

USING LEADER GUIDES

Leader Guides are intended for you, the leader, to guide your Precept Upon Precept® and In & Out® discussions. They are designed to help you reason through the content of the lessons and to ensure you have understood what your group should have learned from their study. The guides offer effective plans for leading discussions.

The Holy Spirit is your guide as you prepare. He is the one who knows what your group needs to apply to their lives. Pray for them as they study and for yourself as you prepare to lead the discussion.

These guides can be used for either the NASB or the ESV edition of the courses. ESV words follow the NASB after a slash / or are set off with parentheses.

Leader Guides include the following:

- Lesson emphasis
- A logical order for the discussion
- Discussion questions
- Suggested visual aid(s)

Practical tips for using the Leader Guide:

- **Don't simply "do" the lesson.**
Stay with the lesson until you have a good understanding of it. This will give you a better grasp of how the Leader Guide takes you through the lesson.
- **You don't have to ask every question in the guide.**
Often one question will be covered while discussing another question so there is no reason to ask it. Your goal is not to ask every question, but to ask enough questions to make sure your group understood the lesson and to help them apply the truths to their lives.

Using the Leader Guide with In & Out

When your entire group uses In & Out

Compare an In & Out lesson with the Leader Guide. Use what relates to the In & Out lesson as a guide for the discussion. Don't teach what's not in In & Out lessons. Remember your goal in the discussion is for your group to discuss what they've learned, not for you to lecture on what you learned.

For groups studying both Precept Upon Precept and In & Out

Use the Leader Guides as designed for PUP, knowing that the In & Out assignments will be covered in the discussion. Make a note in the Leader Guide of what is not in the In & Out.

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**BECOMING A FRIEND OF THE FAITHFUL GOD: A STUDY ON ABRAHAM
LEADER GUIDE
Lesson 1**

Lesson emphasis:

- Genesis 11:24–14:24
- Abram and the Lord

If you and your group studied Genesis Parts 1 and 2, you might begin this discussion by asking about the segments in Genesis mentioned in Day 1. Otherwise, begin with the next question.

These are the generations of:

- 2:4 The heavens and the earth
- 5:1 Adam
- 6:9 Noah
- 10:1 Shem, Ham, and Japheth
- 11:10 Shem
- 11:27 Terah

Who is the main character of Genesis 11:27–14:24?

Abram—one of Terah’s sons

GENESIS 11:27-32

Ask your group what they learned about Abram’s family.

You can use the Family Tree and the maps as visual aids for this part of your discussion.

Abram, Nahor, and Haran were brothers—Terah’s sons.

Sarai was Abram’s wife.

Nahor married his niece, Milcah, who was Haran’s daughter.

Lot was one of Haran’s sons and Milcah’s brother.

Abram’s brother Haran died in Ur.

Sarai was barren.

Terah, Abram, Sarai, and Lot left Ur to go to Canaan.

But they only went as far as Haran and settled there, and Terah died there.

According to Acts 7:1-5, when did the Lord first appear to Abram (Abraham)?

When he was in Mesopotamia, Ur, before he lived in Haran

The Lord told him to depart from his relatives and come into the land He would show him.

How does Hebrews 11:8 relate to this?

The Lord called Abraham (Abram), and he obeyed because of his faith. He obeyed the Lord by going out from his home country, not knowing where he was going.

The Lord led him by stages.

GENESIS 12

Verses 1-3

What are these verses about?

The Lord spoke to Abram.

NOTE: Some in your group might read in commentaries that Genesis 12:1 says, “Now the LORD had said...” as in the New King James version of the Bible. This might indicate what God had told him previously in Ur as Acts 7:3 states.

What did the Lord tell Abram to do?

Leave your country and your relatives / kindred.

Go to the land I will show you.

In Abram’s journey from Ur to Haran, some of his relatives were with him—his father and his nephew.

Some people think that Abram was disobedient because Lot was with him. Others think that he was merely fulfilling a family responsibility of caring for his dead brother’s son. Terah or Abram might have taken Lot to raise when his father Haran died.

Since verse 4 says that he did depart from Haran “as the Lord had spoken to him,” this appears to be a reference to God speaking to him in Haran.

It could be that God had spoken all or part of verses 1-3 to him before in Ur, and then reiterated it to him in Haran as well.

What did the Lord promise Abram in this call?

The land
A great nation
Blessing
A great name
Cursing for those who cursed Abram
All families of the earth blessed in him

What does Isaiah 51:1-2 tell about the Lord's call to Abraham?

He was one when called. Relate to Sarai (Sarah) being barren.

Then the Lord multiplied him so that all of Israel looked to him as their father.

God fulfilled the promise to make a great nation of him, even through his barren wife Sarah.

Discuss what impact God's word had on Abram. Also, help your group to apply this to their lives. What impact does God's Word have on them? Are they willing to follow?

Verses 4-9

What happened in these verses?

Use the maps in the Appendix as visual aids.

Abram obeyed God by leaving Haran at the age of 75.

He took with him Sarai and Lot and all that they had accumulated in Haran.

They went to Shechem in Canaan, modern-day Israel, and God appeared to him.

The Lord added something to the promise He had previously spoken to Abram.

He said that He would give this land to Abram's descendants.

How did Abram respond to the Lord?

He built an altar to the Lord.

Other than his following God from Ur to Canaan, this was the first act of worship that is recorded from Abram's life.

He moved on from Shechem to the mountain on the east of Bethel, between Bethel and Ai. There he also built an altar to the Lord and called upon the name of the Lord.

This was the second altar and the first time the text says he called on the Lord's name.

Abram's calling on the Lord's name showed recognition of Who God is. He was faithful to lead Abram to the land to which He had called him. This was probably the reason he built the altars and called on the Lord's name.

Then Abram went south toward the Negev.

Ask your group how these same principles relate to their own lives today.

In our following God, do we stop and worship Him? Or do too many today only want God's blessing on their lives, not really following God and not worshipping Him or getting to know Who He is? A life of obedience is a life of worship.

Verses 10-20

Where did Abram go? Why? What happened?

He went down to Egypt because of a famine in the land of Canaan. He told Sarai, who was very beautiful, to say that she was his sister instead of his wife.

NOTE: Genesis 17:17 states that Sarai was ten years younger than Abram, which made her 65 years old in Genesis 12, since Abram was 75. Also, Genesis 20:12 says that Terah had been Sarai's father as well as Abram's, but Abram and Sarai had different mothers. It might be helpful to you as a leader to be aware of these facts because someone might bring them up in the discussion.

The Egyptians did notice that Sarai was beautiful, and she was taken into Pharaoh's house. Pharaoh treated Abram, her brother, well and gave him animals and servants for her.

Pharaoh took her for his wife, which might mean that he took her physically. The Lord protected Abram's life, and he didn't lose his wife to Pharaoh permanently.

He sent plagues on Pharaoh's house because of Sarai, and because of this he discovered that she was Abram's wife and sent them away.

Spend a little time discussing what your group learned about Abram from this account.

He had some fears just like people do today, but the Lord didn't say that He would find someone else to bless.

This account shows that God is long-suffering. He was patient as Abram learned to trust Him more and more—living by faith.

At this point, you might ask your group what they noted on their At a Glance charts as the main theme of Genesis 12, and then 13.

GENESIS 13

What are the main events in this chapter?

You can still use the maps as visual aids and also the “Journal on God.”

NOTE: If there is good discussion from this one question, then you don't need to ask more. But if your group doesn't discuss all of this chapter, then you can use the following.

What are verses 1-4 about?

Abram, Sarai, Lot, and company went back to the Negev (ESV—Negeb), to Canaan, to the altar between Bethel and Ai.

Abram again called on the Lord's name.

God had not allowed Abram to be killed as he feared.

God had already made a promise to him that He would bless him.

God had sent a plague against Pharaoh when he had taken Sarai.

