

A Cycle of Sin by Charles Swindoll

THE BIRTH of a newborn is a momentary event, taking place in a matter of hours, but at that moment, life has only just begun. Growth and maturity occur steadily and gradually as a child develops from infancy to young adulthood. After we have trusted in Jesus Christ and we begin growing after our new birth, we still never reach a state of complete perfection. Not in this life. Sin continues to stalk us. We struggle with old temptations. And therein lies one of the most regrettable truths about the life of faith: faithful people sometimes abandon their faith only to become temporarily faithless.

Abraham is a forerunner of faith for the rest of us. Just as we do, Abraham continually struggled to rise above old temptations and conquer repeat sins. For Abraham, one of these old habits was the compulsion to lie when the truth might jeopardize his life.

After watching the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah, Abraham pulled up stakes and eventually moved near the city of Gerar. Finding himself surrounded by people who might kill him for an opportunity to take his wife into their harems, Abraham once again introduced his wife, Sarah, to the king by saying, "She is my sister." And, just like before, Abraham's ploy backfired. The king discovered Abraham's lie and was understandably upset about it. But God still used Abraham to reveal His true nature to a pagan king (see [Genesis 20:6-7](#)). We Christians sometimes fail to rely on our new nature. Instead, we fall back on our old nature, and that's exactly what Abraham did. Yet his failure didn't make him any less God's man. When we fall, we can go to Him in repentance, trusting that He will continue to love us and use us for His purposes.

REFLECT: Are there certain patterns or habits you tend to fall back on when you're facing a difficult situation? What could help you remember your new God-given nature? Don't slip back into your old ways of living to satisfy your own desires.

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