

3 WEEKS

ABRAHAM

FROM FEAR TO FAITH



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SMALL GROUP STUDY

Kicking it off:

What's been the best journey that you've been on?

Big Idea:

We live in a "not there yet" world and God calls us to live by faith, not in fear as we journey through this life.

Key Scriptures:**HEBREWS 11:1, 8-13**

"Now faith is confidence in what we hope for and assurance about what we do not see. . . . By faith, Abraham, when called to go to a place he would later receive as his inheritance, obeyed and went, even though he did not know where he was going. By faith he made his home in the promised land like a stranger in a foreign country; he lived in tents, as did Isaac and Jacob, who were heirs with him of the same promise. For he was looking forward to the city with foundations, whose architect and builder is God. And by faith even Sarah, who was past childbearing age, was enabled to bear children because she considered him faithful who had made the promise. And so from this one man, and he as good as dead, came descendants as numerous as the stars in the sky and as countless as the sand on the seashore. All these people were still living by faith when they died. They did not receive the things promised; they only saw them and welcomed them from a distance, admitting that they were foreigners and strangers on earth."

Genesis 12:1- 20

"The Lord had said to Abram, "Go from your country, your people and your father's household to the land I will show you. "I will make you into a great nation, and I will bless you, I will make your name great, and you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and whoever curses you I will curse; and all peoples on earth will be blessed through you." So Abram went, as the Lord had told him; and Lot went with him. Abram was seventy-five years old when he set out from Haran. He took his wife Sarai, his nephew Lot, all the possessions they had accumulated and the people they had acquired in Haran, and they set out for the land of Canaan, and they arrived there. Abram traveled through the land as far as the site of the great tree of Moreh at Shechem. At that time the Canaanites were in the land. The Lord appeared to Abram and said, "To your offspring I will give this land." So he built an altar there to the Lord, who had appeared to him. From there he went on toward the hills east of Bethel and pitched his tent, with Bethel on the west and Ai on the east. There he built an altar to the Lord and called on the name of the Lord. Then Abram set out and continued toward the Negev. Now there was a famine in the land, and Abram went down to Egypt to live there for a while because the famine was severe. As he was about to enter Egypt, he said to his wife Sarai, "I know what a beautiful woman you are. When the Egyptians see you, they will say, 'This is his wife.' Then they will kill me but will let you live. Say you are my sister, so that I will be treated well for your sake and my life will be spared because of you." When Abram came to Egypt, the Egyptians saw that Sarai was a very beautiful woman. And when Pharaoh's officials saw her, they praised her to Pharaoh, and she was taken into his palace. He treated Abram well for her sake, and Abram acquired sheep and cattle, male and female donkeys, male and female servants, and camels. But the Lord inflicted serious diseases on Pharaoh and his household because of Abram's wife Sarai. So Pharaoh summoned Abram. "What have you done to me?" he said. "Why didn't you tell me she was your wife? Why did you say, 'She is my sister,' so that I took her to be my wife? Now then, here is your wife. Take her and go!" Then Pharaoh gave orders about Abram to his men, and they sent him on his way, with his wife and everything he had."

Genesis 1:27-28

"So God created mankind in his own image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them. God blessed them and said to them, "Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it."

Genesis 9:1

"Then God blessed Noah and his sons, saying to them, "Be fruitful and increase in number and fill the earth."

Genesis 13:2

"So Abram went up from Egypt to the Negev, with his wife and everything he had, and Lot went with him. Abram had become very wealthy in livestock and in silver and gold."

Genesis 15:6

"Abraham believed God and God credited to him as righteousness."



Discussion:

1. Read Abraham's story in Hebrews 11 and Genesis 12. How did Abraham demonstrate that he was holding on loosely to the things of this world?
2. What or who is it that you're holding onto so tightly that it keeps you from being fully on the journey?
3. Read Genesis 12:2-3, In the message we learned that the primary motive behind the call of Abraham is God's desire to bless all people on the earth through him. God's purpose is the same for us who, like Abraham, are called by God. What are some ways you can or are being a person of blessing?
4. Abraham was able to trust God for the journey because he was utterly convinced that God is a God of blessing. How convinced are you of this? Are there some changes needed in your perspective in order for you to see this?
5. Read Genesis 1:27-28, 9:1 and 13:2. Make a list of 10 ways God has blessed you.
6. In Genesis 12:7-9 we see that Abraham built altars for the Lord on his journey. What "altars" are you building in your life to signify and thank God for His blessings?
7. Read Genesis 12:10-20. What dumb thing did Abraham do in this juncture of his journey? Can you relate? Ever done something that shows your fallenness? Discuss what you learned from that.
8. Read Genesis 15:6. Throughout Abraham's journey, despite his mistakes, he acted in ways that showed his trust and belief in God who had called him. Reflect upon your own journey – how can or have you shown that you also believe God?

