

News Story Summary

An error by race organizers has made Bangkok, Thailand home to the world's longest half-marathon. Instead of the typical 21-kilometer (13-mile) run through Thailand's steamy capital, the Standard Chartered Bangkok Marathon on Sunday (November 15, 2015) accidentally extended its annual half-marathon to nearly 28 kilometers (17 miles).

The Jogging Association of Thailand, one of two organizers of the race, admitted to the error late Monday. Race officials responsible for pointing half-marathon runners in the right direction inadvertently directed them to make a U-turn at the wrong place.

The race organizer said, "We have rebuked the association but we could not do anything else."

While some runners complained that this mistake created a dangerous situation for athletes who had carefully trained for 13 miles, others took it in stride, joking that with the price increase to the marathon from the previous year, they were getting more miles for their money.

(For more on this story, search the Internet using phrases such as "Bangkok half-marathon")

Focus Attention

Follow the instructions for the "Focus Attention" section on page 140 of the leader guide, inviting group members to share stories of getting lost because of poor directions or a faulty GPS. Then share the news story about the Bangkok half-marathon. Ask: *What would your reaction be if you suddenly found yourself running more miles than you were expecting to run in a race?* Allow for discussion. Then comment that as we wrap up our study of Abraham's life today, it may seem as though Abraham's story has been full of unexpected detours and u-turns. Yet, the course of Abraham's life precisely followed the route God set for him. Transition to the lesson following the prompts on page 140 of the Leader Guide.

Challenge

Refer back to the news story. Point out that no matter how carefully human beings map out a course for themselves, they will eventually make mistakes. But God, in His sovereignty, had a plan for Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob that was perfect. And he has a plan for us as well. Proverbs 16:9 says, "A man's heart plans his way, but the LORD determines his steps." Remind group members of the Point of the session: *God provides for the needs of His people in a way that is consistent with His eternal plan.* Close in prayer, thanking God for his plan and asking Him to help your group trust Him more.