

Abraham: The Father of Faith

Passages: Gen 12; 15; 17; 18; 22

Memory Verse

“But without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him.” (Hebrews 11:6)

Knowledge of God’s Will [God’s Word]	Knowledge of God [God’s Divine Nature]	Good Works [Behavior]
1. God promised Abraham the land of Canaan and many descendants. 2. God promised that through Abraham, the families of the earth will be blessed. 3. God fulfilled His promises to Abraham.	God is faithful, and His promises are true.	Trust in God’s promises and identify any obstacles that hinder us from trusting Him completely.

Overview

Spiritual Teachings

- A. The Beginning of Faith – Abraham’s Calling
- B. A Maturing Faith – Building a Relationship with God
- C. A Perfected Faith – God Tests Abraham
- D. Abraham’s Everlasting Trust in God

Life Application: Holding on to God’s Promises

Memory Verse

Conclusion: Abraham came to have complete faith in God because of God’s reassurance and faithfulness to His promises. In times of doubt, let us remember to be like Abraham and continue to hold on to what has been promised to us, for God will always remain faithful.

Spiritual Teachings

Introduction

We know Abraham today as “the father of faith,” but his faith did not develop overnight. Rather, it took many years of learning how to obey and trust in God. Through studying Abraham’s life, we can examine how his continual belief in God’s promises matured and shaped his faith.

A. The Beginning of Faith – Abraham’s Calling (Gen 12:1–9)

When Abraham, originally called Abram, dwelt in Ur, the Lord called him to depart from there to the land of Canaan. Let’s turn to Genesis 12:1–3.

What Did God Promise to Abraham?
Promise #1: God will show Abraham a land that he will receive (Gen 12:1)
Promise #2: God will make Abraham a great nation (Gen 12:2)
Promise #3: Through Abraham, God will bless all the families of the earth (Gen 12:3)

Acts 7:2 records that the “God of glory appeared to our father Abraham when he was in Mesopotamia, before he dwelt in Haran.” Thus, God called Abraham when he was still in the land of the Chaldeans. “Then [Abraham] came out of the land of the Chaldeans and dwelt in Haran. And from there, when his father was dead, [God] moved him to this land in which you now dwell” (Acts 7:4). Though the Bible does not say how long Abraham remained in Haran or why, he was seventy-five years old when he continued his journey to the promised land (Gen 12:4).

Regardless of how long it took him to get to the promised land, Abraham’s actions give us insight into his faith. Genesis 12:4 tells us that “[Abraham] departed as the LORD had spoken to him.” From this simple act of obedience, we can see Abraham’s initial faith in the Lord. He was willing to leave the familiar and comfortable to travel to the unknown. Abraham put his trust not in what he could see, but in what God promised him. His faith still had room to grow, but Abraham still demonstrated one of the most important tools of our faith: obedience. Let’s read Hebrews 11:8–9. True faith requires that we live lives obedient to God’s word.

B. A Maturing Faith – Building a Relationship with God (Gen 15–21)

After Abraham and his family came to the land of Canaan (Gen 12:5), he still encountered various trials that tested his faith in God’s promises. Let’s look at a chart to see the highs and lows of Abraham’s journey to a mature faith. *See Figure 01: Abraham’s Journey to a Mature Faith. (Teachers: You may want to pick a few points to go over.)*

From the diagram, we can see that Abraham’s journey of faith was not one continuous climb upwards. Like us, he experienced many low points in his faith. One of the lowest points came when he failed to demonstrate his complete trust in God’s promise of descendants. In Genesis, chapter 16, we can see that Abraham’s wife Sarah, known then as Sarai, was still barren after dwelling in the land of Canaan for ten years. Sarah decided that she could no longer wait for God’s promise and used a tradition of the time to have a son: She gave Hagar to Abraham, so that her maidservant could become a surrogate mother.

Abraham did not ask God about what to do but chose to act on his own. He agreed to Sarah's suggestion, revealing his lack of trust in God's promise of descendants. After this incident, God was silent and did not appear to Abraham for thirteen years. Let's turn to Genesis 17:1–8, 21–22.

Abraham was ninety-nine years old when God renewed His covenant with him and restated the same promises. Additionally, God promised that Sarah would bear him a son, Isaac, the following year. This was His first promise towards Abraham with a specific timeline. Despite the weaknesses of man, God clearly remained faithful and was still willing to renew His covenant with Abraham and encourage him. This was also not the first time that God restated His promises to Abraham; God reaffirmed them many times, and each time, they never changed.

