

Week Two

Genesis 15:1-6; 16:1-15; 17:15-22; 18:1-15; Genesis 21:1-7
To Be Blessed is to do it God's Way

This lesson needs an introduction as to how our week of study will flow and why we will focus on Abraham in this manner.

God promised Abraham a great nation. Our Sovereign Lord sees our life completely in His full plan. Our study this week is Abraham's heir—God's plan versus Abraham's plan. I hope that we all learn from this lesson the difference in life choices—doing it God's way versus our way of trying to make it happen. Our study will begin with God's promise of an heir then we will study Abraham's solution of making that plan work. And, finally, we will study God's fulfillment of His promise. Because we are focusing this week on the process Abraham went through for God's promise to be complete, we will move each day from chapter to chapter looking only at the scripture pertaining to our subject—a child is born.

Day One: "The Lord's Promise of a Son"

Read Genesis 15:1-6

Review chapter 14. In 15:1, what is "after this" referring to?

The Lord came to Abram in a vision. How does He speak to you?

Read Genesis 13:14-18 with Gen 15:2-3. Abram had thought about the Lord's promise of land being given to his offspring. What do we see as Abram's dilemma and solution to having an offspring?

Re-read Gen 13:14-18 with Gen 15:4-6. How does God compare Abram's offspring?

We see in studying these verses that Abram and the Lord are having a conversation. A perfect model of how we can talk to God in our prayer time. Abram is questioning God—"what can you give me, I am childless?" It's as if Abram is saying, "This plan of yours will never work, Lord." Is your relationship with the Lord one that allows you to question His plan for your life and to seek His thoughts and ways? How do you see your relationship strengthening by prayerfully questioning His ways and seeking His perfect plan?

Take a moment to think about what God is asking you to do today—may be to be a stay at home mom, to change careers or go back to work, how to discipline a child, be taken out of an environment that you are comfortable in, or to serve in your church. It could also be to mend a relationship, to sell your possessions without understanding why, or to be silent in a situation that you've been very vocal in. Is it something that in your eyes just won't work? Can you name all the reasons why God's plan can't fit in your life?

In closing, go through the process we see Abram take...

- *Give all your questions and thoughts to the Lord (v 2-3)*
- *Allow God to speak to you (v 4-5)*
- *Believe in God's plan (v 6)*

God knew of this difficult task that you are currently facing before you were created. He knows the perfect way for you to complete it. Let His ways be complete in your life today.

Day Two: "Abram's way of helping God's promise be fulfilled"
Read Genesis 16:1-15

Read Genesis 16:1-6. In your own words, what is happening in these verses?

Read Genesis 16:2 and 4. Why do you think God allowed this?

What is happening in your life today as a result of your desire to do things your way? How are you living the consequence of not waiting on the Lord and has it broken a relationship as we see here?

Read Genesis 16:7-15. When Hagar ran away, who looked for her and found her?

What was Hagar told to do?

Many times God allows us to go through painful situations not for us to flee from but to submit to as we see in these verses with Hagar. What area of your life is God telling you to go back and submit to? Will you be obedient?

The Lord also promised to increase Hagar's descendants but what did He say about the child in verses 11-12?

In verse 13, what does Hagar say of the Lord?

When God speaks to you, He allows you to see Him in some way. What attributes of God have you seen this week?

In closing today's lesson, reread verse 15. "So Hagar bore Abram a son..." She did it! Hagar went back to Sarai and submitted to her authority and she had a son named Ishmael. Hagar endured an incredible, emotionally painful trial. She was obedient and in turn the Lord provided strength and the ability to withstand. Think about what you are running from today—an illness, taking care of a parent, fear of losing a job, financial stress—is God telling you to submit to that? If so, will you trust Him and know that in your obedience to Him that He will completely provide whatever is needed to bring that situation to completion. Hagar bore a son. What must you bear? Pray to begin that process today.

Day Three: "God repeats His promise—Let's try this again, Abraham"

Read Genesis 17: 15 - 22

The first thing we see in these verses is that Abraham and Sarah's names have been changed (17:5 and 17:15). Although we will discuss this during class, what I want you to consider during this study time is this—when you allow God to work in your life, your appearance begins to change. Your name probably won't change as a result of His work but your heart will begin to change and the way others see you will change.

What does God repeat to Abraham?

Read Abraham's first response to God's promise in Genesis 15:3-4. What is Abraham's response to God's promise this time?

Many times the Lord's plan is humanly impossible as we see here with Abraham and Sarah's ages. We see Abraham try to alter God's plan by having God bless Ishmael. In your current situation, are you trying to alter God's plan because His way seems so unreachable? Identify how you are currently altering areas of your life and ask that God give you the strength to wait on Him and follow His direction.

What additional information does God give Abraham in these verses?

Re-read verses 18-20. God is so gracious to Abraham. He promises to bless Ishmael even though Abraham's son is a product of disobedience. Think about your life for a moment. How is God blessing you even though you are not being completely obedient to Him? Write down God's blessings and thank Him for His unfailing love.

In closing, we must realize that we have been given blessings not because of our greatness but because of who God is. Take time to thank Him for His greatness and His purpose.

Day Four: "God allows Sarah to hear the promise"

Read Genesis 18:1-15

There is much to take from these verses but for our purposes today, we will focus mainly on verses 9-15.

Who do you think the 3 men are in verse 2?

In verses 3-8, list all the events as they happen between Abraham and the guests.

In studying these 8 verses, we begin to see Abraham's awareness that guests might come, his eagerness to serve and his family that participated in making the guests comfortable and rested. As you evaluate your life, are you prepared to serve the Lord in attitude and time? How have you anticipated and prepared to serve the Lord this week?

Who does the guest ask about and why do you think her name was spoken?

What did Sarah do when she heard the guest's comment?

Sarah laughed "to herself". Often our external posture doesn't show our internal thoughts and doubts. What event are you currently "going through the motions" that you internally believe will never come to completion? Write that situation in a prayer to the Lord and ask Him to change your heart from doubtfulness into joyful anticipation.

How did the Lord respond to Sarah's doubt?

How would you answer the question in verse 14?

In closing, re-read verses 12-15. God hears our doubts—those thoughts that we never speak to anyone else. He quietly convicts our heart when we lie even to ourselves. Praise God that in times when your faith is weak He never changes. Praise Him for His continued blessing and faithfulness when you doubt. Pray that God will change your internal doubt to wholehearted belief.

Day Five: "God's promise fulfilled"

Read Genesis 21:1-7

To understand the miracle that has happened, name some details that need not be overlooked. (v 1-2)

What has happened in your life that only God can receive credit for because only through His work could it happen. What emotion does it bring as you think of it?

In verse 4, Abraham circumcised Isaac. This is an outward sign of God's ownership. How are you publicly showing God's ownership in the blessings He has given you?

In verses 6-7, Sarah acknowledges that she will speak her testimony to others so they will hear what God has done in her life. What has God done in your life that you should be telling others? What is keeping you from testifying to his work? (For some, you may need to name something new God has done in your life. Many times we may look at only one large change God has made in our life and go through life looking at that one change. If so, we miss all the other possibly more subtle changes. God is working and changing our character daily to become more like Him. Don't miss the blessing.)

Look back at Sarah since we started studying her. Has her character changed from first receiving the news? In what ways?

In closing, pray that God will begin to show you His work in your daily life. Pray for an expectant heart and that God will give you joy and laughter as He begins to change your character.