Wrapping It Up:

As you face challenges this week, be reminded that we live in a "not there yet" world and you are just passing through on this journey.

Memory Verse:

"By faith, Abraham, when called to go to a place he would later receive as his inheritance, obeyed and went, even though he did not know where he was going." Hebrews 11:8

SMALL GROUP STUDY

Kicking it off:

What are the toughest odds you've found yourself coming up against?

Big Idea:

God blesses a belief and trust in Him that goes against all odds.


Key Scriptures:

Genesis 15:1-6

"After this, the word of the Lord came to Abram in a vision: "Do not be afraid, Abram. I am your shield, your very great reward." But Abram said, "Sovereign Lord, what can you give me since I remain childless and the one who will inherit my estate is Eliezer of Damascus?" And Abram said, "You have given me no children; so a servant in my household will be my heir." Then the word of the Lord came to him: "This man will not be your heir, but a son who is your own flesh and blood will be your heir." He took him outside and said, "Look up at the sky and count the stars—if indeed you can count them." Then he said to him, "So shall your offspring be." Abram believed the Lord, and he credited it to him as righteousness."

Genesis 17

"When Abram was ninety-nine years old, the LORD appeared to him and said, "I am God Almighty; walk before me faithfully and be blameless. Then I will make my covenant between me and you and will greatly increase your numbers." Abram fell facedown, and God said to him, "As for me,



this is my covenant with you: You will be the father of many nations. No longer will you be called Abram; your name will be Abraham, for I have made you a father of many nations. I will make you very fruitful; I will make nations of you, and kings will come from you. I will establish my covenant as an everlasting covenant between me and you and your descendants after you for the generations to come, to be your God and the God of your descendants after you. The whole land of Canaan, where you now reside as a foreigner, I will give as an everlasting possession to you and your descendants after you; and I will be their God.” Then God said to Abraham, “As for you, you must keep my covenant, you and your descendants after you for the generations to come. This is my covenant with you and your descendants after you, the covenant you are to keep: Every male among you shall be circumcised. You are to undergo circumcision, and it will be the sign of the covenant between me and you. For the generations to come every male among you who is eight days old must be circumcised, including those born in your household or bought with money from a foreigner—those who are not your offspring. Whether born in your household or bought with your money, they must be circumcised. My covenant in your flesh is to be an everlasting covenant. Any uncircumcised male, who has not been circumcised in the flesh, will be cut off from his people; he has broken my covenant.” God also said to Abraham, “As for Sarai your wife, you are no longer to call her Sarai; her name will be Sarah. I will bless her and will surely give you a son by her. I will bless her so that she will be the mother of nations; kings of peoples will come from her. Abraham fell facedown;

Genesis 17 (cont.)

he laughed and said to himself, "Will a son be born to a man a hundred years old? Will Sarah bear a child at the age of ninety?" And Abraham said to God, "If only Ishmael might live under your blessing!" Then God said, "Yes, but your wife Sarah will bear you a son, and you will call him Isaac] I will establish my covenant with him as an everlasting covenant for his descendants after him. And as for Ishmael, I have heard you: I will surely bless him; I will make him fruitful and will greatly increase his numbers. He will be the father of twelve rulers, and I will make him into a great nation. But my covenant I will establish with Isaac, whom Sarah will bear to you by this time next year." When he had finished speaking with Abraham, God went up from him. On that very day Abraham took his son Ishmael and all those born in his household or bought with his money, every male in his household, and circumcised them, as God told him. Abraham was ninety-nine years old when he was circumcised, and his son Ishmael was thirteen; Abraham and his son Ishmael were both circumcised on that very day. And every male in Abraham's household, including those born in his household or bought from a foreigner, was circumcised with him."