God's Promises Repeated	Bible Verses
Promise #1: God will give Abraham and his descendants the promised land of Canaan	Gen 13:14–15; 15:7; 17:8; 22:17
Promise #2: God will make Abraham a great nation	Gen 13:6; 15:5; 17:5–6; 22:17
Promise #3: God will bless nations through his descendants	Gen 12:3; 22:18

We can see that God repeated His promises multiple times throughout Abraham's lifetime. Abraham may have doubted at times, but God continued to reassure him. These encouragements strengthened his faith and allowed it to mature over time, until the day God asked Abraham to circumcise every male in his household, including Abraham himself, as a symbol of their covenant (Gen 17:10–11).

That very day, Abraham and his household were circumcised (Gen 17:26). His immediate obedience to God's command illustrates his growth in faith. And as He had promised, God blessed Abraham and Sarah with a son the following year, even though Sarah was past the age of childbearing. Through this great miracle, Abraham learned how faithful God was to His promises.

C. A Perfected Faith – God Tests Abraham (Gen 22–24)

In Genesis, chapter 22, God decided to put Abraham's faith to the ultimate test to see if he truly knew how to trust in God. Let's read Genesis 22:1–3. Abraham's actions show how much his faith had grown. He didn't question or put off God's command but got up early the next morning to obey. Abraham knew that God had promised descendants through his son, but he was still willing to sacrifice Isaac, "concluding that God was able to raise him up, even from the dead" (Heb 11:17–19). God's constant reassurance of His faithfulness gave Abraham the courage to obey without doubt.

What do you think it means to have a perfected faith? (*Allow students to write down and then share their answers.*) To have a perfected faith means to trust God wholeheartedly and act with complete obedience to God. When our faith has been perfected, we understand that God is always faithful to His promises. So even when we are facing temptations or trials, we will always rely on God and be completely obedient to Him, just as Abraham was.

D. Abraham's Everlasting Trust in God (Gen 25:1–11)

After this great test from God, Abraham lived the rest of his life in the land of Canaan. He died at the age of 175 and was buried in the cave of Machpelah, where Sarah had been buried before him. Although

Abraham did not live to see all the promises of God fulfilled, his words and actions demonstrated that he still firmly believed that God would fulfill them. Looking back now, we can see that God truly was faithful to Abraham. Let us see how God fulfilled each of His promises.

	How Was Each Promise Fulfilled?
Promise #1: The promised land of Canaan	After Abraham's descendants suffered for 430 years in the land of Egypt, God raised up Moses so that he could help to deliver and lead the people out of Egypt to the promised land (Ex 12:40; 6:2–8). However, once the Israelites arrived in the land of Canaan, they lacked the faith to enter the land. So, God punished them, allowing them to wander in the desert for forty years more (Num 14:28–35). When the years of wandering were over, Joshua and Caleb led the people to conquer the land of Canaan and claim the land that God had promised (Josh 12:7–24).
Promise #2: Many descendants	Abraham and Sarah gave birth to Isaac in their old age. Isaac and Rebekah gave birth to Jacob and Esau. Jacob then had twelve sons through his two wives and their maidservants. These twelve sons would multiply to become the nation of Israel (Ex 1:6–7).
Promise #3: Nations shall be blessed through his descendants	Jesus Christ is a descendant of Abraham through the line of Judah, and it is through Him that all the people of the earth are blessed with the hope of salvation (Gal 3:14; Mt 1:21). We are no longer separated from God. Through Jesus Christ, we are able to draw near to Him and receive His salvation, which is the ultimate blessing (Heb 10:19–20).

God's three blessings were given not only to Abraham, but also to Abraham's promised son, Isaac (Gen 26:23–24), his grandson, Jacob (Gen 28:13–15), and hundreds of years later, to his descendant King David (2 Sam 7:13). God's faithfulness to His covenant led to Jesus Christ's coming thousands of years after Abraham, fulfilling His promises to Abraham, as well as providing a way to salvation.

