

- **Main Passage:** Genesis 25:7-11
 - **Supporting Passage:** Acts 20:24
 - **Purpose:** To understand that our true legacy will be defined not by earthly standards but by the impact we make for God's Kingdom.
 - **Session Snapshot:** This final lesson in your study of the life of Abraham will have men looking at the idea of legacy. As Christians, we have to see the concept of legacy as part of our obedience to God. We are called in Scripture to pass along our faith to our children and make disciples of all people. When it's all said and done, and we step away from this life and into our eternity with God, how well will we have lived our life as an asset to God's Kingdom is how we will judge our legacy. This lens, the lens of our faith, is how your group will process legacy in this session.
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GETTING STARTED

Kick-off your time together by introducing a new theme or reviewing what you did in the last session.

FIRST, remind your group that this is week 5 of their video series on Abraham and that it's part of a larger study looking at the real men of the Bible.

THEN, if you want to start with asking men for prayer requests, checking in on how their weeks have gone, or any other housekeeping tasks, do so.

FINALLY, if there are no questions or other input, transition into the *Digging In* section of your leader's guide.

DIGGING IN

Jump into the session by watching this week's video.

FIRST, play the video. You can access the video by logging into your Iron Hill Press account.

THEN, when the video is over, lead men in a short discussion based on what Rick covered. Feel free to come up with your own questions, or consider asking some similar to those below:

- **Legacy is a big word. How do you define legacy?**
- **How do you feel about the idea of a legacy? Is it something that is over-emphasized? Or is it something we should be concerned about? Can you think of a biblical basis for legacy, a reason why we as Christian men should care about how our life impacts those around us?**

- Can you think of someone you know who left or is leaving a strong legacy? Share one thing about them that contributed to this legacy.
- Rick made a point to say that though Abraham was not perfect, Scripture shows Abraham living out his last days well. In what ways does the importance of “finishing well” evolve as we get older?
- Our legacy runs directly through those people whom God has put in our lives. The people who know us best are the best judges of our true legacy. How does that make you feel?
- If we had to make a list of "legacy killers," what would that list look like? (*If you have the ability to write this list down on the board, do so.*) What about “legacy boosters”? What are some things that we can do to give ourselves the best shot at a meaningful legacy?

FINALLY, transition into the *Opening the Word* portion of your time together by saying something like the following:

- **As Christians, we have to see the concept of legacy as part of our obedience to God. We are called in Scripture to pass along our faith to our children (Deut. 6:4-9, Prov. 1:8). Furthermore, we are called to make disciples of all people (Matt. 28:18-20). One way we as Christian men understand the concept of legacy is by seeing it through the lens of our faith. When it's all said and done, and we step away from this life and into our eternity with God, how well will we have lived our life as an asset to God's Kingdom? That's how we'll process legacy in this session. Let's jump in.**

OPENING THE WORD

Spend time going deeper into a specific concept Rick introduced in the video.

FIRST, explain that you’re going to take a more in-depth look at Genesis 25:7-11. The context for your Bible study has remained the same over the last few weeks. You may want to see how much your group remembers about the context and see if they can fill in some of the info.

- **Author:** While there’s no specific author named within the text, Moses is the accepted author for Genesis, with some editing and additions done after his death (such as the account of his death!).
- **Time frame:** It’s difficult to establish with any certainty a date for the completion of the Pentateuch (a name for the first five books of the Bible—including Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy—of which Genesis is a part). Most of the material originated from Moses himself, and depending on the date of the Exodus (which is also not known for sure), that would make the date for the writing of Genesis sometime in the 1400s or the 1200s BC.
- **Purpose:** Genesis details the earliest history of our world, including creation and Adam and Eves' fall. It also focuses on the emergence of Israel, not only as God's people but as the group God would work through to bring redemption to the world.

THEN, once you’ve reviewed the context for the book, read or have a volunteer read Genesis 25:7-11. Explain to your group that this is a very straightforward passage that, at first blush, might not have that much to say to us. But if we’ll give it some deeper reflection, like all of Scripture, there is much to learn. Lead men in a discussion. Ask something like the following:

- **Abraham lived to be an elderly man, even by the standards of his day. What is this supposed to signify to us about God's view of Abraham?**