God meant for His promise to come through her as well as Abram.

When God promises, it comes to pass; nothing can thwart His plans.

Give time for your group to discuss application.

What are verses 5-13 about?

Abram and Lot had too many possessions to live together on the land.

There was strife between their herdsmen, so they separated.

Lot took the Jordan Valley going eastward, and Abram settled in the land of Canaan.

NOTE: Don't spend too much time here on Lot as there will be a lesson later in this course which will cover all of the material about him. It is easy for people to get carried away speculating about Lot, so don't give your group the opportunity. They will study him later.

Discuss what happened in verses 14-18 once this separation had taken place.

God spoke to Abram again and restated His promise of the land.

The land Abram saw would be given to him and his descendants forever.

Something new was added to the promise—forever.

A second new thing added was that God would make them as numerous as the dust.

Abram then moved his tent and dwelt by the oaks of Mamre in Hebron and built an altar there to the Lord.

Each time God spoke to Abram, he responded in some way. Maybe not always in the right way, but Abram was progressively following God's leading.

GENESIS 14

Ask your group about the main theme for this chapter on their At a Glance chart. Continue to use the maps and the "Journal on God" as visual aids.

What are the main events?

There was a war between some of the kings of the east with the kings of Lot's area, and Lot was taken captive. But Abram and his allies rescued Lot.

After this the new king of Sodom, one of the victors because of Abram, went out to meet him.

Another king, Melchizedek, the king of Salem, a priest of God Most High, brought out bread and wine. Melchizedek blessed Abram, and Abram gave him a tenth of the spoils.

Get a description from your group by asking them what they learned about Melchizedek.

Melchizedek means "king of righteousness" according to Hebrews 7:2. Salem means "peace," so he was the king of a city which meant peace.

He was a priest of God Most High.

Psalm 110:4; Hebrews 5:5, 6; and 6:20 all speak of Jesus being a priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek.

Hebrews 7 also says that he was without father, mother, genealogy, beginning of days, and end of life. He was made like the Son of God, a priest perpetually.

From this description it appears that Melchizedek might have been a Christophany, a preincarnate appearance of the Son of God.

Abram paid him a tithe, a tenth.

NOTE: You don't need to mention that Melchizedek might have been a Christophany; just be aware that someone might bring it up. Be cautious about too much discussion as to whether or not he was, since this could be a place where the discussion could move from its point to a tangent.

Discuss what Melchizedek said to Abram.

Melchizedek referred to God as “God Most High, possessor [or Creator] of heaven and earth.”

“God Most High” is the name connected with God’s sovereignty.

Abram saw over and over that God is sovereign, and His plans will not be thwarted.

Melchizedek also reminded Abram that it was God who had delivered him from his enemies.

Verse 22 is the last mention of Abram speaking of God in the chapters studied in this lesson.

He called God, “the Lord God Most High, possessor of heaven and earth.”

He recognized that it was God who had given him not only this victory, but also everything that he had.

Verse 23 states that Abram would not take anything from the king of Sodom so that the king could not say that he had made Abram rich.

You can end your discussion by asking your group what they learned about the Lord and how it applies to their lives.

Ask what they learned also about Abram and how it relates to them.

God didn’t tell Abram everything He wanted him to know all at once. It was progressive.

We have the entire Word of God today, and He has told us everything He wants us to know at once. But He leads us into the discovery of that truth from His Word progressively, revealing one truth and then another truth and then another.

Encourage your group to continue to study and see God reveal truth to them through His Word and His Holy Spirit.

Abram didn’t recognize all of the truth about God at the beginning. He grew in his knowledge of God and in his faith to follow God, to believe what God said—what He promised.

**BECOMING A FRIEND OF THE FAITHFUL GOD: A STUDY ON ABRAHAM
LEADER GUIDE
Lesson 2**

Lesson emphasis:

- Genesis 15
- 3 covenants

REVIEW

To begin this discussion you can ask your group what they remember about Abram and the Lord from Genesis 11:27–14:24.

You might also ask how Genesis 15 begins.

“After these things”

What things? Review the main themes of Genesis 12–14 using the At a Glance chart as a visual aid.

Genesis 12	God’s promises to Abram / Abram went to Canaan and Egypt
Genesis 13	Abram and Lot separated
Genesis 14	Abram rescued Lot / Melchizedek

GENESIS 15

What is this chapter about? Ask your group what they noted on their At a Glance chart for the theme of Genesis 15.

Abram believed / The Lord made a covenant

What happened in verse 1?

The Lord’s word came in a vision to Abram.

He told Abram not to fear because He is a shield to him and his reward will be very great.

Relate this to how the Lord protected Abraham against Pharaoh and the kings at war. God was his shield.

This could also be translated, “I am a shield to you; your very great reward.”¹ You might relate this to the end of chapter 14. It could be that this was immediately following his conversation with the king of Sodom, or it could also be a longer period of time. It is interesting that Abram took no reward from the king of Sodom. Relate this to God giving or being his reward.

God was his shield, so there was no need for fear. This is also true for believers today. God is our shield, and we should not fear.

This statement also relates to what comes after it in the text of Genesis 15.

Verses 2-8

What are these verses about?

Abram asked the Lord two questions.

In verse 2, Abram asked God what He would give him since he was still childless and his heir was Eliezer.

A custom of that time was for a childless couple to adopt a trusted slave to be their heir. Eliezer was born in Abram’s house but was from Damascus. Abram might have come through Damascus from Haran to Shechem, but we also know from the events in Genesis 14, that he had gone north of Damascus to rescue Lot.

God then promised Abram that it would be one from his own body who would be his heir. This is the first time this is stated.

God took him outside and told him to look at the stars. God told him that his descendants / offspring would be as numerous as the stars. Relate this to Genesis 13:16, “dust of the earth.” This was not a new promise.

Verse 6 says that Abram believed in the Lord. He believed the seed was coming from him as the Lord had promised, the seed who would bless all by faith.

He had followed by faith before, but at this point it seems that his complete trust and faith were in God and His promises.

God reckoned / counted this belief as righteousness to Abram’s account. His righteousness came from faith in God.

God reminded him that He had brought him out of Ur to give this land to him as his inheritance or possession.

¹ *New American Standard Bible: 1995 update*, marginal note (Gen 15:1) (LaHabra, CA: The Lockman Foundation, 1995).

His second question is in verse 8. Abram asked God how he would know this. Then God made a covenant with him. He gave the land to his descendants / offspring.

What is a covenant?

covenant, *beriyth*—a solemn binding agreement made by passing through pieces of flesh

Verses 9-21

What happened when the Lord made a covenant with Abram?

Abram cut the animals, except the birds, and laid each piece opposite the other. He had to drive away the birds of prey. It appears that it must have taken him all day to complete his task.

When the sun was going down, Abram fell into a deep sleep. God said to him, “Know for certain . . .” answering his question in verse 8 of how he would know that he was going to possess the land.

His descendants / offspring would be enslaved 400 years.
Afterward, they would come out with many possessions.
God would judge that nation.
In the fourth generation, his descendants would return.
Abram would live a long life and die in peace.

When it was very dark, a smoking oven (ESV—fire pot) and a flaming torch passed between the pieces of the animals.

It was a custom when making a covenant for the parties to walk between the sacrificial animals. This smoking oven and flaming torch was not Abram passing between the pieces; he was in a deep sleep. This was God Himself making the covenant.

The land was described as being from the river of Egypt to the Euphrates River, and God gave it to Abram’s descendants.

How do the passages in Exodus 2; 3; 11; and 12 fulfill some of Genesis 15?

Tell your group to look at the chart in the lesson on Day 3 as a visual aid for this part of your discussion.

Exodus 2

Israel (Abraham’s descendants / offspring, the Hebrews) was in bondage in Egypt.

