has shown us the power of arising and lifting up. In response to Israel's dangerous and treacherous enemy, God said in Isaiah 33:10, "*Now I will arise... now I will be exalted, now I will lift Myself up.*" He took action and in the process He was exalted and the enemy was routed.

This is the bottom line for every believer: will we wander away from those who under a dark shrub or will we get up, get going, and get a hold of the commission Jesus gave us in Mark 16:15, to go into all the world and preach the gospel to every person?

What will it be? Far removed or face to face?

Bible Devotions: Hook Line & Sinker (study guide)

Genesis 21:15-18
Far Removed or Face to Face?

HOOK

1. What is your primary concern when you hunt (or even fish or camp) on public land?

2. How far across a field would you need to be so as not to hear a baby cry? In the woods?

3. Describe how you'd build a Genesis-era bow and arrow. Include specific types of material.

LINE

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How do you get close to unsaved people? What do you tell them about Jesus... about eternal life?

Have you ever seen someone die? What was your response? Your immediate thoughts? If you haven't witnessed a death, how do you think you'd respond and what would you think about?

SINKER

Take a few minutes to write your thoughts on this devotional. Reflect on your own experiences.

Key words: arise lift up hold with your hand