Discussion:

1. Read Genesis 15:1-6. In this passage, God is promising Abraham and Sarah descendants “as numerous as the stars” despite the fact that they were in their 90s and well past child bearing age. Is there anything you are currently facing that seems like an impossible situation? How might Abraham’s belief in a seemingly impossible situation encourage you to trust God in yours?
2. God told Abraham not to be afraid. Identify one area where you are afraid, but you sense God is calling you – how might you respond in faith in this area?
3. Read Genesis 17. God set forth a plan and a promise as He entered into a covenant with Abraham. Abraham and Sarah both laughed at God’s plan, but eventually were faithful in responding in faith to God’s command for the sign of the covenant “on that very day.” Where are you holding back from full obedience to God?
4. It’s been said that delayed obedience is disobedience. Is there any action that you’ve been putting off that keeps you in disobedience to God?
5. Throughout Abraham’s story, there are times when he faced doubts, but he had enough faith to respond in obedience. And as he responded in faith, God always came through and Abraham’s trust was built. How have you seen your own trust be built as you have responded to God in obedience? In what ways do you struggle with obedience?

Wrapping It Up:

Pray together for the strength and courage to believe God and to act in immediate obedience to Him against all odds.

Memory Verse:

“Abram believed the Lord, and he credited it to him as righteousness.”
Genesis 15:6

SMALL GROUP STUDY

Kicking it off:

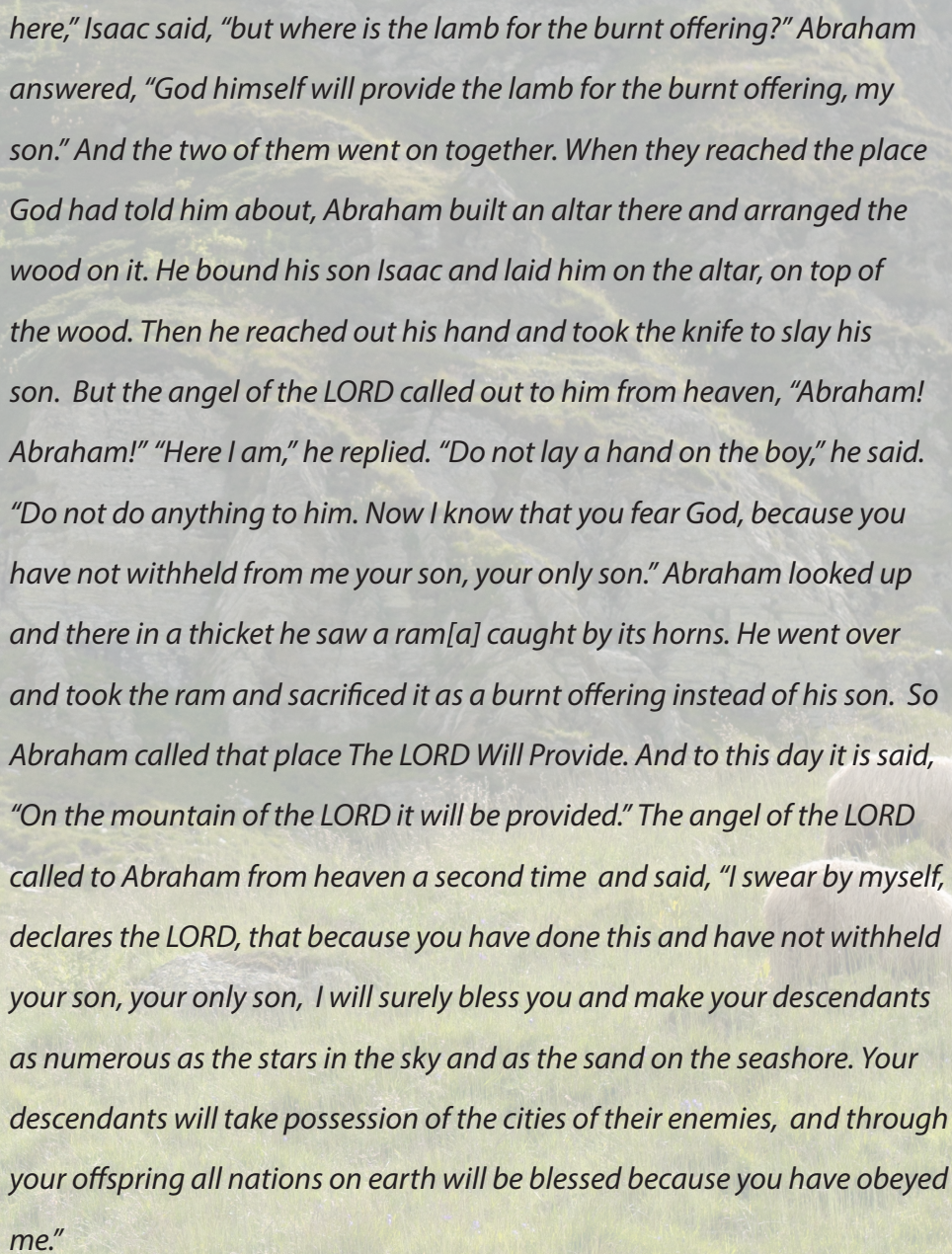
What is the greatest sacrifice someone has every made for you? (besides Jesus)

