Genesis Bible Study
Part 2, Chapters 12-36

Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob

Bible Studies
by Kathleen Dalton
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This book has been put together for you to use either

- In your personal devotional Bible Study time.
  or
- For your Bible Study Discussion Group.

It is divided into several lessons, typically covering one Bible chapter per lesson.

At the beginning of each lesson I have included a page called “Questions For You to Answer” I suggest digging into these questions before you read my comments on the passage. If you are studying as a group, I suggest making sure each member of your group has a copy of the next week’s questions in advance so that they can prepare if they want to. Preparation for a Bible Study is one way to establish the habit of getting into the Word every day.

An online version of this study is available for free download at:
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Genesis Bible Study  
Part 2, Chapters 12-36  
Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob  

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Supplement: Quiz for Chapters 12-36  

A suggestion for your next Bible Study
Introduction
Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob

You’ve probably heard and loved many of the stories in this second part of Genesis:

Abraham is called to forsake all and move to the Promised Land, becoming the first Jew.

Lot, Abraham’s nephew, chooses to live in “sin city”, and when he and his family have to run away because God is going to destroy that city, Lot’s wife turns back to look at the home she is leaving, and is turned into a pillar of salt.

Abraham and Sarah jump ahead of God’s will and give birth to a son, Ishmael, who will have to eventually leave their family, causing great pain to Abraham.

Abraham and Sarah miraculously have a child, Isaac, in their old age, the Son of Promise.

Abraham offers his precious son on an altar, at God’s suggestion.

Isaac marries a woman he had never seen before his wedding night.

Twins born to Isaac and Rebekah fight their whole lives with one another.

Jacob cheats his father and his brother, encouraged to do so by his mother.

Jacob is tricked into marrying the wrong sister!

Rachel cannot have children, and gives her handmaid to Jacob as a surrogate. (Common problem in this family.)

Jacob has twelve sons, who become the twelve tribes of Israel. It sounds impressive until you read further and realize you would have to look hard to find a more dysfunctional family anywhere!
As you study your way through Genesis Part 2, I think you'll be struck, as I was, at what a total mess this chosen family was. And perhaps you'll come to the same conclusion I have: all families are dysfunctional in more ways than we know. 😊

Genesis Part 2 is full of hope and a little humor for all of us dysfunctionals! That’s why I’ve chosen the following Memory Verse for this study:

**Memory verse for this study:**

> “Oh, taste and see that the LORD is good; blessed is the man who trusts in Him.” (Psalms 34:8)

Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and all the rest of their very big, very human family had to learn, just like we do, that the LORD is to be trusted above all others, and especially above themselves.
Lesson 1
Questions for you to Answer

Genesis 12&13

Memory verse for this study:

“Oh, taste and see that the LORD is good; blessed is the man who trusts in Him.” (Psalms 34:8)

1. (12:1) Why do you think it was necessary for Abram to leave everything in order to do what God wanted him to do?

2. (12:2-3) What are the different parts of this covenant God makes with Abram? Does Abram have to do anything to receive these promises?
   a.
   b.
   c.
   d.
   e.
   f.
   g.

3. (12:4-5) Who else went with Abram? Because they went, too, does that indicate faith in God on their part?
4. (12:6-7) What is one more promise God gives Abram as he arrives at the tree of Moreh?

5. (12:8-9) Why does Abram build an altar everywhere he goes? What does this tell us about Abram?


7. (13:1-7) What problem did Abram face as he returned to the Negev?

8. (13:8-13) Why did Abram let Lot choose? Hadn’t the land been given to Abram? Wasn’t he a person with more authority and more rights than Lot?

9. (13:14-18) Lot chose the land which held the most promise. It was beautiful, well-watered, like a garden. Abram was left with the hilly land of Canaan which could only prosper if God brought rain and controlled disaster. Why was God pleased with Abram?

10. When you are faced with choices in life, you feel you have a responsibility to choose the smartest, safest, most promising way. You feel that God expects you to. But does He? Are there times when He expects you to choose something that doesn’t look smart, or might not be safe or promising?
Lesson 1
Genesis 12 & 13

1. (12:1) Why do you think it was necessary for Abram to leave everything in order to do what God wanted him to do?

Well, for one thing, it looks like God wanted Abram to start something new. It wasn’t going to be an extension of what Abram’s father or Abram’s relatives had already done. It was going to be a brand new thing. The only way to start such a brand new thing would be to cut ties with the past and with the people of the past, and leave himself open to new ideas, new ways of doing things, and direct communication from God Himself. He probably also was going to be cutting ties with past sins and old ways of going about life. This was going to be doing things in the ways of God.

