

# GENESIS 17

**KEY THOUGHT: God keeps His promises, even when they seem impossible. Our response is to trust Him, walk with Him, and obey Him.**

**Genesis 17 takes place about thirteen years after Genesis 16.** Abraham is 99, Sarah still has no child, and Ishmael is thirteen. God appears as **God Almighty - El Shaddai**. The promise looks impossible, but God is showing Abraham that His promise depends on His power, not human ability.

God tells Abraham, **"Walk before me, and be blameless."** This means to live wholeheartedly and faithfully before God, not to be sinlessly perfect. God changes Abram's name to **Abraham** and Sarai's name to **Sarah**. Their new names remind them that God is giving them a new identity and a future based on His promise.

God gives **circumcision** as the sign of the covenant. It did not save Abraham. Genesis 15:6 already says Abraham believed God and was counted righteous. The sign showed that Abraham's household belonged to God's covenant people. The New Testament later teaches that outward signs must be joined with an inward heart of faith (Rom. 2:28-29).

God promises that the covenant line will continue through **Isaac**. Ishmael is still loved and blessed, but Isaac has a special place in God's covenant plan. Abraham responds **that same day** with obedience. His obedience does not earn God's promise; it is his response to God's grace. The chapter reminds us that **grace comes first, then faith responds with obedience**.

## **Discuss:**

1. Why do you think God waited until Abraham and Sarah were so old before giving them the promised son?
2. What does it look like today to "walk before" God and live wholeheartedly for Him?
3. If Abraham was already counted righteous by faith in Genesis 15, why was obedience still important in Genesis 17?
4. What is the danger of having outward religious practices without a heart that truly trusts God?
5. Why did God choose Isaac for the covenant line while still blessing Ishmael? What does that teach us about God's purposes?
6. If circumcision is called an "everlasting covenant" sign, why are Christians not required to practice it as a religious requirement today? See Acts 15, Romans 4, and Galatians 5.
7. Where are you tempted to judge God's promises by what seems possible instead of by who God is?