Big Idea:

What you do when you have to walk in the darkness and God seems distant, remote or silent can be a catalyst for your greatest growth in faith.

Key Scriptures:**Genesis 22:1-18**

"Some time later God tested Abraham. He said to him, "Abraham!" "Here I am," he replied. Then God said, "Take your son, your only son, whom you love—Isaac—and go to the region of Moriah. Sacrifice him there as a burnt offering on a mountain I will show you." Early the next morning Abraham got up and loaded his donkey. He took with him two of his servants and his son Isaac. When he had cut enough wood for the burnt offering, he set out for the place God had told him about. On the third day Abraham looked up and saw the place in the distance. He said to his servants, "Stay here with the donkey while I and the boy go over there. We will worship and then we will come back to you." Abraham took the wood for the burnt offering and placed it on his son Isaac, and he himself carried the fire and the knife. As the two of them went on together, Isaac spoke up and said to his father Abraham, "Father?" "Yes, my son?" Abraham replied. "The fire and wood are



here," Isaac said, "but where is the lamb for the burnt offering?" Abraham answered, "God himself will provide the lamb for the burnt offering, my son." And the two of them went on together. When they reached the place God had told him about, Abraham built an altar there and arranged the wood on it. He bound his son Isaac and laid him on the altar, on top of the wood. Then he reached out his hand and took the knife to slay his son. But the angel of the LORD called out to him from heaven, "Abraham! Abraham!" "Here I am," he replied. "Do not lay a hand on the boy," he said. "Do not do anything to him. Now I know that you fear God, because you have not withheld from me your son, your only son." Abraham looked up and there in a thicket he saw a ram[a] caught by its horns. He went over and took the ram and sacrificed it as a burnt offering instead of his son. So Abraham called that place The LORD Will Provide. And to this day it is said, "On the mountain of the LORD it will be provided." The angel of the LORD called to Abraham from heaven a second time and said, "I swear by myself, declares the LORD, that because you have done this and have not withheld your son, your only son, I will surely bless you and make your descendants as numerous as the stars in the sky and as the sand on the seashore. Your descendants will take possession of the cities of their enemies, and through your offspring all nations on earth will be blessed because you have obeyed me."

Mark 9:24

"Immediately the boy's father exclaimed, "I do believe; help me overcome my unbelief!"



Discussion:

Read the story of Abraham and Isaac in Genesis 22:1-18 and answer the following:

1. The writer of this passage lets us know right from the beginning that God was testing Abraham. Have you ever been through something you would now consider a test? How'd you do?
2. Abraham, in this moment, is stepping out into what a great Old Testament scholar calls "the road of godforsakenness", when God seems to be contradicting Himself. How do you see that happening in this passage?
3. Abraham passed God's test and showed that he would not withhold anything from God, even "his only son Isaac whom he loved". Can you let go of what you love the most? Or would you withhold that from God?
4. If faith is about hanging on in dark places, in living in unreserved obedience to God by faith, you have to trust Him. In what ways are you most challenged to show your trust in God?
5. In the message we learned

that trust is not "doubt free certainty". In fact, Abraham had doubts along the way. He lies to Pharaoh about Sarah being his sister, he impregnates his wife's servant because he doubts God's ability to provide and heir, and he laughs when God tells him Sarah will have a son in her old age. Discuss the relationship between doubts and trust when it comes to God's promises.

6. Read Mark 9:24. In what areas do you believe, but you need God to help your unbelief?
7. In what areas is God asking you to display "tenacious obedience"?

