

GOD GIVES ABRAM A NEW NAME

God affirms his promise and Abraham bows to his authority.



THE STORY: GENESIS 16

MONDAY

It had been some time since God called Abram and still he had no children.

It had been some time since God called Abram and still he had no children. Abram's wife Sarai was barren and, in those days, it was a disgrace for a woman to not bring her husband a son to carry on the family name. In her desire to provide children to Abram, she offered her servant to Abram as a second wife. Abram listened to Sarai and married Hagar, who bore Abram a son named Ishmael. In Galatians 4:22-23, Paul explains that Ishmael was born normally, without a miracle, and that the son of God's promise was to be born by a miracle through Sarai. God needed no help to bring to Abram a son and he would soon bring the child of his promise through Sarai. Abram assumed Ishmael was the answer to the promise (17:18) and didn't realize that God was about to do something amazing!

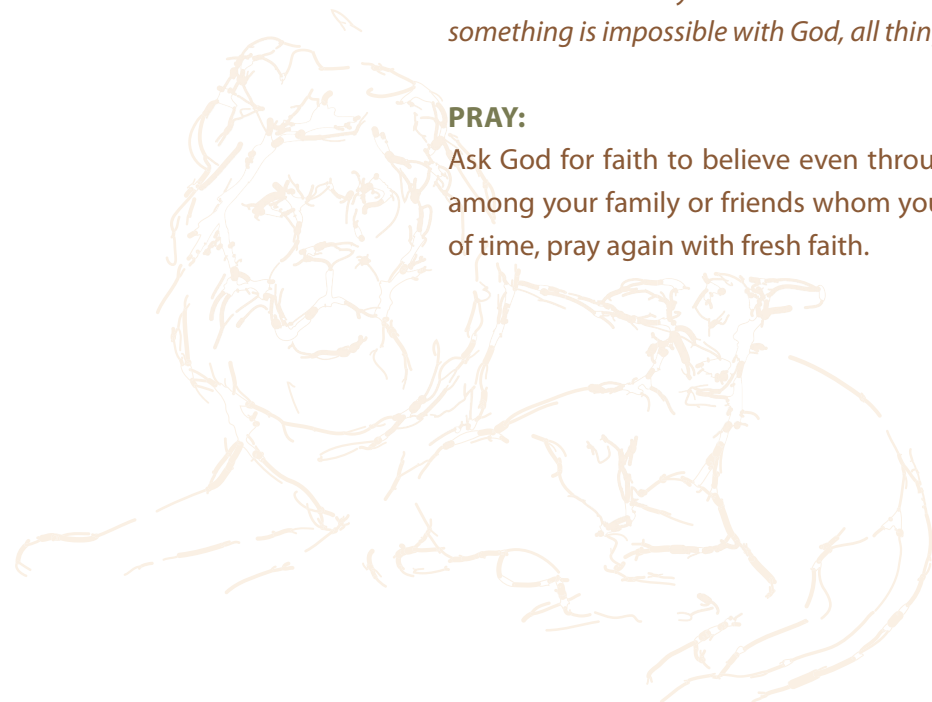
TALK ABOUT IT:

Why do you think Abram took a second wife? *(He just didn't see any other way for God's promise to be fulfilled.)*

We know that God did give Abram a son, Isaac. What do you think Abram's long wait teaches us? *(Abram's long wait teaches us that even when we don't see a way, God can still make a way. Even when we see no hope, there is hope in God. Even we think something is impossible with God, all things are possible [see Matthew 19:26].)*

PRAY:

Ask God for faith to believe even through difficult times. If there is an unbeliever among your family or friends whom you have been praying for over a long period of time, pray again with fresh faith.





God affirmed his promise and gave Abram a new name.

God affirmed his promise and gave Abram a new name.— God gave Abram a new name with a humorous twist. Abram means “father of many.” People must have laughed at Abram. The man who was called “father of many” couldn’t have even one child by his wife and had to take his wife’s maid servant in order to produce an offspring! Now, God changed his name to Abraham, which means “father of the multitude.” Imagine the response of the people as Abraham announced that he had changed his name from “father of many” to “father of the multitude!” Yet, there is no indication that Abraham was embarrassed; instead, he took the name in faith.

TALK ABOUT IT:

Why was Abram’s new name going to be hard to explain to everyone around him? *(Why would a man who has no children take a name that means the “father of the multitude?”)*

PRAY:

Ask God to help you live a faith-filled, obedient life like Abraham did.



Where is Jesus?

When God touched Abraham, his whole life changed! God gave him a name that reflected his new job description. Abraham means “father of the multitude.” One day, this multitude will all bow their knees to Jesus who received the name above all names (see Philippians 2:9-11)

TALK ABOUT IT:

How did Abram’s obedience make a way for Jesus? *(Abram’s faith was an example to all of us and Abraham was used of God to bring the Redeemer to his people. Jesus is a descendant of Abram/Abraham.)*

PRAY:

Thank God for the gift of faith he gave Abram and ask God to pour out faith into your heart so that you can be used by God as he desires.


