

# **Living by Faith**

## Lesson 1

Genesis 18:1-15, 21:1-7; Hebrews 11:8-12;

Romans 4:16-25

May 24, 2020

## **Faith in God's Promises**

### **Introduction**

The late American theologian R.C. Sproul once said, "It is one thing to believe in God; it is quite another to believe God." Abraham and Sarah had experienced disappointment after disappointment by not being able to have a child for their entire adulthood. When God promised to give them a son in their old age, Sarah laughed at the thought.

God delivered on His promise, though, and Sarah and Abraham's faith flourished. Then, because of their faith in God's promise, God was able to use them to build the nation of Israel, and Abraham was called the father of a nation.

Our trials, fears, and disappointments can keep us from believing in God's promises and trusting in the work of Jesus in our lives. The greater our faith, however, the more God can use us to establish His kingdom on earth.

***Memory verse: "And without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him."—Hebrews 11:6***

Pray and read Genesis 18:1-15, 21:1-7; Romans 4:16-25; Hebrews 11:8-12. What questions or observations do you have about these passages?

## **What do the passages say?**

1. How did God appear to Abraham? (Genesis 18:1-2)
2. What promise did God make to Abraham and Sarah? (Genesis 18:10-13)
3. How did Sarah react when she heard God say that she would have a son within a year? (Genesis 18:11-12)
4. What happened as a result of God's promise to Abraham and Sarah? (Genesis 21:2)
5. What enabled Sarah to get pregnant, despite her advanced age? (Hebrews 11:11)
6. What was Abraham persuaded God could do? (Romans 4:20-21)
7. How was Abraham's faith credited to him? (Romans 4:22)
8. For who is this crediting of righteousness through faith also? How? (Romans 4:23-25)

## What do the passages mean?

1. Imagine how Sarah must have felt at her age, never having been able to have children. The point of being able to have children had long passed. What was her mindset at this point? Do you think that she had accepted the disappointment of not being able to have children? (Genesis 18:10-15)
2. Compare the laughter of Sarah when God made his promise in Genesis 18 to her laughter when God fulfilled His promise in Genesis 21. What were the emotions of each laughter? Which laughter was more joyful? (Genesis 18:12, Genesis 21:6-7)
3. Read Romans 4:9-17. Why was it important to Paul that Abraham was justified before he was circumcised? (Romans 4:9-17)

4. Neither Abraham nor Sarah ever expected to have a child in their old age, but God's promise changed everything. God enabled Sarah to become pregnant, but Abraham and Sarah had to learn God's promises are sure. What would have happened if they had rejected God's promise and refused to believe that God was capable of such a feat? (Hebrews 11:11-12, Romans 16:16-20)
  
5. Abraham was given his son Isaac because God does not renege on a promise. However, Abraham had to learn to trust God by faith. How did this act of faith allow Abraham to become the father of many nations? (Romans 4:16-19)

### **Applying the passages**

1. Abraham and Sarah probably had deep and long-standing disappointment and had accepted that they would not have children. Write down a few disappointing experiences that you've had. How have these experiences affected your ability to trust Jesus? (1 Genesis 8:10-15)

2. God’s plans for us always bring him glory. That’s one of the points of our faith in the work of Jesus: God chooses to be involved in our lives. We accept His promises in faith, and then God is glorified as He works His purpose in our lives. How do you see this process play out in the story of Sarah and Abraham? (Jeremiah 29:11, Hebrews 11:11-12)

3. A large part of faith is the hopeful knowledge that God has the power to change our lives and desire to work in our lives. He is the mighty creator of the universe who desperately wants to be intimately involved in our lives. (Hebrews 11:1-2) Think for a few minutes about when you doubted either God’s power or His interest in what you were going through. Now think about times when you’ve seen Jesus active in your life. How was your faith affected by these experiences?