Wrapping It Up:

Spend some time praying together for those areas that you have identified in your time together. Pray that you can hang on, trust God, and be tenaciously obedient in all situations, not holding back anything from Him.

Memory Verse:

"Immediately the boy's father exclaimed, "I do believe; help me overcome my unbelief!"

Mark 9:24

life of Abraham

Strengths and Accomplishments:

- His faith pleased God
- Became the founder of the Jewish nation
- Was respected by others and was courageous in defending his family at any cost
- Was not only a caring father to his own family, but practiced hospitality to others
- Was a successful and wealthy rancher
- Usually avoided conflicts, but when they were unavoidable, he allowed his opponent to set the rules for settling the dispute

Weakness and mistakes:

- Under direct pressure, he distorted the truth

Lessons from his life:

- God desires dependence, trust, and faith in him - no faith in our ability to please him
- God's plan from the beginning has been to make himself known to all people

Vital statistics:

- Where: Born in Ur of the Chaldeans; spent most of his life in the land of Canaan
- Occupation: Wealthy livestock owner
- Relatives: Brothers: Nahor and Haran. Father: Terah. Wife: Sarah. Nephew: Lot. Sons: Ishmael and Isaac.

Key Verse:

“Abram believed the Lord, and he credited it to him as righteousness.” **Genesis 15:6**

Abraham's story is told in Genesis 11-25.

He is also mentioned in Exodus 2:24; Acts 7: 2-8; Romans 4; Galatians 3; Hebrews 2, 6, 7, 11.



Top 10 Tips for Leading a Small Group

1. Establish a welcoming, accepting, and safe environment.
 - Take time to prepare.
 - Make sure to give a warm enthusiastic greeting to each person.
 - Verbally communicate the environment that you hope to create.
 - Ephesians 4:1-3
2. On the opening night of your group you need to have some intentional discussions centered around these questions:
 - What is the purpose of our group?
 - What is the vision for our group?
 - What are your expectations?
 - What do you hope to gain from this group experience?
 - What are some things we value as a group?
 - What are some healthy guidelines we need to have in place?Review and sign a group agreement.
3. Be authentic. Spend time sharing your life stories in order to get to know each other on a deeper level.
4. Find a good balance between:
 - Truth and grace/Bible study and life
 - Encouraging and challenging one another
 - Giving and receiving feedback from each other
5. Ask good questions to stimulate good discussion. Use open ended questions and follow up questions.
6. Hang out together, do things socially, eat together and have fun together!
7. Develop a missional lifestyle, find a service project to do together in the community.
8. Raise up new leadership by rotating facilitation of the group.
9. Share the responsibilities in order to increase individual commitment and ownership of the group.
10. Pray for your group and for each other!

Find ways to celebrate what God is doing in your group! Who else could you invite to join you in order that their life may be impacted by what God is doing in your group?

Group Agreement

OUR PURPOSE

To transform our spiritual lives by cultivating our spiritual health in a healthy small group community. In addition, we: _____

OUR VALUES

Group Attendance: To give priority to the group meeting. We will call or email if we will be late or absent.

Safe Environment: To help create a safe place where people can be heard and feel loved. (Please, no quick answers, snap judgments, or simple fixes.)

Respect Differences: To be gentle and gracious to people with different spiritual maturity, personal opinions, temperaments, or imperfections. We are all works in progress.

Confidentiality: To keep anything that is shared strictly confidential and within the group, and to avoid sharing improper information about those outside the group.

Encouragement for Growth: To be not just takers but givers of life. We want to spiritually multiply our life by serving others with our God-given gifts.

Welcome for Newcomers: To keep an open chair and share Jesus' dream of finding a shepherd for every sheep.

Shared Ownership: To remember that every member is a minister and to ensure that each attender will share a small team role or responsibility over time.

Rotating Hosts/Leaders and Homes: To encourage different people to host the group in their homes, and to rotate the responsibility of facilitating each meeting.

OUR EXPECTATIONS

- Refreshments/mealtimes _____
 - Childcare _____
 - When we will meet (day of week) _____
 - Where we will meet (place) _____
 - We will begin at (time) _____ and end at _____
 - We will do our best to have some or all of us attend a worship service together.
 - Our primary worship service time will be _____
 - Date of this agreement _____
 - Date we will review this agreement again _____
 - Who (other than the leader) will review this agreement at the end of this study _____
-

ABRAHAM

FROM FEAR TO FAITH



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community church

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