The other obvious answer to this question is that God asked Abram to leave everything behind, so, even if Abram didn’t fully understand it, that is what he had to do.

I am reminded of a passage in the New Testament, Luke 14:25-33. In essence, Jesus was telling all His followers that they would have to meet the same standard Abram was told to meet: “So likewise, whoever of you does not forsake all that he has cannot be my disciple” (Luke 14:33). We have a lot more in common with Abram than we might have thought.

2. (12:2-3) What are the different parts of this covenant God made with Abram? Did Abram have to do anything to receive these promises?

   a. You will be a great nation.
   b. I will bless you.
   c. I will make your name great.
   d. You will be a blessing to others.
   e. I will bless those who bless you.
   f. I will curse those who curse you.
   g. All families of the earth (for the rest of time) will be blessed in your blessing.
Did Abram have to do anything to receive these promises? In other words, was there an “if”? Yes. He had to believe God (faith) and leave all behind (obey). Because he believed God (faith), he went in the direction God pointed (obey). Abram’s “leaving” was inevitable because he had true faith. If Abram hadn’t left all and followed God’s orders, it would have been proof he never had faith in the first place.

Let’s look at God’s covenants so far with mankind, to see what might be different about this new covenant with Abram:

1. **Covenant with Adam & his descendents.**
   - Made in the image of God.
   - Given rule over all the earth.
   - Told to be fruitful & fill the earth.
   - Told to subdue the earth, manage it well.
   - Given eternal life in the garden. After they sinned, they were promised eternal life if they trusted in God’s promises.
   - Limited to a vegetarian diet.
   - They were not to kill.

2. **Covenant with Noah & his descendents.**
   - They were given permission to eat animal meat.
   - God promised He would never destroy earth with a flood again/rainbow.
   - From that point on, animals would fear men.
   - They were commanded not to eat live animals…no blood.
   - Human government was instituted.
   - The punishment for murder of another human was to be death.

3. **Covenant with Abram & his descendents.**
   - He was told to leave his country and his father.
   - God would make him a great nation.
   - God would bless him.
   - God would make his name great.
   - God would curse those who cursed him.
   - All people on earth, through all time, would be blessed through them/him.
   - Land was given to him to pass on to offspring.

Are the covenants with Adam or Noah set aside because of this new covenant with Abram? No. They are now all three in place. But the Abrahamic covenant refers specifically to Abram’s descendants from this point on. One small portion of the Abrahamic covenant also extends to all people of the world – they would all be blessed through him.
What is different about the Abrahamic covenant? It is directed to a “nation”, not just to the total population of the world. This covenant takes place after the Tower of Babel (Genesis 11), and there are many different nations now. God has a plan to reach the whole world by blessing and communicating with one nation in particular. Why? What has changed that He must do this?

Remember, at this point the whole world is not speaking the same language any more. Each separate nation is finding it very difficult to communicate with the other nations.

So God’s plan was perfect for a world full of people groups which could not speak each other’s languages any more. That which could not be easily communicated through words would now be communicated through pictures. The Jewish people would be asked to live a certain way and practice certain things so that they could be a non-verbal picture, a drama, to the rest of the world of what God was like, and what it would take to be in a right relationship with Him.

For instance: when animals were offered on the altar of sacrifice, as part of the Jewish sacrificial system, the world could see:

- The result of sin was always death.
- A perfect sacrifice had to die in order to make the results of sin go away.
- The One, True God of the Jews could not be appeased by personal acts of righteousness – they would never be enough to get rid of sin forever.
- To be right with the One, True God, a person had to have faith in God. “Faith” meant believing that the One, True God would somehow provide a way for the sinner to be cleaned from his sins, and thus be perfect enough to know God and be right with Him forever.

How was this going to work? How could the world see all these “pictures” which the Jewish people would live out with their lives? The One, True God gave a piece of land to the Jewish people – to Abram – which would, over the next 4,000+ years, turn out to be in the middle of the traffic pattern of the world. Nations from the north would have to pass through Israel to go south. Nations from the south would have to pass through Israel to go north. Nations from the east would have to pass through Israel to go west. Nations from the west would have to pass through Israel to go east.

As the world passed through this land given to the Jews, they would see how the Jewish people lived and how they worshipped the One, True God. They would learn from the living drama of Jewish lives what God was all about and how to be right with Him….and they could and would take those stories back to their countries, no matter how far away they were, and no matter what different languages they spoke. Pictures are cross-cultural!
3. (12:4-5) Who else went with Abram? Because they went, too, does that indicate faith in God on their part?