- *Answer:* This is supposed to alert the reader that God was pleased with Abraham and blessed him with long life. While God doesn't work this way in every case and in every culture, in Abraham's culture, long life was seen as reflective of God's favor.
- **So, knowing what we know about Abraham and the mistakes he made, how do we make sense of God's favor shown to Abraham?**
 - *Answer:* There are a few ways to answer this: 1) God will bless who He will bless and favor who He will favor. This is the heart of the parable of the vineyard owner Jesus told in Matthew 20. God is sovereign and all-knowing. He alone knows who He will bless and why. 2) This is a sign of God's grace. There is a tendency if we're not careful to see grace as a New Testament construct. But that would be a mistake. The Old Testament is full of signs of God's grace toward His people. God chose to see Abraham in light of his devotion, faithfulness, and faith and not in light of his faults. The same math is still in play today for us as Christ-followers.
- **Rick alludes to this in the video, but who remembers who Ishmael was?**
 - *Answer:* Ishmael was Abraham's firstborn son, but NOT the son born through God's promise to Abraham. Ishmael's mother was Hagar, Sarah's servant. When God didn't keep His promise of an heir as quickly as Sarah wanted Him to, she hatched a plan to have Abraham sleep with Hagar to have a child. Abraham did, and it turned out to be a huge relational disaster. Sarah eventually kicked Hagar and Ishmael out of the family to wander in the desert. But God protected them and promised Ishmael he would grow into a great nation in his own right, though God foretold that Ishmael would forever live in hostility toward others.
- **This is a rough backstory. It is yet another time in Abraham and Sarah's life where they stumbled and fell far short of God's plan for their lives. However, what do we see in vs. 9?**
 - *Answer:* Ishmael was there with Isaac at the burial of Abraham.
- **What does this say to you about what had happened within the family in the years between Ishmael's exile and Abraham's death?**
 - *Answer:* While we don't know the whole story, and we can't infer too much about family dynamics, commentary writers point out that Ishmael's presence at Abraham's death would show that Abraham loved Ishmael and that Ishmael at least felt welcomed to be present at such a meaningful moment.
- **Especially as it pertains to legacy, many men find themselves with relationships that are strained or in disrepair. What does this story say to us about the possibility of those relationships being redeemed or mended?**
 - *Answer:* Isaac's name appears first in this verse for a reason. He was the child God promised, the firstborn son through whom God would call a people. Just because Abraham and Ishmael made amends at some point didn't change Ishmael's identity. The consequences of our wrongdoing are rarely able to be undone. BUT, God is the God of redemption and reconciliation. God desires for us to be at peace with all people, especially our family members. It is the work of Christ-followers to do everything within their power to repair rifts and rebuild bridges. It is never too late to try to right old wrongs.
- **Look at vs. 11. God's blessing of Isaac isn't meant to be read as a carryover of His blessing of Abraham. Instead, it's to be seen as a sign of God's faithfulness to the promise He made to Abraham. How does God's faithfulness empower our legacy as men?**
 - Answers will vary.

Say something like:

- **Abraham lived a powerful legacy, not because he was perfect or more righteous than the average man. We know from our studies that Abraham could at times demonstrate a weak faith, and he had the tendency to try and rush God's plan for him. And yet, we also know that Abraham was defined**

by a faith that was strong and true more often than it was not. He believed God and served God. And at the end of his life, Scripture paints him as a man who died with his legacy intact, one that thousands of years later, we still study. Let's wrap up our time together by thinking a little more about our own legacy.

NEXT, briefly have a volunteer turn to Acts 20:24 and read the verse aloud for the group. Explain that this is Paul speaking at a critical juncture in his life. He knew he was about to face great danger and potential death. He was reflecting on his life and what mattered most to him. Then, ask:

- **What was Paul's ultimate measure of his legacy?**
 - *Answer:* His ability to finish strong, to work faithfully to the end to complete the task God had given him.
- **How did Paul define the task that God had given him?**
 - *Answer:* He said that he had been called to "testify to the gospel of the grace of God."

FINALLY, remind your group that we study the men of the Bible to apply the lessons they learned to our own lives. Ask if there are any questions about what you have discussed so far, then move to *Accepting the Challenge* so that you can begin applying what you've learned. But before you do, say something like:

- **Paul knew exactly what God had called him to do. As we transition to the application portion of our time together, I want you to marinate on this question: "What has God tasked me with?"**

ACCEPTING THE CHALLENGE

Focus your group's attention on the takeaways from your time together.

FIRST, explain that you want to challenge the group to focus on the takeaways from this session. Consider starting this portion of your session by asking your group what they think are the main application points from your session. Allow discussion to go until there are no more suggestions.

THEN, if necessary, supplement your discussion with the following application points. Say something like:

- **What has God tasked you with? How has God called you to spend the life He purchased for you through the death of His Son, Jesus, on the cross?**
 - What is your task? What is your call? What is the primary purpose God has given to you? Most men go through life never answering this question because they don't take the time to ask it. What if YOU took the time to ask that question and to listen to how God answered it? Building a legacy of faithfulness is more difficult when you haven't stopped to ask what it is you're faithful to. Consider spending some time this week praying to God to help you define your task and to faithfully commit to carrying it out.
- **"What is your legacy?" This is a question Rick asked to end the video. But here's the truth: We don't get to answer this ourselves.**
 - How would the people around you answer this question? How would your wife answer it? Your parents? Your children? Your friends? Take the time to ask the people in your life how they would describe the legacy you have built. Ask them to think about how they would describe you if you were to leave the earth today. Encourage them to be honest. Then use their responses as a way to prayerfully affirm your life's path or to make the necessary changes. After all, you can't fix something if you don't know that it is broken.
- **No one sits down to "build" their legacy. A legacy is built when a man strings together a lifetime of right decisions.**

- Faithfulness in the small things is how we become men of mighty legacies. How are you doing in the faithfulness department? Are you a man of integrity? Are you a good steward of the life God has given you? If you need to reevaluate your daily commitment to faithfully be who God has called you to be, now is the time.

FINALLY, encourage men to continue to marinate on these points in the week to come. Challenge them to listen to what God is trying to tell them and to respond accordingly. If there are no more questions or input, close your time together in prayer.