When Israel cried to the Lord, He remembered His covenant with Abraham, his son Isaac and his son Jacob (Israel).

Exodus 3: 11; and 12

Moses was used by God to do miracles in Egypt so that the Egyptians would be compelled to let them go and to give many possessions to the people of Israel.

Thus they plundered the Egyptians when Moses led them out of Egypt to return to Canaan.

What covenant did God remember in Exodus 2:24?

The covenant He made with Abraham.

What did God promise Abraham according to the covenant in Genesis 15?

Descendants / offspring (a seed) and the land

Tell your group to look at the charts in the lesson on Day Four about the covenants. The timeline at the end of Day Five is also helpful. There is a chart at the end of this lesson which you as the leader can use to list the main points of each covenant as they are discussed.

THE OLD COVENANT, THE LAW

Ask your group what they learned about this covenant.

Exodus 24

After Egypt, on their way back to the promised land of Canaan, the people of Israel stopped in the desert.

There at Mount Sinai, God gave the Law, the Old Covenant, to the sons of Israel written on tablets of stone. The people covenanted with God, promising to keep the Law. Sacrifices and offerings were made.

Jeremiah 31

God made this covenant with Israel when He took them out of Egypt.

They broke it—didn't keep His commands as they said they would.

Galatians 3

Those who were under the Law were also under a curse to perform all of the Law. No one was justified by the Law. The Law didn't give life.

This covenant did not invalidate the Abrahamic Covenant or nullify the promise which God made with Abraham and his descendants / offspring.

Verse 21 said the Law was not contrary to the promises. These were two different covenants that are compatible.

The Old Covenant of the Law came 430 years after the promises spoken to Abraham and his seed. This was not 430 years after Genesis 15, but 430 years from the last time the promise was reiterated to Abraham's grandson Israel (Jacob) when God spoke to him on his way to Egypt (Genesis 46).

The Law was added because of transgressions—sin—until the Seed (Christ, 16) should come (19). The Law shows one's need for a Savior Who can make righteous. It gives God's standard of righteousness. It was given as a tutor / guardian to lead men to Christ (24).

Unlike the Abrahamic Covenant, this covenant was a conditional one with an end. Israel was supposed to keep the conditions of this covenant, but instead, according to Jeremiah 31:32, they broke it.

It was in effect until the seed came—the Seed, Jesus. The Law was a tutor / guardian to lead to Christ.

What about today? How does all this apply to today?

Some people still try to get to God by a set of rules, many not according to God's Law but according to man-made laws of "holiness."

No law can impart life. Life does not come by works of a law (Gal. 3:21).

At this point, you can ask your group to summarize what they've learned about the Abrahamic Covenant and the Old Covenant.

THE NEW COVENANT

Ask your group what they learned about this new covenant.

Jeremiah 31

It's not like the Old Covenant which was broken.

God writes His Law on the heart.

He'll be their God and they'll be His people.

All will know Him.

He'll forgive iniquity and remember sins no more.

Ezekiel 36 and 2 Corinthians

He'll put His Spirit within to cause to walk in His statutes and ways.

Galatians 3

The Spirit is received by faith in Jesus Christ.

Believers in Jesus Christ, those who follow Abraham in faith

The promise of the seed to Abraham blesses all families of the earth.
Even Gentiles receive the Spirit by faith in Christ.

Christ brought about the New Covenant which gives life and righteousness.

Then what is the New Covenant's relationship to the Old Covenant?

The New Covenant is not contrary to the Law.
The Law was to be a tutor / guardian for Israel until Christ came.

He has come, so there is no more need for the Old Covenant, the Law.

What is the relationship of the New Covenant to God's covenant with Abram?

Christ is Abraham's Seed in Whom all the families of the earth would be blessed.

How do the three covenants relate to one another and to salvation?

Abrahamic Covenant, unconditional
promised the Seed
was a covenant of faith
for Abraham's descendants to inherit the land forever

The Law, Old Covenant; conditional
was added because of transgressions
is a tutor / guardian to lead to Christ
was until the Seed should come
did not invalidate or nullify the Abrahamic Covenant promises
was of works and not of faith

The New Covenant, salvation; unconditional
fulfillment of the promise of the Seed
forgiveness of sins
fulfillment of the Law because of the Spirit within, not contrary to the Law
brought the blessing of Abraham to the believing Gentiles

To end your discussion you can ask about Genesis 15:6 being quoted in the New Testament.

Paul used Abraham as an illustration of one who was justified (made righteous) by faith in Romans 4 like he did in Galatians 3.

Even during the time of Abraham, salvation was by faith.
It has always been by faith that one is counted righteous by God.

How is the context of James different?

James taught that there is righteousness which comes from faith.

James 2:14-26 states more than once that faith without works is dead.

If there is no evidence of salvation—no evidence of the Spirit dwelling within as the New Covenant of salvation promises—if there is no righteousness, then there is no faith.

James does not contradict what Paul says, but actually goes along with it.

Verses 21-24 give the explanation. Abraham's works showed that his faith was real. His faith was perfected or completed. This was the evidence of his faith. This is a controversial teaching even today among many churches, though it should not be, because the Word is very clear on this aspect of salvation.

As you close your discussion, you might ask your group the following:

True salvation is by faith, not by keeping the Law or doing good deeds.
Have you truly believed or have you tried to earn salvation?

Does your life give evidence that you are a believer?
His Spirit within causes believers to walk in His ways.

God's Covenant with Abram	The Old Covenant, The Law	The New Covenant
God made with Abram	God made with Israel	God made with believers
Promised descendants, Seed	Added because of transgressions	God's law within written on hearts
God gave this land to them	Tutor to lead to Christ	Forgive iniquity
Abram believed God	Israel broke the Law	God's Spirit within, cause to walk in His ways
All nations blessed		

**BECOMING A FRIEND OF THE FAITHFUL GOD: A STUDY ON ABRAHAM
LEADER GUIDE
Lesson 3**

Lesson emphasis:

- Genesis 16:1–18:15
- Is anything too difficult for the Lord?

REVIEW

To begin this discussion, you can ask your group what they remember as the main points of Genesis 12–15. Use the At A Glance chart as a visual aid for this part of your discussion.

Genesis 11:24-32	Abram and family left Ur and settled in Haran
Genesis 12	Abram, Sarai, Lot—Ur to Canaan, Abram built altars, then to Egypt
Genesis 13	In Canaan, Abram and Lot separated
Genesis 14	Abram rescued Lot, Melchizedek
Genesis 15	Lord made a covenant with Abram

Then you can ask specifically about God’s promises to Abram in Genesis 12.

God promised to make Abram a great nation and to bless him.

He would make his name great and make him a blessing.

God would bless those who blessed Abram and curse those who cursed him.

In him, God promised to bless all families of the earth.

Verse 7 adds that God promised the land of Canaan to Abram’s descendants.

How old was Abram in Genesis 12?

He was 75 years old when he departed from Haran.

How did God expand on His promises to Abram in Genesis 13?

God said that the land was for Abram and his descendants forever.

His descendants would be as numerous as the dust of the earth.

What did the Lord tell Abram about his heir in Genesis 15?

He promised that one from Abram’s own body (ESV—his own son) will be his heir.

GENESIS 16

What is this chapter about? When did these events take place?

Abram's son Ishmael was born when he was 86 years old.

NOTE: If the question above stimulates discussion so that all of the points of this chapter are brought out, then you don't need to ask the following questions. But if you need more specific questions for a good discussion of this chapter, use some or all of the following.

There is a simple timeline at the end of this lesson's guide which you can use as a visual aid.

Verses 1-6

What happened in these verses?

Sarai offered her idea as to how Abram could have an heir—one from his own body. She gave her Egyptian maid Hagar to Abram as his wife to produce an heir.

