

February 23/24, 2002

Study Questions
By Faith We Live: A Study of the Life of Abraham
Faith and Obedience
Genesis 17:1-27

Opening Discussion

1. Have you ever had someone say to you, “You’ll just have to trust me on this”? Do you find trusting someone without knowing all the details difficult or easy? Why?
2. How hard is it to trust someone when all the circumstances seem to be pointing in another direction? For example, someone gives you directions somewhere but, as you go, the directions seem wrong. Do you typically trust the directions even if they seem off, or do you abandon them and try something else? Why is this? Do you ever do the same thing with God?
3. What relationship does faith have with obedience? Can you think of a time when you were obedient and things didn’t work out so good for you? Do liars, cheaters, etc. sometimes prosper in this life while those who seek to do right take it on the chin? What motivates you to do what is right the next time if you have no guarantee things will “work out” as you wish they would? In other words, does our obedience go beyond just the practical question of what “works” in our best interest?

Bible Study

1. Abram is now 99 years old (17:1). He was 75 when he left Haran (13:4). He and Sarai are still waiting for the son of promise. What would it be like to wait that long for God to keep His promise? Hebrews 11 states that Abram was as good as dead in regards to having children. Why do you suppose God waited so long?

Why does God make us wait sometimes?

2. In Genesis 17:1 God calls Abram to walk before Him blameless. What does the term “walk” imply about our obedience? God’s command for Abram to walk blameless is preceded by His introduction of Himself as “God Almighty” (El Shaddai). How do God’s name and His command go together?
3. God changes Abram’s name to Abraham after so many years of waiting for the son of promise. How hard would it be to accept this name change while the promise still goes unfulfilled? Wouldn’t it almost feel like mockery? Why didn’t God wait until Sarai was pregnant to change his name?

What do we learn about God from this story?

How does this story relate to Hebrews 11:6?

4. The sign of the covenant would be circumcision. Read the following passages to see what they communicate about circumcision. How does this idea of circumcision relate to us today in the New Covenant? What does God really want from us?

Romans 2:28-29, 4:9-12

Deut. 10:16, 30:6

Jer. 4:4

Col. 2:9-12

5. Read Galatians 4:21-31. What does Paul tell us about Ishmael and Hagar? What do they represent?

What does Isaac represent?

6. In Genesis 17:22-27, how does Abraham respond to what God has told him? Imagine the conversations with the men and women in his camp as he explains what God has commanded. What does this say about Abraham—that all the men cooperated with him to believe a promise that must have now seemed totally impossible?

In what ways do we influence the faith of those around us?

Application

1. What three practical lessons concerning faith and obedience do you learn from Abraham in Genesis 17?

2. What is necessary for you to walk blamelessly before God?

What role does faith play in your walk?

What specific things can you do to strengthen your faith?

3. Pray for one another. Pray that you will trust God Almighty in spite of circumstances around you.