

- **Main Passage:** Genesis 15:1-6
  - **Purpose:** To understand that trusting in God means trusting in God's timing and sovereignty.
  - **Session Snapshot:** Genesis 15 contains a profound moment early in the narrative of God keeping His promise to make Abraham the father of a great nation. God has made the promise to Abraham, but God has not delivered on His promise according to Abraham's timing. As men, we know well the tension between what we ask of God and having the patience and trust to wait in confidence as He keeps His promise according to His sovereignty and His perfect sense of timing. This session will challenge men to see God's timing for what it is: best for them and most glorifying to God.
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## GETTING STARTED

*Kick-off your time together with a quick connection time or reviewing what you did in the last session.*

FIRST, remind your group that this is week 2 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. If you have men present in this session who were not in your first session, consider re-introducing yourself, and if necessary, having the men in your group do the same.

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, as this is only the second session, remind the group that you will watch a video that will be about 15 minutes long, followed by a short discussion of the video. Then, you'll spend a few minutes in Bible study, followed by a closing activity. Consider encouraging men to take notes as they watch the video.

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

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:

- **Rick said something interesting at the start of the video. He said that we need other men in our lives to serve as examples to us. Can you name a few men who serve as examples for you when it comes to faith? What is it about their faith that encourages and inspires you? Have you ever considered thanking one of these men for the role they play in your life?**

- The passage Rick read from today is ultimately about the desire of Abraham's heart and Abraham's faith in God's willingness to satisfy that desire. What was Abraham's desire? We'll get into this more in a bit, but if you had to articulate a major desire of your heart, what would it be? Are you willing or able to share that desire with the group?
- Rick says that God is not unaware of the desires of your heart. How does that make you feel?
- If God tells you something is going to happen, it's going to happen. And yet, we wrestle with how to deal with God's timing, don't we? Have you ever had a season in your life where you struggled with God's timing in answering a prayer? Share the circumstances with the group. What was it like as you waited on God? How did you feel? What impact did the manner in which you waited (whether good or bad) have on your faith? On the faith of those around you?
- Rick reminded us that our vision is flawed compared to God's. How does this impact how we trust God to keep His promises?
- Abraham experienced a moment of doubt that ultimately led to a moment of faith. What role does doubt play in your relationship with God?

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

- **Part of being a real man is having the self-control and the steadfastness to wait for God and to wait well. Abraham showed in today's passage that maybe he struggled with waiting well. Let's look a little closer at this interaction between God and Abraham and what we can learn about both God and Abraham.**

## 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 15:1-6. As Rick stated in the video, it's the story of Abraham doubting God's timing. Before you jump in, make sure you remind your group that one of our goals, as you encounter God in His Word, is that you would grow in your knowledge of the Bible. A major part of understanding the Bible is understanding the context in which you encounter a passage. Provide the context for the passage using the following bullet points:

- **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. Depending on the date of the Exodus (which is also not known for sure), that would make a date for the writing of Genesis sometime in the 1400s or the 1200s BC.
- **Purpose:** Genesis details our world's earliest history, 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, read or have a volunteer read Genesis 15:1-6. When the volunteer has finished, direct your group's attention back to the beginning of the passage. Lead them in a brief discussion by asking something similar to the following:

- **In Genesis 13:2, we learn that Abraham was "very rich in livestock, in silver, and in gold." Abraham had as much material wealth as he might want. What did he not have?**
  - *Answer:* A Son
- **What does this tell us about what mattered to Abraham, what his heart desired? How do you see this reflected in his response to God in vs. 2-3?**
  - Answers will vary, but like many of us, Abraham realized that material wealth wasn't as important as his desire for family and legacy. Abraham wanted a son he and Sarah could pass their name to, someone they could love and raise. You can almost hear this frustration in Abraham's question to God.
- **Abraham was 75 years old when he first received the promise of an heir. Genesis 21:5 tells us he was 100 years old when Isaac was born. (Sarah was 90.) So, Abraham and Sarah waited 25 years for God to keep His promise. We don't know how old Abraham is here in chapter 15 (Wiersbe says he could have been waiting as long as ten years at this point), but he's been waiting for a while. Why is waiting on God so hard?**
  - Answers will vary, but part of it is our human nature. Part of it is questioning whether we understood God correctly in the first place. Sometimes we think we know where God is leading, but we doubt ourselves. And so we can find ourselves questioning God's timing.
- **God is on record for responding to our questioning in different ways throughout Scripture. Zechariah was struck mute for a few months when he questioned the angel's pronouncement of a son. Job's questioning was met with God strongly rebuking Job, reminding Job exactly who God was. How did God meet Abraham in his questioning?**
  - *Answer:* Look at vs. 5.
- **Here's the thing about God: never in Scripture does He strike anyone down for asking honest questions. God doesn't turn His back on the doubts of His children. In His way, He answers them and walks them through their questioning. If you haven't already in the opening discussion, can you share a time when you went through a season of doubting God's promise or plan for you? It's OK to share. It's a common experience for God's people.**
  - Answers will vary.
- **In his excellent book, *A Reason for God*, Tim Keller writes, "A person's faith can collapse almost overnight if she has failed over the years to listen patiently to her own doubts, which should only be discarded after long reflection." Keller points out that honest questioning of God's will and plan has a role in healthy faith. How do you respond to this?**
  - Answers will vary.
- **Abraham expressed his honest questioning to God. He openly asked God why He hadn't acted on His promise. What did God NOT do?**
  - Answers will vary. God didn't punish Abraham. But, neither did God grant Abraham his son at that exact moment. Abraham waited something like 15-20 more years for Isaac to be born.
- **But when Abraham questioned God, what did God DO?**
  - *Answer:* He reiterated His promise. He restated His plan for Abraham. He confirmed His will.
- **What effect did this have on Abraham?**
  - *Answer:* Abraham had a choice. And in the face of his doubt, Abraham chose faith. He chose to believe. Vs. 6 says Abraham believed, and it was credited to him as righteousness. Theologically, this is saying that Abraham's faith saved him. Abraham modeled saving faith for us, thousands of years before Jesus would come and show us the perfect path for saving faith: faith in Jesus' death and resurrection.

NEXT, explain to your group that while we can't know what was going through Abraham's mind, we know what it's like for us to interact with God's promises. We know what it's like to choose to either believe God or not. Ask something like:

- **At some point in our lives, we all wait on God. We all wait on God to answer our prayers or to fulfill a promise or assurance we believe He has made to us. What is the key to waiting well? How is it possible that we as men can wait in a posture of trust and faith, especially if our timing and God's might not line up perfectly?**
  - Answers will vary. But the truth is that we can only wait well if we are confident in God's character.
- **How crazy is it to think that we know much more about God than Abraham did? We have the full revelation of Scripture. We have thousands and thousands of years of examples of God interacting with His people. We know God. We know His character. When we don't wait well, or when we get impatient or doubt God, what are we saying about His character?**
  - Answers will vary, but essentially we're saying He's not who is claims to be.
- **If we believe that God is all-knowing, all-powerful, and has our best interest in mind, how is it possible that we become impatient or that we doubt His will for our lives?**
  - *Answer:* It's not possible. It's a rhetorical question. If we know God, then we know He is uniquely trustworthy. We must trust that both His timing and His ability to keep His promise is perfect.

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.

## 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:

- **One key application is the thought of trusting God. Abraham had a moment of doubt. We don't have to be Abraham. We don't have to wrestle with God in unbelief. We can look to the cross and KNOW that God is faithful and keeps His word, no matter the cost.**
  - This week and in the weeks to come, when you doubt God's willingness to keep His word, consider the cross. Consider what the cross cost God and the lengths to which He went to make the cross happen. If God is willing and able to sacrifice Himself on the cross in order to make a way for sinful humanity to be in relationship with Himself, He is more than willing and able to keep His promise to you.
- **Second, we have to become good at waiting. This is a mark of a mature Christian.**
  - We must learn to wait well. To wait actively, not passively. To wait in hope, not in hopelessness. To wait in faith, not in doubt.
- **Third, we must consider how our waiting can be one of the most powerful tools we have to lead others closer to Jesus.**
  - Chances are, someone around you knows the desires of your heart. Sarah knew Abraham and his desire to have a son. She shared that desire. How Abraham waited impacted Sarah deeply, as you'll

see next week. How you wait on God can lead others closer to God or farther away. Stop and think how well you're doing in influencing others as you serve and follow God.

If it feels appropriate, allow some discussion about the kind of processing they find themselves doing.

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.