Abram listened to the voice of his wife in this matter and did as she suggested. This was 10 years after they had lived in the land of Canaan. Abram was approximately 85 years old at the time. God first promised descendants / offspring to Abram about 10 years previous.

What is the chain of events?

Sarai gave Hagar to Abram as his wife to produce an heir.

Abram went in to Hagar, and she conceived.

Hagar then despised (ESV—looked on with contempt) Sarai.
Sarai treated her harshly.
Hagar ran away.

You might want to discuss for a few minutes how this relates to today. Do people, even believers, get tired of waiting on God to do what He has said that He will do and come up with their own solutions?

What can be learned from this unfortunate event in Abram's and Sarai's lives? How can believers prevent this kind of thing from happening in their lives?

Learn to trust God and wait for His timing to bring about His promises in His way.

Verses 7-14

What happened in these verses?

Hagar, the Egyptian maid, fled from Sarai's presence toward Egypt.

Shur is on the way to Egypt from Hebron. Here the angel of the Lord met her in the wilderness and told her to return and submit to Sarai.

Then God made a promise to Hagar.

- greatly multiply her descendants / offspring so that they would be too numerous to count. These would also be Abram’s descendants, as well as Hagar’s.
- a son
She was to name him “Ishmael,” which means, “God hears.”² At the end of verse 11, He says that the Lord has given heed to or, literally, “has heard” Hagar’s affliction.³

What’s the description of Ishmael?

a wild donkey of a man
against everyone and everyone against him
live to the east of his brothers (ESV—dwell over against all his kinsmen)

At this point, you can ask your group what they learned about the names of the Lord in this lesson. Have them use the Journal on God as visual aid for this part of your discussion.

Genesis 14:18-20 El Elyon, God Most High

Genesis 15:2 Lord GOD (Adonai means “master” or “lord”)

NOTE: Tetragrammaton, YHWH, is the Hebrew word for God that consists of four letters and is transliterated using consonants, YHWH, and pronounced as Adonai or Elohim in substitution of the original, now forbidden pronunciation. It is the root of “Jehovah.”

Genesis 16:11 says that God heard the affliction of Hagar. Ishmael means, “God hears.”

Genesis 16:13 she called God, “the God Who sees me / a God of seeing.” This is transliterated as Elroi. In verse 14 the well was named literally, “the well of the living one who sees me.”⁴

Give time for your group to discuss Who God is and how that relates to their circumstances.

² *New American Standard Bible: 1995 update*, marginal note (Genesis 16:11) (LaHabra, CA: The Lockman Foundation, 1995).

³ *New American Standard Bible: 1995 update*, marginal note (Genesis 16:11) (LaHabra, CA: The Lockman Foundation, 1995).

⁴ *New American Standard Bible: 1995 update*, marginal note (Genesis 16:14) (LaHabra, CA: The Lockman Foundation, 1995).

Verses 15-16

How does this chapter end?

Hagar gave birth to Ishmael when Abram was 86 years old.

GENESIS 17

How does this chapter begin? What was Abram's age?

Abram was 99 years old.

He was 75 years old when he left Haran, so 24 years had passed since then.

There were 13 years between Genesis 16 and 17.

Verses 1-8

What happened?

The Lord appeared to Abram and spoke with him.

God revealed Himself to Abram as God Almighty, El Shaddai.

This name of God means exactly what it says. He is the Almighty One, the Powerful One, or Mighty One. Some think this name also means that He is the All-Sufficient One.

He told Abram to walk before Him and be blameless, in other words to live as God would have him live. This was not to say that he had not been doing this, but it was a command from God to keep on living as he should.

God then began to speak of covenant again.

He changed Abram's name to "Abraham."

This was a common part of covenant rituals. Abraham means, "father of a multitude," whereas Abram means, "exalted father."⁵

God promised that nations and kings would come from Abraham.

NOTE: In Genesis 12:2, it says that God told Abram He would make him a great nation. Here God said He would make him the father of a multitude of nations. The great nation promised in Genesis 12 was the nation of Israel that came out of Egypt in very large number.

⁵ *New American Standard Bible: 1995 update*, marginal note (Genesis 17:5) (LaHabra, CA: The Lockman Foundation, 1995).

What else did the Lord say?

God said that His covenant with Abraham and his descendants / offspring is an everlasting covenant and that the land will be theirs forever. He stated twice that He will be their God.

Verses 9-14

What are these verses about?

God said that the sign of this covenant was circumcision.

Abraham and his descendants were to keep this as a condition of the covenant.

If a man was not circumcised, then he was to be cut off from his people (the nation of Israel), because he had broken the covenant.

This included all of the servants and foreigners among them.
Every male at least 8 days old was to be circumcised.

The sign of God’s everlasting covenant—the promise of descendants / offspring and the land—is in their flesh.

Your group might have questions about circumcision, such as: Why circumcision and not something else as the sign? What about women? Isn’t circumcision part of the Law?

Concerning the physical location of circumcision, this is the place closest to the seed that God told Abraham would come forth from your own body. It was a sign of the promise God made to Abraham for descendants / offspring.

Since the lineage was through the men and not the women, the sign of the covenant was unnecessary for the women. If the husband was part of the covenant, then so was his wife or his daughter.

NOTE: Circumcision was instituted as a sign of the Abrahamic Covenant, not of the Law as sometimes is assumed. In the New Testament, circumcision is sometimes referred to as being a legalistic ritual, similar, or connected to the works of the Law. But it was given by God many years earlier than the Law was given.

Verses 15-22

What are these verses about?

The Lord spoke about Sarai, and He changed her name to Sarah, meaning “princess.”⁶

⁶ *New American Standard Bible: 1995 update*, marginal note (Genesis 17:15) (LaHabra, CA: The Lockman Foundation, 1995).

Lesson 3, Chapters 16:1–18:15

Then God gave the promise to Abraham—for the first time—that Sarah would have a son. She would be the mother of nations and kings.

What followed this promise?

Use the chart about Isaac and Ishmael on Day Four of the lesson as a visual aid for this part of your discussion.

Abraham fell on his face laughing and questioning in his heart.

Then he suggested to the Lord that Ishmael might live before Him, presumably as his heir.

God said no, Ishmael was not going to be the one through whom the covenant descendants / offspring would come, who would inherit the land forever, or through whom the Seed would come.

Isaac was God's choice for the covenant. Isaac means, "he laughs."⁷

God promised that Ishmael would, however, be fruitful and multiply and be the father of twelve princes and a great nation. But the covenant promises would go to Isaac whom Sarah would bear to Abraham at the same season the next year.

From the conversation between God and Abraham, what can you learn about their relationship?

Abraham had no problem talking with God and even expressing his concerns when he didn't understand how God would accomplish something. He knew Him as the Most High God, his Lord and Master, Creator of heaven and earth. He knew Him as God Almighty—nothing was or is too difficult for Him.

Verses 23-27

What event ends chapter 17? Was Abraham obedient to keep his part of the covenant? When? How soon after God spoke to him?

Abraham was circumcised that very day and had all of the men of his household circumcised as well, including every male eight days and older. Ishmael was thirteen years old, and Abraham was ninety-nine years old.

He was immediately obedient to what God had told him to do.

Give your group time to discuss any application from this chapter.

⁷ *New American Standard Bible: 1995 update*, marginal note (Genesis 17:19) (LaHabra, CA: The Lockman Foundation, 1995).

GENESIS 18

What are verses 1-19 about?

The Lord appeared to Abraham again by the oaks of Mamre in Hebron.

Abraham was still living in Hebron where he had moved in Genesis 13:18.

How did the Lord appear to Abraham this time?

He was one of three men.

In verse 13, during Abraham's conversation with the men, it was the Lord who asked Abraham why Sarah laughed.

Then in verses 16-17, as Abraham walked with the men to send them off, the Lord again spoke.

What did the Lord tell Abraham in verses 9-10?

