

Altared

Scripture and Background Information for October 8-14.

To prepare for your group discussion each week, group members should use the **Community Group Discussion Guide** to complete the **GOD'S WORDS** and **MY WORDS** columns using the scripture below.

Abraham is known as one of the fathers of our faith, but his faith was not perfect. At moments, he believed in God wholeheartedly and was willing to be incredibly obedient to God while, in others, he let fear and selfishness drive his actions. In this series, we will study the life of Abraham, all the successes and failures, to see how we may relate to his relationship with God. Ultimately, we hope to learn how each of us can direct the devotion of our lives to God, so that we allow Him to determine the destination of our journeys.

Background for Genesis 17:1-8:

In Genesis 16 Abram and his wife Sarai took the promises of God into their own hands. Instead of trusting that the Lord would provide a child for them through their own marriage, they schemed to have children through one of Sarai's maidservants, Hagar. However, after Hagar conceived, their situation became volatile. Sarai did not treat Hagar nor her child, Ishmael, well which caused her to run away. Hagar only returned after God told her to and promised to be with her and Ishmael. But even though Abram had a son and an heir in his household it was not the son that God had promised to Abram.

So about 13 years later, in our passage for today, we see God reiterate His promise to multiply Abram's descendants. Despite Abram's past failures and the circumstances, he has faced, God proves to still be faithful to him. The promises are still intact and to symbolize that God is still going to come through for him, God gives him a new name. Abram is now to be called Abraham which means he is, "a father of many nations," (Genesis 17:4-5). This means that he will still have a son of promise even though he tried to achieve these promises on his own. This son will still become many descendants of Abraham, they will still inherit the land, and they will still be blessed by God and be a blessing to the world.

Insights and questions to engage with the text:

1. What does God's reiteration of the promise to Abraham show us about His character?
2. Even though he failed many times, God is proving to be faithful to Abraham. In what ways have you seen God prove his faithfulness to you in your life? What have been some moments in your life when you have found it hard to trust in God's faithfulness to you?
3. What can you do to consistently remind yourself of God's faithfulness in your life? How can we encourage each other to believe that the Lord is faithful to us every day?

*Check back in with your groups about the rhythm of silence and solitude. Ask how their times in silence and solitude have been and what God has been showing them in those moments.