Check for Understanding

- In Genesis 12:1–3, what are the three things God promised to Abraham?**
 - God will give Abraham and his descendants the land of Canaan
 - God will make Abraham a great nation
 - God will bless nations through his descendants
- God's faithfulness is shown through His fulfilled promises to Abraham. How were these promises fulfilled?**
 - Inherit the promised land of Canaan: After leaving Egypt and wandering in the wilderness for more than forty years, Joshua and the Israelites were able to conquer the land of Canaan and receive it as their inheritance.
 - Many descendants: Through Isaac and Jacob, Abraham's descendants multiplied to become the nation of Israel.
 - The nations will be blessed through his descendants: Jesus Christ came from the seed of Abraham because He descended from the line of Judah. He has brought salvation to the world to save mankind and has become a blessing for the whole world.
- How did Abraham demonstrate his faith in God? Share examples from Abraham's life.**
 - He obeyed God's command to move from Ur to the promised land (Acts 7:4)

- b. He and his household were circumcised (Gen 17:26)
- c. He did not withhold his son Isaac from God (Gen 22:12)

4. How did Abraham's journey of faith prepare him for the ultimate test from God?

Though Abraham's journey of faith was filled with ups and downs, God gave him many opportunities to learn to obey God. These tests of faith helped to prepare him for the ultimate test from God.

Life Application

Holding on to God's Promises

We learned today that to hold on to God's promises requires more than just belief – it requires faith in action through obedience to God's commands. When God told Abraham to leave his homeland, he packed up his possessions, gathered his family, and departed. When God told him to offer his only son, he rose early the next morning to take Isaac to the mountain. Abraham obeyed because he held on to the promises of God; he believed in God's faithfulness. Today, let us look at some specific promises that God has given to us and think about how these promises should shape and guide our actions.

1. Ephesians 6:1–3: "Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. 'Honor your father and mother,' which is the first commandment with promise: 'that it may be well with you and you may live long on the earth.' "
 - a. What is the promise of God? *God promises that when we obey our parents, it will be well with us, and we will live a long life on the earth.*
 - b. What must we do to receive this promise? *Obey and honor our parents.*
 - c. Has this promise affected the way we treat our parents? What can you do to receive this promise?
2. Malachi 3:10 – " 'Bring all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be food in My house, and try Me now in this,' says the LORD of hosts, 'If I will not open for you the windows of heaven and pour out for you such blessing that there will not be room enough to receive it.' "
 - a. What is the promise of God? *God promises that when we offer tithe, He will pour down blessings from heaven.*
 - b. What must we do to receive this promise? *We have to offer tithe of what we receive.*
 - c. Why do we offer tithe? Is it difficult for you to offer tithe of what you receive?
3. Matthew 6:33 – "But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you."
 - a. What is the promise of God? *God promises that if we put Him and the matters of His kingdom first, then He will provide all that we need.*
 - b. What must we do to receive this promise? *Put God and the matters of God first.*
 - c. Have you put God's kingdom first in your life? How will our actions change because of this promise?
4. Isaiah 58:13–14 – "If you turn away your foot from the Sabbath, from doing your pleasure on My holy day, and call the Sabbath a delight, the holy day of the LORD honorable, and shall honor Him, not doing your own ways, [...] then you shall delight yourself in the LORD; and I will cause you to ride on the high hills of the earth, and feed you with the heritage of Jacob your father."
 - a. What is the promise of God? *God promises that we will find delight in Him and find abundance in Him.*
 - b. What must we do to receive this promise? *Keep the Sabbath day holy and honor it.*

- c. Do you find the Sabbath day a delight? Why or why not?
- d. How do you honor the Sabbath day each week?

God made many promises to Abraham, but there were times when he was unable to truly believe. Likewise, there are times today when we are still unable to believe in God's promises. When we find ourselves in that situation, we must ask ourselves:

What obstacles are hindering us from trusting completely in God's promises?

Examples: Desires for material objects or wealth, influences from social media or friends outside of church, laziness, pride, anxieties, such as those about our future or well-being, unwillingness to give up time for God.

After identifying the obstacles that hinder us from trusting completely in God, we need to remember that God is greater than all of these obstacles. God is faithful even when we lack faith, for He cannot deny Himself (2 Tim 2:13). For Abraham, God was able to make the impossible happen; He gave Abraham a son when Abraham was ninety-nine years old. This is the same God that we worship today, so let us learn to trust in Him and in what He has promised us.