At that time the next year, Sarah would have a son. Relate this timing to Genesis 17:21.

Genesis 17 and 18 were very close in time.

What was Sarah's reaction?

She laughed when she heard this, because she was old and past childbearing and Abraham was old.

What was the Lord's reasoning in verse 14?

"Is anything too difficult / hard for the Lord?"

Give your group time to discuss relevant points of Abraham's life up to this point and how it all relates to them.

Abraham was seventy-five years old when he left Haran for Canaan (12:4). At that time, he had already been given God's promise of descendants. At this point he was ninety-nine and had been waiting for twenty-four years.

What did Abraham know by this point, according to Romans 4:18-21?

Even though he knew that there was no physical way that Sarah and he could produce a child, he believed what the Lord told him. He wasn't weak in faith.

He was fully assured / convinced that what God promised, He was able to perform.

He came to understand that nothing was too difficult / hard for the Lord.

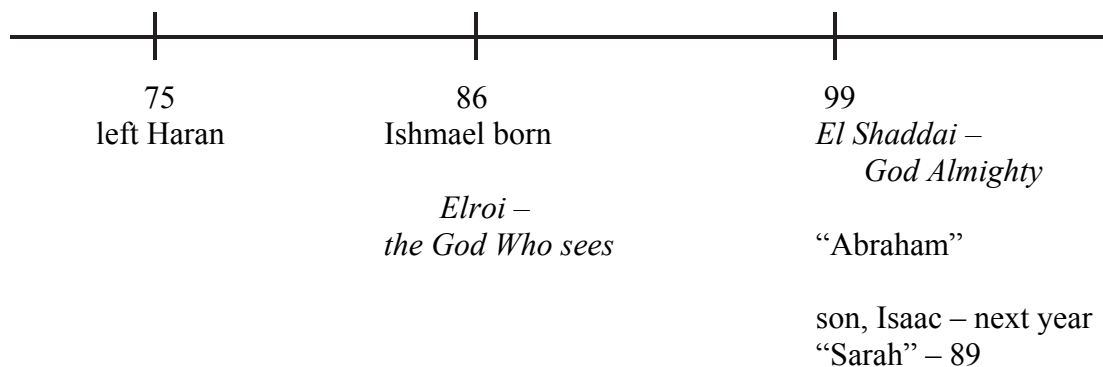
Give time for your group to discuss how well they know the Lord as God Almighty.

Lead your discussion back to Genesis 18.

You might end by asking what verses 16-19 are about.

This shows the relationship between the Lord and Abraham.

God didn't hide from Abraham what He was going to do, because in him all nations of the earth will be blessed. God chose him so that he could command all those nations who would come from him to do right according to the Lord's ways.



Is anything too difficult / hard for the LORD?

**BECOMING A FRIEND OF THE FAITHFUL GOD: A STUDY ON ABRAHAM
LEADER GUIDE
Lesson 4**

Lesson emphasis:

- Genesis 18:16–19:38
- Lot
- Homosexuality

REVIEW

To begin this discussion, you can ask what your group remembers from Genesis 11–18. As you review, you might also ask what Genesis 11–18 says about Lot.

Use the At A Glance chart and maps as a visual aid for this part of your discussion.

Genesis 11:27-32 Abram and family left Ur and settled in Haran

Lot's father, Abraham's brother, Haran died in Ur.

Genesis 12 Abram, Sarai, Lot—Ur to Canaan, Abram built altars, then to Egypt

Lot went with Abram to Haran and then on to Canaan.

Genesis 13 In Canaan, Abram and Lot separated

Lot had great possessions like Abram—flocks, herds, and tents. When he and Abram separated, Lot chose the valley of the Jordan. At that time, it was like the garden of the Lord, well watered everywhere. Then he settled in the city of Sodom where the men were wicked and sinners.

Genesis 14 Abram rescued Lot, Melchizedek, God Most High

Lot was taken captive by the kings warring with the king of Sodom and his allies. Abram defeated the kings, but his aim was to rescue Lot.

Genesis 15 Lord made a covenant with Abram

Genesis 16 Ishmael was born when Abram was 86, God who sees

Genesis 17 “Abraham,” circumcision—sign of covenant, Isaac promised at 99

Genesis 18 3 men (Lord) visited Abraham, next year a son, Judge of all earth

GENESIS 18:16-33

What happened in these verses?

The Lord told Abraham what His plan was concerning Sodom and Gomorrah and why. The sin of Sodom and Gomorrah was exceedingly grave.

An outcry had come to Him, and He was going down to see.

How does this relate to Genesis 11:6-9?

Tell your group to use the chart from Day Four in the lesson as a visual aid for this.

A similar statement was made that the Lord “came down” to see about an unrighteous situation.

God is all-knowing—omniscient.

He didn’t have to come down from heaven to earth to see if something were true.

But in these two instances, He did, and both resulted in judgment.

The tower of Babel and the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah are both widely known even today; both are examples of God as the Sovereign Ruler over all.

How did Abraham refer to God in verse 25? Why?

The Judge of all the earth

Abraham knew that God would not slay the righteous with the wicked because He is the One Who deals justly.

So he asked God to spare the city of Sodom if there were fifty righteous within it.

As Abraham continued, God agreed to Abraham’s requests, ending with only 10 righteous in the city.

The two men (angels) had left the Lord speaking with Abraham and had headed toward Sodom to destroy it. Surely Abraham’s request that the city be spared showed his concern for his nephew Lot.

GENESIS 19

What are the main events of verses 1-11?

The two angels, in the form of men, went to Sodom.

Lot urged them to stay at his house for the night.

The men of Sodom tried to take those two so they could have sexual relations with them.

Lot tried to protect them and offered his two virgin daughters instead.

Lot was threatened by the city men.

The angels struck the men blind at Lot's door.

Ask what your group learned about Lot from 2 Peter 2:7-8.

Lot is described here as a righteous man.

Relate this to how Abraham was counted righteous before God.

He believed in the Lord (Gen. 15:6).

2 Peter 2 does not say when Lot became a righteous man, only that he was at some point while living in Sodom. It does not say that he was righteous before living in Sodom.

As a righteous man, he was oppressed / distressed by the sensual conduct of the unprincipled / wicked men around him. While living among them, he felt his righteous soul tormented day after day with their lawless deeds.

NOTE: There is a caution that needs to be stated here. Don't let speculation arrive at a conclusion that Lot was a picture of a "carnal Christian" who was totally self-centered. This is contradictory to the clear teaching of salvation in the New Testament. (You would also need to check out the meaning of "carnal," King James Version, in 1 Corinthians 1–3, describing the Corinthian believers.)

Lot and Abraham both made some bad choices after being called righteous men, but most of what the Scripture says about them is not about their sin.

Lead your discussion back to Genesis 19:12-26.

What did the two men/angels tell Lot, and how did he respond?

They told him that they were going to destroy Sodom and that he was to warn his family.

Lot next warned his future sons-in-law of the coming judgment upon their city but to them he appeared to be jesting. The next morning when it was time to leave, Lot hesitated so that the angels led him out of the city with his wife and two daughters.

They were told to escape and not to look behind them. Lot's wife, however, looked behind her and turned into a pillar of salt. It could be that this looking was a lingering-and-looking behind the others so that she was caught in the rain of brimstone and fire while they made it to safety.

Lot was afraid that they might not be able to make it to the mountains before the judgment started, since they were in the valley, so he asked to be able to go to the town now called Zoar. His request was granted. God's destruction of Sodom was so complete that all the cities around it were destroyed, the entire valley, all the inhabitants of the cities, and what grew on the ground. Zoar was spared.

Lesson 4, Chapters 18:16–19:38

At this point, you can ask your group what they learned from the other Bible passages in the lesson about Sodom.

Have them use the chart “What the Bible Says about Sodom” as a visual aid.