THE STORY: GENESIS 17:9-22*

* Be aware that you will likely raise questions about circumcision with the reading of this passage. It is best to explain this to the children prior to reading the passage.

THURSDAY

Abram humbly worshipped God and obeyed.

Abram humbly worshipped God and obeyed. Abraham was 75 when God first called him out of Haran. Now, in this passage, he is 99 and still has no child with Sarah. It is interesting to see that God had not forgotten his promise even though a very long time had passed. Abram did not charge God; instead, he worshipped him.

God's awesome holiness was contrasted with Abram's sinful life. God told Abram to "walk before me and be blameless." (Genesis 17:1) Abram could not possibly stand at the call to be blameless and fell on his face.

Though Sarah was not pregnant, Abram, in faith, obeyed the Lord that very day. His circumcision was a sign of his righteousness that had come to him by faith before he was circumcised (see Romans 4:11).

TALK ABOUT IT:

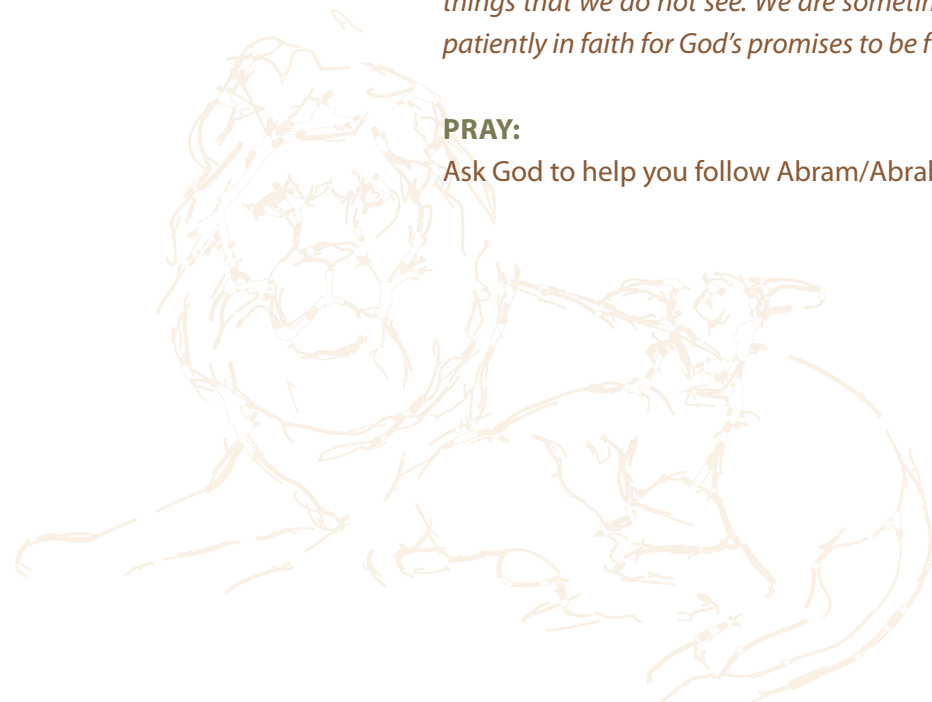
Can we get a glimpse of what is inside a person's heart by what he or she does? *(Yes, we can learn much about a person's heart by the way he or she lives.)*

What can we learn from Abram/Abraham by observing what he did? *(We can learn that he believed God and understood that he was a sinner in the presence of God. Also, he trusted God enough to undergo circumcision without the promise of a son being fulfilled.)*

How is Abram/Abraham an example for us? *(We often quickly give up believing for things that we do not see. We are sometimes much slower to obey God's Word to wait patiently in faith for God's promises to be fulfilled.)*

PRAY:

Ask God to help you follow Abram/Abraham and his example of faith in God.





On the road to Emmaus.

David makes his plea to God, “Let the evil of the wicked come to an end, establish the righteous, save the upright in heart and be a righteous judge.” Clearly, David was asking that the people of the Lord be established and that God would stop the evildoers. He was not thinking of God’s greater plan of salvation and since each person’s salvation is based in Jesus Christ, David’s was a tall request. How could God possibly be both a righteous judge and also one who allows any individual to be called righteous or upright? The answer can only be found in Jesus since Jesus was the only one who was upright in heart. God poured out his wrath upon Christ for our sin and we are then given Christ’s righteousness when we trust in Christ for salvation. In this great grace-filled transaction, we have the answer to David’s prayer. God remains the righteous judge and we who are given the righteousness of Christ and a changed heart can be preserved while those who reject Christ are brought to an end.

TALK ABOUT IT:

Given that all men are sinful, how could God answer David’s prayer to establish and save the righteous and upright in heart? *(Jesus was the only one who was upright in heart. God poured out his wrath upon Christ for our sin. We then are given his righteousness when we trust in Christ for salvation.)*

PRAY:

Thank God for the righteousness he provided through Jesus so that one day we would be able to stand righteous before him.