Memory Verse

"But without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him." (Hebrews 11:6)

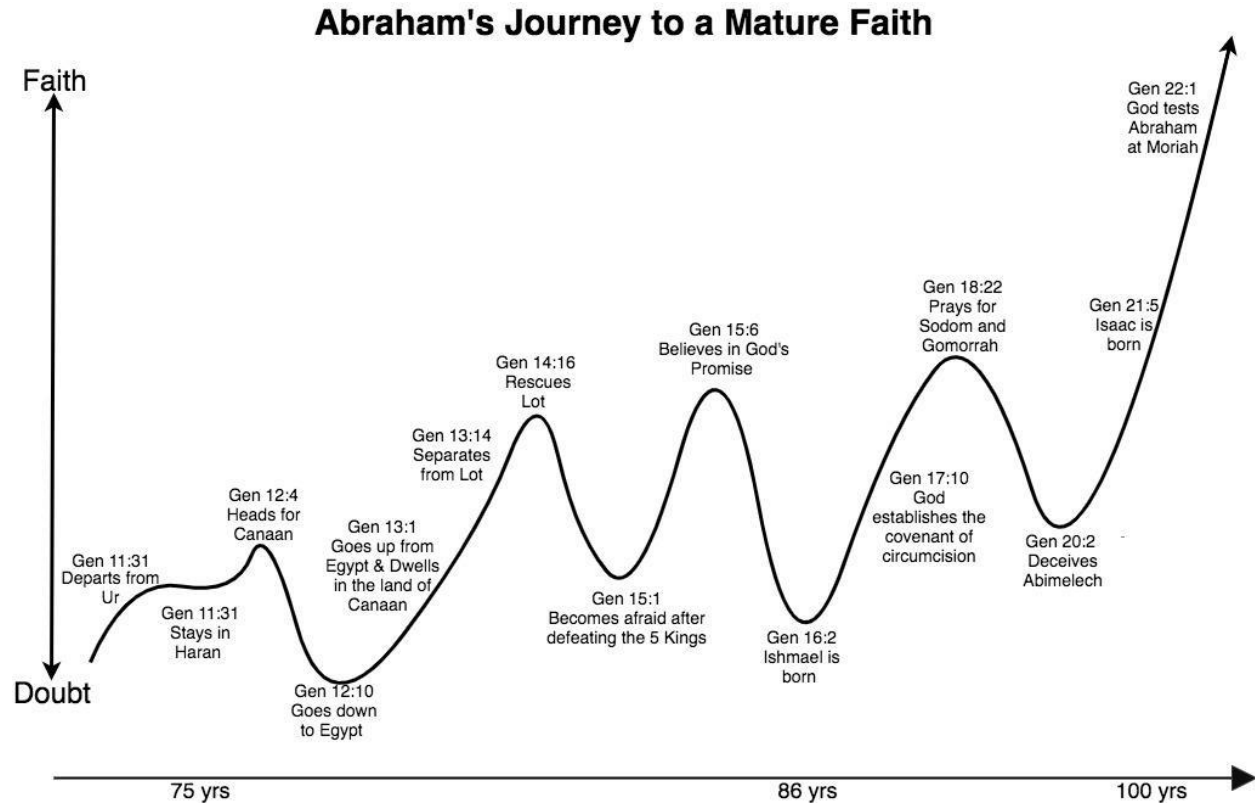
Meaning

1. It is impossible to please God without faith. If we do not have faith in God, then we cannot trust in God. If we do not trust in God, then we would have many doubts and find it difficult to obey God.
2. We must believe in God and trust that He is the only one that can truly help us. To have faith means that we need to know who God is: our Creator and Father in heaven. To live out our faith means to obey what God has commanded us to do.
3. God will fulfill His promises to those who diligently seek after Him with faith.

Conclusion

Just as Abraham's journey in faith was filled with ups and downs, we will also encounter trials of our own. Even when Abraham demonstrated doubt in God's promises, God remained faithful to Abraham, fulfilling each of the promises He had made to Abraham. In those times of doubt, let us remember to be like Abraham and to continue to hold on to what has been promised to us, for God will always remain faithful.

Figure 01: Abraham's Journey to a Mature Faith



Lesson 6 Homework Assignment Answer Key

1. What do we require in order to please God, and why?
It is impossible to please God without faith, and if we do not have faith in God, then we cannot trust in Him.
2. "By _____ Abraham _____ when he was _____ to go out to the place which he would receive as an _____. And he went out, not _____ where he was going." (Hebrews 11:8)
faith, obeyed, called, inheritance, knowing
3. What was Abraham's response when God called him to leave his homeland?
He immediately packed up his possessions and left for Canaan with his family.
4. What major event showed Abraham's dip in faith?
When he agreed to follow Sarah's plan to have Hagar serve as a surrogate mother.
5. What important tool of our faith does Abraham demonstrate? Why is this so important?
Obedience. This is important because true faith requires that we live lives obedient to God's word.
6. Pick one of the promises that we learned about during this lesson and explain what you can change in your life to receive it (Eph 6:1–3; Mal 3:10; Mt 6:33; Isa 58:13–14).
See Life Application. Personal answers.