Deuteronomy says that God overthrew the cities in His anger and wrath.

Jeremiah says that no man will live there.

Lamentations says it was overthrown in a moment.

Zephaniah says Moab will be like Sodom—nettles, salt pits, perpetual desolation.

Jude says that Sodom and Gomorrah are examples in undergoing the punishment of eternal fire because they indulged in gross immorality and went after strange flesh.

Isaiah says they displayed their sin and didn’t conceal it.

Jeremiah lists some of the sins as adultery, falsehood, evildoers, wickedness.

Ezekiel lists arrogance, not helping needy, haughty.

Jesus said in Matthew that if the miracles done in Capernaum had been done in Sodom, it would have remained.

Ask your group what they learned from their study of what the Bible says about homosexuality.

NOTE: As you discuss this, be aware that one or more of your group might have a child or relative, co-worker, acquaintance, or perhaps the child of a friend who is a homosexual, or may even be converted or practicing homosexuals themselves.

Be sure you question your group and let them discuss what God says concerning homosexuality. It is important that they leave the discussion understanding for themselves what God’s Word says.

Leviticus 18:22; 20:13

It’s a clear command from God that a man is not to lie with a male as one lies with a female. It is an abomination, a detestable act, and punishable by death.

Judges 19–20

This is another account of homosexuality with similar events to Genesis.

Again women were offered to the men outside. This time a woman was given to them so that they raped and abused her all night, and she was dead the next morning.

Judges 20 gives the account of how all of Israel came against this.

What does the New Testament say about those who practice homosexuality?

Romans 1:18-32

God’s wrath is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men.

Men are without excuse before God.

They dishonored their own bodies, because they exchanged the truth of God for a lie, worshipping themselves instead of God.

There is a downward spiral listed in these verses. Part of that is degrading passions.

Women exchange the natural function / relations for that which is unnatural / contrary to nature. Men abandon the natural function / relationships of the woman and burn in their desire toward one another, committing indecent / shameless acts with other men.

Those who practice these things are worthy of death.

They not only practice these things, but also give hearty approval to others who practice the same sins.

1 Corinthians 6:9-11

This clearly states that those who practice this sin have no inheritance in the kingdom of God. In other words, they have never been saved. They are the unrighteous.

But God saves people out of homosexuality.

Some of the Corinthian believers had, in the past, practiced such sins. God had washed them, sanctified them, and justified them in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and in the Spirit of God. He saved them.

Relate this to what happens in the New Covenant.

God puts His Spirit within to cause believers to walk in His statutes and keep His ordinances. God saves people from continuing in their sins.

All are born sinners, and God is the only One who can cure sin.

So, can a person be a practicing homosexual and be a true child of God?

No, not according to the Word of God

How are believers to treat homosexuals?

Like any other sinner

Lead your discussion back to Genesis 19.

What are verses 27-29 about?

Early in the morning Abraham, from the oaks of Mamre at Hebron, looked toward the valley and saw the smoke of God's judgment ascending.

He knew then that there had not been even ten righteous people in the city of Sodom.

But God remembered Abraham and sent Lot out. Relate this to Genesis 18:23-25. God is the Judge of all the earth who is just and did not slay / sweep away the righteous with the wicked.

Verses 30-38

What are these verses about?

Use the family tree of Lot and a map for visual aids.

Lot was afraid to stay in Zoar, so he went to the mountains and stayed in a cave with his two daughters.

His daughters thought that there was not a man on earth to father children by them.

So they made Lot so drunk on two different occasions so that he didn't know what they did. They seduced him to father a son by each of them.

Their sons were Moab and Ben-ammi.

From these came the Moabites and the Ammonites who lived in what is today Jordan. Both are mentioned quite frequently in the Old Testament.

**BECOMING A FRIEND OF THE FAITHFUL GOD: A STUDY ON ABRAHAM
LEADER GUIDE
Lesson 5**

Lesson emphasis:

- Genesis 20 and 21

REVIEW

Ask your group what they remember as the main events of Genesis 11:27 through chapter 19. If they can't remember, then direct them to look at their At A Glance charts.

The maps can also be helpful visual aids for this discussion.

Genesis 11:27-32	Abram and family left Ur and settled in Haran
Genesis 12	Abram, Sarai, Lot—Ur to Canaan, Abram built altars, then to Egypt
Genesis 13	In Canaan, Abram and Lot separated
Genesis 14	Abram rescued Lot, Melchizedek, God Most High
Genesis 15	Lord made a covenant with Abram
Genesis 16	Ishmael was born when Abram was 86, God who sees

What does Genesis 16:1-16 say about Hagar and Ishmael?

Direct your group to look at their charts on Day Four of the lesson.

Sarai gave her Egyptian maid, Hagar, to Abram as his wife, so that she might have an heir through Hagar. Hagar conceived a child by Abram and then despised (ESV—looked on with contempt) Sarai. Sarai treated Hagar harshly, and Hagar fled into the wilderness toward Egypt.

God spoke to Hagar there, telling her to return and submit to Sarai. He told her that He would greatly multiply her descendants / offspring so that they would be too many to count. She would bear a son and call his name Ishmael, meaning, “God hears.”⁸ He would be a wild donkey of a man, against everyone, and live to the east of all his brothers.

Hagar named that place after the God who sees (ESV—a God of seeing)—Elroi. She bore Abram a son when he was eighty-six years old.

What is the main theme or event of Genesis 17?

Abraham, circumcision—sign of covenant, Isaac promised at 99

⁸ *New American Standard Bible: 1995 update*, marginal note (Genesis 16:11) (LaHabra, CA: The Lockman Foundation, 1995).

Using the same chart from Day Four as a visual aid here, ask what Genesis 17:18-26 says about Ishmael.

When Abraham was ninety-nine, he suggested to God that Ishmael might live before Him, as his heir. God said a very clear, “No.” God’s everlasting covenant would be established with Isaac. Sarah was to bear Isaac at the same time the next year.

God said of Ishmael that He would bless him, make him fruitful, and multiply him exceedingly. He would be the father of twelve princes and a great nation.

That same day Abraham circumcised Ishmael at the age of thirteen as well as every male among his household as God commanded him.

What are the themes or main events of Genesis 18-19?

Genesis 18	3 men (Lord) visited Abraham, next year a son, Judge of all earth
Genesis 19	God destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah, Lot spared, sons born

GENESIS 20

With that background, ask your group what this chapter is about.

Abimelech took Sarah in Gerar

Direct them to look at the maps as visual aids for this part of your discussion.

What is the progression of events?

Abraham and Sarah went to Gerar. Abraham told the king of Gerar that Sarah was his sister, and she agreed. Although Sarah was eighty-nine years old at this time, the king took her. Relate this to the trip to Egypt in Genesis 12.

God intervened in a dream to Abimelech the king and told him that he was a dead man unless he restored Sarah to her husband Abraham. Abimelech reminded God that he had done this in integrity of heart and innocence. God had kept him from touching Sarah and thereby sinning against Him.

Consider the timing of this event. Why it is so important that God included in this account that Abimelech did not touch Sarah—had not come near her?

This was sometime shortly after God’s promise that Sarah would have a son the next year. Perhaps Satan was trying to stop the birth of a son by Abraham.

But God was the one in charge, and He still is today—even in the difficult situations of life and in places where there seems to be no fear of Him. Nothing can thwart His plan.

God told Abimelech to restore / return Sarah to Abraham, and He called Abraham a prophet. God had closed the wombs of Abimelech's entire household during this time.

After calling Abraham into account for his sin of deception, Abimelech's household was healed by God in answer to Abraham's prayer. Abraham was not perfect, but he was a righteous man who committed a sin. Although he believed in God and His promises, he feared for his life and deceived Abimelech for protection.

Give time for your group to discuss how the principles of this chapter can be applied to their lives.

GENESIS 21

What is this chapter about?

