

## Bible Study

### God Is Faithful To His Promises

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#### Read Hebrews 11:8-12,17-19

This study focuses on the obedience, perseverance and trust of Abraham and Sarah. It aims to help deepen your obedience, strengthen your faith and remind you that you can trust in God's confident promises.

#### Open in prayer

The phrase "by faith" is mentioned 19 times in Hebrews 11. Clearly highlighting the importance of how faith led several Biblical characters in this chapter to live in obedience, persevere through hardships and trust in God's promises.

My husband and I went to view the majestic Grand Canyon one cold Spring day. I am not a hiker by any means, but the scenery was breathtaking. There was snow on the ground, and it was a beautiful day. I should also mention that I happen to be afraid of high places. So when we began our short trek along the trail bordering the cliffside, the only thing running through my mind was the fact that I couldn't see the ground beneath the snow. I began to cry and may have lamented to my husband how upset my mom would be if anything happened to me. To be clear, I was safe, and well away from the edge, but my mind went straight to fear and doubt. It felt like such a long hike, and I couldn't wait until it was over. I was definitely outside of my comfort zone and had a problem with "stepping" out in faith. Luckily my husband's guidance on that trail reminded me to trust his direction and to keep stepping in faith.

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#### Faith in Action (v8-10) A lesson in obedience

##### Read verses 8-10.

Abraham obeyed God's call to leave his homeland. He took not merely a *step*, but rather a *leap* of faith. Despite not knowing where they were going or what they might experience, Abraham and Sarah set out to Canaan. Living in tents like strangers in a foreign land meant they weren't tethered to the physical land. They often moved their tents and followed grazing land for their flocks. This was a physical demonstration of obedience and willingness to follow God's direction.

In the book *Hudson Taylor's Spiritual Secret*, Taylor is famously quoted as having said, "Christ is either Lord of all, or is not Lord at all" (Frederick Howard Taylor, *Hudson Taylor's Spiritual*

*Secret* [Chicago: Moody Press, 1932], 216). This is the essence of obedience. We either allow him to rule all our affairs or he may as well have absolutely none of our heart. The blessing in this? “Lord of all” means we are never alone. We opt out of the need to handle our burdens by our own strength. Obedience is not imprisonment; it is the only sure path to freedom (Psalm 119).

### **Read Genesis 17:7-8**

#### **Discussion Questions:**

When is the last time you took a step outside of your comfort zone?

What is God challenging you to

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### **Faith in the waiting (v11-12) A lesson in perseverance**

#### **Read verses 11-12**

Abraham is 100 and Sarah, 90 years old. They both know that Sarah is well beyond her child-bearing years and laugh at the impossible idea of Sarah being with child. But God promises her that she will indeed be given a son. And through this son, she will be the mother of nations. When God made this promise, Sarah didn’t get pregnant immediately. In fact, they waited for 25 years before God’s promise came to be. The birth of Isaac meant more than the joy of having a child, it meant the fulfillment of God’s promise.

John Ortberg writes, “Obvious question: why? Why does God make us wait? If he can do anything and if he's God, why doesn't he bring us relief and answers now? I certainly don't understand all of this, but I believe at least in part, to paraphrase Ben Patterson, what's going on is this: What God does in us while we wait is as important as what it is we're waiting for.”

Their faith wasn’t perfect, and was at times accompanied by uncertainty, as proven by Sarah persuading Hagar to give Abraham a son (Ishmael, who was blessed with a smaller separate covenant with God). God made them wait because in the waiting, He was teaching them about patience and perseverance. He was also strengthening their faith and deepening their knowledge of who He is. He is the God of the impossible.

### **Read Genesis 17:15-17.**

#### **Discussion Questions:**

Have you ever prayed for something for so long that you have considered giving up?

How has God been faithful to you in a season of waiting?

### **Also read Genesis 18:9-15**

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## **Faith in His promises (V17-19) A lesson in Trust**

### **Read verses 17-19**

Abraham and Isaac's story is one of the most painful tests of trust that we can read about in the Bible. Isaac wasn't simply their child - he was the child that God promised and made a covenant about. The child whose descendants would outnumber the stars in the sky. And God was asking Abraham to offer this promised son as a sacrifice.

As a mother of two, I often face my own tests of faith and trust. When we send our kids to preschool or kindergarten, we trust in the school system to keep them safe. When we send our kids to camp for the first time, we tell them we hope they have a blast, then secretly call to camp asking how they're doing. But we can't trust in God only when things make sense. We need to trust Him because we know who He is.

God was asking Abraham to do the impossible. My own heart breaks every time I read that Isaac asked his father where the sheep for the burnt offering was. But because Abraham had already been the recipient of God's blessings and faithfulness, in verse 19 he even mentions that "God could raise the dead", and leaned hard into his trust of whatever God was planning. I am not sure my resolve would be quite as strong. He may not have understood why he was being given this difficult task, but he trusted the God who gave the command. His faith relied heavily on the character of God

At the very last moment, while Abraham likely felt he was being stretched beyond his limit, and angel of God stopped him, and God provided a ram for Abraham to sacrifice instead (Genesis 22).

### **Read James 2:21-23 (MSG)**

#### **Discussion Question:**

Is God asking you to trust Him in a specific area of your life?

Have you ever felt tested by God? What was your response?

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#### **Discuss:**

- Write down a promise from God's Word that you need to focus on. What doubts are you facing about this promise?
- How can we support each other as women of faith—especially when our faith becomes unsteady or uncertain?

- Share one area where you need encouragement to trust God's promises this week.

**Listen to the song 'Promises' by Maverick City.**

**Close in Prayer**