

IN THE BEGINNING

H

HIGHLIGHT — GENESIS 12:1-3, HCSB

1 The Lord said to Abram: Go out from your land, your relatives, and your father's house to the land that I will show you. 2 I will make you into a great nation, I will bless you, I will make your name great, and you will be a blessing. 3 I will bless those who bless you, I will curse those who treat you with contempt, and all the peoples on earth will be blessed through you.

HIGHLIGHT — GENESIS 15:1-6, HCSB

1 After these events, the word of the Lord came to Abram in a vision: Do not be afraid, Abram. I am your shield; your reward will be very great. 2 But Abram said, "Lord God, what can You give me, since I am childless and the heir of my house is Eliezer of Damascus?" 3 Abram continued, "Look, You have given me no offspring, so a slave born in my house will be my heir." 4 Now the word of the Lord came to him: "This one will not be your heir; instead, one who comes from your own body will be your heir." 5 He took him outside and said, "Look at the sky and count the stars, if you are able to count them." Then He said to him, "Your offspring will be that numerous." 6 Abram believed the Lord, and He credited it to him as righteousness.

MEMORY VERSES: HEBREWS 11:6; HEBREWS 11:8-10

E

EXPLAIN

Consider the number of promises different people have made to you throughout your lifetime. "I promise I brushed my teeth." "I promise I'll be home in time for Christmas." Hopefully, most of the promises made to you were kept. Most likely, many were broken. When someone breaks a promise, it causes to question that person's character and any future promises they might make, no matter how simple the matter.

God's promises to Abraham were clear. He promised to make Abraham into a great nation, to give him a great name and much land, and also to bless all peoples through him. These were bold promises that could have been dismissed as absurd, but Abraham believed God. His understanding of God's character trumped his own perception of God's promises, so he believed the promises and was counted as righteous. Abraham received and obeyed God's promises by faith, and so must we.



LONG HOLLOW
BAPTIST CHURCH

In the Beginning, Week of January 17, 2016

LEADER GUIDE



A

APPLY

What did Abraham have to give up in order to obey his faith in God's promises? Is sacrifice always required in order for us to have faith? Why or why not?

Why is it often difficult for us to trust God's promises? What does our lack of faith say about our understanding of God's character and power?

Take a closer look at God's response to Abraham's skepticism in Genesis 15:4-5. How did God handle Abraham's skepticism? What does this response show you about God's character?

The Bible is replete with promises from God for His people. Spend some time as a group sharing some of your favorite promises of God from Scripture.

Though he did obey, Abraham clearly struggled to surrender to God's promises. Are there any of God's promises that we've just discussed that you are struggling to believe? How can we as a group encourage you in your unbelief?

What steps are involved in moving from unbelief to belief? How does knowing that God always remains faithful to His Word help us in our moments of unbelief?

Read Romans 4:23-25. According to this passage, what does our faith need to be in, and why is that the case?

Faith needed to be focused on Him who raised Jesus from the dead. His sacrifice was substitutionary, undertaken for the benefit of another. But Jesus was also resurrected, the most powerful demonstration that He is the Son of God. Jesus' resurrection broke the power of sin and death and made possible the way of righteousness by faith. For Paul, salvation involved Jesus' perfect sacrifice for our sins and His glorious resurrection over death working in tandem. Because of the miracle God worked through Christ, we are assured of having salvation when we place our faith in Him.

R

RESPOND

Close your group time in prayer together. Spend some time thanking God for His promises and His faithfulness to always uphold His end of the covenant, even when we are unfaithful. Take time to thank God for sending Jesus and declaring us His righteous children. Pray that group members would trust God's promises this week regardless of their circumstances.