God did what He promised because nothing is too difficult / hard for Him. Isaac was born.

Verses 1-7

What are the main events?

Sarah bore a son to Abraham at the appointed time which God had spoken. God's promises do come to pass, maybe not always in man's timing, but always in His. Relate this to Genesis 17:21; 18:10, 14.

Abraham was one hundred years old when Isaac was born, and Sarah was ninety years old. He circumcised Isaac when he was eight days old, ensuring that the sign of the covenant was on Isaac.

How do Hebrews 11 and Romans 4 relate to Isaac's birth?

Tell your group to look at their charts for Day Two and Three in the lesson.

Hebrews 11:11-12

By faith Sarah received ability to conceive because she considered Him faithful Who had promised. So at some point prior to her conceiving Isaac, Sarah believed in God, and it was reckoned to her as righteousness.

Romans 4:13-25

God made the promise to Abraham and his descendants / offspring that he would be the heir of the world. It was based on faith.

Verse 17 says Abraham believed God who gives life to the dead and calls into being that which does not exist. Compare with verse 19, which says that Abraham's body was as good as dead and Sarah's womb was dead. Hebrews 11:11-12 also says that he was as good as dead with respect to having a child.

Abraham believed that God was able to perform what He had promised. He had promised a son to Abraham and Sarah, and Abraham was fully assured / convinced that God could perform it. It states here that Abraham's faith was unwavering, growing strong. Even when he considered his own body's condition—as good as dead—and the deadness of Sarah's womb, his faith was not weak.

God still brings life out of death. God is the Everlasting God Almighty; nothing is impossible for Him. He raised Jesus from the dead.

Lead your discussion back to Genesis 21:8-21. What's the next event in this chapter?

Abraham made a great feast the day Isaac was weaned.

Sarah saw Ishmael, then possibly about sixteen years old, mocking Isaac. She told Abraham to drive out this maid and her son, for Ishmael would not be an heir with her son Isaac. This caused distress / displeasure for Abraham, because Ishmael too was his son. God told him not to be distressed / displeased because He would make a nation of Ishmael since he was Abraham's descendant. But God also told him to listen to Sarah.

Abraham sent Hagar and Ishmael away, and they wandered about in the wilderness of Beersheba.

NOTE: Some say that it was a common practice of the time for a slave concubine and her children born to their master to be given their freedom if that master had an heir from his wife. Also, after the death of the master, they could no longer be held in bondage.

What happened when Hagar was in the wilderness?

Previously when Hagar had fled from Sarai, the angel of the Lord came to her, and God told her that He would greatly multiply her descendants. He also told her she would bear a son, Ishmael, because the Lord had given heed to her affliction. She recognized God as Elroi, the God who sees / a God of seeing.

The angel of the Lord again called to Hagar in the wilderness. He told her not to fear; He would make a great nation of the lad. Then He opened her eyes to see a well.

Ishmael grew and lived in the wilderness of Paran. He became an archer. Hagar took an Egyptian wife for him. Relate this to Genesis 16:1; Hagar was Egyptian.

How does Galatians 4:21-31 add to these events in Genesis 21?

Paul, inspired by the Holy Spirit of God, said that Hagar and Sarah were representative of the two covenants: the Law, the Old Covenant; and salvation, the New Covenant.

Although these events really happened as recorded in Genesis, they are shown in another light by a New Testament author.

NOTE: Scripture interprets Scripture. Only God, in His Word, has assigned any secondary meanings to Scriptures. Too many times people get carried away trying to “spiritualize” events in the Old Testament. The truths about who God is and how He deals with people in this course on Abraham are examples of the richness of the Old Testament taken literally. Your group might need to be cautioned in this area.

Ask what your group learned from Galatians 4.

You can use the chart at the end of this lesson’s guide as a visual aid for this.

Abraham had two sons, one by the bondwoman / slave woman—Hagar, and one by the free woman—Sarah.

The son by the bondwoman / slave woman was born according to the flesh. It had been Sarai’s idea to give Hagar to Abram to produce an heir. This was indeed an act of the flesh—planned by the flesh and brought about by the flesh.

The son of the free woman was born through the promise. Relate this to what has already been discussed from Romans 4 and Hebrews 11. It was only by God that Isaac was born.

In this allegory, these two women represent two covenants, one from Mount Sinai, the Old Covenant of the Law. Hagar is representative of the Law and her children are slaves in bondage to the Law. They are those who teach or believe that righteousness only comes by keeping the Law through works of the flesh.

You might ask your group if they know of examples of this today.

People today are in bondage to legalistic sets of “Dos and Don’ts.” Some think, and are even taught, that to be holy or righteous they have to be doing certain things thought up by men and not doing another list of things.

Verse 25 says that this corresponds to the present Jerusalem in slavery with her children. At the time Paul wrote Galatians, there was much legalism in Jerusalem and in Judaism in other places.

The son of the bondwoman / slave woman will not be an heir with the son of the free woman.

Sarah, the free woman, is representative of the New Covenant of salvation. Her children are free—the Jerusalem above, a reference to the New Jerusalem, the Bride of Christ, which is also the Church. Believers in Jesus Christ are her children born according to the Spirit, like Isaac, children of promise.

So what does it mean to cast out the bondwoman / slave woman and her son?

Believers are to cast out the bondwoman and her son by getting rid of legalism and works of the flesh, by not being bound to keeping a set of rules, by not living a life of slavery—by being set free by the Spirit. If you know the truth, the truth will set you free.

Believe the promises of God—live by faith. Righteousness comes by faith, not works. Even from the time of Abraham righteousness has been by faith. It is still the only way to salvation.

As a result of salvation, the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, there will be righteousness because of God’s law written on hearts. It is a righteousness that comes by faith.

Live by the Spirit to cast out the bondwoman / slave woman and her son.

Lead your discussion back to the text of Genesis 21.

What happened in verses 22-34?

Abimelech came back on the scene.

Abimelech and Phicol, the commander of his army, came to Abraham. Abimelech wanted assurance from Abraham that he would not deal falsely with him or his children / descendants. Abimelech knew that God was with Abraham in all that he did. If they were going to live near one another, he wanted to be safe.

Abraham swore to Abimelech that he would treat him with kindness. He also complained about a well that had been taken from him by Abimelech’s servants. Wells were a means of survival in that dry land.

They made a covenant. Here is a covenant between men.

Abraham set seven ewe lambs by themselves and gave them to Abimelech as a witness that he had dug the well. He called the place Beersheba, because there the two of them took an oath. Abimelech returned to the land of the Philistines, and Abraham planted a tree at Beersheba and called on the name of the Lord, the Everlasting God, El Olam.

Give time for your group to discuss what they’ve learned about the Lord in this course.

How does this chapter end?

Abraham stayed a long time in the land of the Philistines.

Before 1948, the land of Israel had for a time been called Palestine. This name was probably derived from “Philistines” and given to the land of Israel by the Romans.

You can end your discussion with a short review of the main points in Genesis 20–21 and relevant application.

Cast out the bondwoman / slave woman and her son

Bondwoman / slave woman: Hagar

Son born according to flesh, not an heir

Mt. Sinai = Old Covenant, Law

Present Jerusalem

Children in slavery to law

Free woman: Sarah

Son of promise according to Spirit

New Covenant

Jerusalem above

Children of promise are free according to the Spirit

**BECOMING A FRIEND OF THE FAITHFUL GOD: A STUDY ON ABRAHAM
LEADER GUIDE
Lesson 6**

Lesson emphasis:

- Genesis 22–23; 25:1-18
- Abraham offered Isaac

REVIEW

To begin this discussion, you can ask your group how Genesis 22 begins.

After these things

Genesis 22 is after what things? Use this as an introduction to review the main events of Genesis 11:27 through chapter 21. At A Glance charts and maps are helpful visual aids for this discussion.

Genesis 11:27-32	Abram and family left Ur and settled in Haran
Genesis 12	Abram, Sarai, Lot—Ur to Canaan, Abram built altars, then to Egypt
Genesis 13	In Canaan, Abram and Lot separated
Genesis 14	Abram rescued Lot, Melchizedek, God Most High
Genesis 15	Lord made a covenant with Abram
Genesis 16	Ishmael born when Abram was 86, God who sees
Genesis 17	“Abraham,” circumcision—sign of covenant, Isaac promised at 99
Genesis 18	3 men (Lord) visited Abraham, next year a son, Judge of all earth
Genesis 19	God destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah, Lot spared, sons born
Genesis 20	Abimelech took Sarah
Genesis 21	Isaac born when Abraham was 100

Continue to use the maps as visual aids for this discussion.

GENESIS 22

What is this chapter about? What is the main event?

Abraham offered Isaac

What is the sequence of events in this chapter? What leads to and follows Abraham offering Isaac?

God tested Abraham by telling him to offer his only son Isaac, whom he loved, as a burnt offering on one of the mountains in the land of Moriah.

Ishmael was also Abraham's son; however, God made it clear in Genesis 17:18-19, that it was only with Isaac that He would establish His covenant.

Abraham obeyed God just as when God instructed him to leave Ur; he did not hesitate to obey. You might give time to discuss personal application at this point.

On the third day, Abraham left his young men saying that he and the lad would go worship and return. In Genesis 22:1 when God instructed Abraham to offer Isaac and in Hebrew 11:17, God called this a test. Abraham called it worship.

Obedience is an act of worship, of bowing to God's will.

Abraham said, knew that both he and Isaac would return to the men, because God had promised that He would establish His covenant with Isaac and his descendants.

How do Hebrews 11:8-19 and James 2:20-26 help us to understand Genesis 22?

As with other main events in Abraham's life, he offered Isaac by faith—believing God.

He believed that God is able to raise the dead. Even if he sacrificed Isaac, God would raise him because of His promise which involved Isaac.

James says that Abraham's faith was working with his works.

He believed God and did what He told him to do.

His works showed that he truly believed God, had faith.

Hebrews 11:19 says that Isaac was a type (ESV—figuratively speaking).

How was Isaac a type of God's beloved Son?

John 3:16 and other places in the Bible tell about God's love for the world so that He offered His only Son. Then He raised Him from the dead.

Lead your discussion back to the sequence of events in Genesis 22.

What does the text say about Isaac?

He was not a small child when this took place.

Isaac was old enough to carry the wood—enough wood for a burnt offering.

Compare this with Leviticus 1.

He was called a lad, which is the same word used for Ishmael in the previous chapter when he was about 16 years old.

Isaac had to have been willing to obey his father.

Isaac asked where the lamb for the burnt offering was.
And Abraham told him that God will provide.

This is another foreshadowing or picture of the Lord Jesus Christ.

After the Lord stopped Abraham from killing Isaac, He provided the ram as a sacrifice.

Ask your group what they learned about the name of the Lord associated with this event?
Direct them to their Journal on God. At this point, you might review what they've learned about God in this study.

14:18-20	God Most High, Possessor of heaven and earth
15:2	Lord (Adonai)
16:13	Elroi, the God who sees
16:11	Ishmael means, "God hears"
17:1	God Almighty (El Shaddai)
18:25	Judge of all the earth who deals justly
20:17-18	opens and closes wombs
21:33	the Everlasting God (El Olam)
22:14	The Lord will provide: Jehovah-jireh

It's not necessary to cover all of these.

What was the result of God testing Abraham in Genesis 22?

Verse 12 tells the result. Abraham feared God; he didn't even withhold his son.

In verses 16-18, what else did the Lord say?

Because he obeyed God, the Lord added to the promises He'd already made to Abraham.
His seed / offspring would possess the gate of their / his enemies—overcome.

How does this sequence of events end in verse 19?

Abraham and Isaac returned to live at Beersheba where they had been since chapter 21.

How does this chapter end? Use the Family Tree as a visual aid here.

Verses 20-24 tells the children of Abraham's brother Nahor, who married their niece Milcah. Milcah was also Lot's sister and the daughter of Haran, Abraham's and Nahor's brother who had died in Ur.

GENESIS 23

What happened in this chapter?

Sarah died, and Abraham buried her at Hebron.

When did she die?

Sarah was 127 years old when she died.
Abraham was 137 years old at that time.

He was 75 when he came to the land of Canaan, so Sarah's death took place 62 years after entering Canaan.

Isaac was born when Abraham was 100, so Isaac was 37 when Sarah died.

How did Abraham refer to himself in verse 4? Compare with Hebrews 11:8-19.

A stranger and a sojourner (ESV—sojourner and foreigner)

Hebrews 11

Verse 9 says that Abraham lived as an alien in the land of promise, Canaan.
He was looking for the city whose builder is God.

Verses 13-16 say that Abraham and Sarah were strangers and exiles on the earth, seeking a country of their own. They desired a better country, a heavenly one. God prepared a city for them. They found what they were looking for.

You might ask your group how they are living during their time on earth. Give time for application discussion.

Ask your group about anything else they want to discuss in Genesis 23 and also what 1 Peter 3 says about Sarah.

For four hundred shekels of silver, Abraham bought the cave and field of Machpelah, which faced Mamre. The field and the cave in it were deeded over to Abraham.

There he buried Sarah, and later he would be buried there, as would Isaac, Rebekah, Leah, and Jacob.

1 Peter 3:1-6

Sarah was a holy example.
She hoped in God and submitted to her husband.

GENESIS 25:1-18

What happened after Sarah died?

Abraham took another wife named Keturah.

Use the Family Tree as a visual aid as your group discusses these verses.

Abraham had six sons by Keturah.

He gave gifts to the sons of his concubines (not the first or primary wife).

Ishmael by Hagar

The six sons of Keturah

Then he sent them away from Isaac toward the east.

Abraham gave all that he had to Isaac because he was the son of promise, son of the covenant. Isaac lived in Beer-lahai-roi.

What are verses 7-11 about?

Abraham died at the age of 175 years

Isaac and Ishmael buried him in the cave of Machpelah where Sarah was buried

Abraham outlived Sarah by 38 years.

Isaac, the son of promise, was 75 when his father died.

Ishmael was approximately 89 when Abraham died.

Who are verses 12-18 about?

The generations of Ishmael

Ishmael had 12 sons, or princes.

Relate this to the promise God gave to Abraham in Genesis 17:20.

These sons settled from Havilah to Shur, east of (or before) Egypt as one goes toward Assyria.

Ishmael lived 137 years, which means that he outlived Abraham by only 48 years.

Verse 18 says that Ishmael settled “in defiance of” (literally, *fell over against*)⁹ all his “relatives,” (literally, *brothers*)¹⁰ (ESV—over against all his kinsmen). Relate this to God’s prophecy in Genesis 16:11, 12.

⁹ *New American Standard Bible*, marginal note (Gen 25:18) (LaHabra, CA: The Lockman Foundation, 1995).

¹⁰ *New American Standard Bible*, marginal note (Gen 25:18) (LaHabra, CA: The Lockman Foundation, 1995).

How was Abraham remembered by his descendants? Discuss the cross-references.

In 2 Chronicles 20 in his prayer, King Jehoshaphat of Judah reminded God of His promise to give the land of Israel to Abraham’s descendants. He referred to Abraham as, “Your friend forever” (ESV—your friend).

In Isaiah 41:8, God called Abraham His friend.

James 2:23 says that Abraham believed God, and it was reckoned / counted to him as righteousness, and Abraham was called the friend of God.

Give time for application discussion.

You might also ask your group what they learned from Abraham’s life as lessons for their own lives.

ABRAHAM'S FAMILY TREE