Here are the ones who were living in Haran at the time God called Abram to a new life: (Only Abram’s father did not go with him.)

- Terah, Abram’s Dad
- Abram
- Sarai, Abram’s wife
- Lot, Abram’s nephew,
- Abram’s servants

Because they went with Abram, does that indicate they also had faith in the One, True God? We don’t know about all of them. But as we read through the rest of Genesis, we find out that Abram had genuine faith, and Sarai had genuine faith, and at least one of the servants of Abram had faith.

4. (12:6-7) What was one more promise God gave Abram as he arrived at the tree of Moreh?

The One, True God promised that not only would the land be given to Abram, but it would also be passed down to his descendants. It would always belong to Abram’s descendants whether Abram was alive or not.

5. (12:8-9) Why did Abram build an altar everywhere he went? What does this tell us about Abram?

Abram was constantly reaffirming his faith in the One, True God. He knew that none of this would come to pass without God bringing making it happen. His sacrifices acknowledged his own need for forgiveness of sins – and that he was believing the One, True God would take care of those sins once and for all someday. Abram had faith. He believed God would do what He said He would do. “He did not waver at the promise of God, but was strengthened in faith, giving glory to God, and being fully convinced that what He had promised He was able also to perform.” Romans 4:20&21

I think Abram was trying to survive the best way he knew how. He had a lot to learn about trusting God to take care of him and his family. This was one of those old practices his family had taken part in for generations. Abram needed to learn that the LORD could handle any situation. He needed to learn to trust Him as he began to break away from the old ways of doing things.

7. (13:1-7) What problem did Abram face as he returned to the Negev?

Abram had been blessed already. His flocks and herds and the people necessary to care for it all had greatly increased. Lot had been blessed, too. There was friction between the people of Abraham and the people of Lot because they were getting too big for their blessings! This little family group had started out so well together as they left Haran, but now they were growing apart.

One reason for that spreading gap might have been because Abraham continued to trust God and offer Him sacrifices, but Lot did not. Abraham was continuing in the way of faith. Lot was going a different direction. He was increasingly attracted to the things of this world, and was beginning to use the world’s ways more and more, and God’s ways less and less.

8. (13:8-13) Why did Abram let Lot choose? Hadn’t the land been given to Abram? Wasn’t he a person with more authority and more rights than Lot?

Yes, Abram was the patriarch – the older, the wiser, and the one in charge. He let Lot make the choice, I think, because he knew that peace in the family was essential to the future of his little group. And also, he knew that God’s promise to bless him was not based on his own ability, but on God’s. So, he decided to believe God could bless him even if he allowed Lot to choose the best land for himself.

9. (13:14-18) Lot chose the land which held the most promise. The land Lot chose was beautiful and well-watered, like a garden. Abram was left with the hilly land of Canaan which could only prosper if God brought rain and controlled disaster. Was this the smartest and wisest choice? Did this choice offer the best chance at prosperity? And yet, God was pleased with what Abram did. Why was God pleased with Abram?
God knew Abram had made a faith choice. The only way Abram would survive and prosper was if God blessed him. Abram’s own ability was not going to be enough in this harsh and forbidding land. God was very pleased with Abram’s faith. “Without faith it is impossible to please God.” Hebrews 11:6

10. When you are faced with choices in life, you feel you have a responsibility to choose the smartest, safest, most promising way. You feel that God expects you to. But does He? Are there times when He expects you to choose something that doesn’t look smart, or might not be safe or promising?
Lesson 2  
Questions for you to Answer  

Genesis 14

Memory verse for this study:

“Oh, taste and see that the LORD is good; blessed is the man who trusts in Him.” (Psalms 34:8)

1. (:1-12) Who’s who, and who was making war with who?

2. (:12) Who got caught up in the crossfire of this political situation?

3. (:13) Abram had not chosen to live in Sodom or Gomorrah or any of the other cities being attacked and destroyed in this chapter. Why did he have to get involved?

4. (:14-16) What did Abram do, and was he successful?

5. (:17) Which king showed up to thank Abram for what he had done?

6. (:18) Who was Melchizidek, King of Salem? Have we seen him before?

8. (21-24) What did the King of Sodom want to give Abram in thanks for what he had done? Why did Abram refuse?

9. Abram shows us what it takes to survive in the world scene...in other words, what kind of behavior God blesses as we deal with political enemies or friends. What can you learn from this chapter about how to walk by faith through political upheaval?
Lesson 2
Genesis 14

What is “politics”?

It’s governments, laws, armies, kings, presidents, governors, wars, nations.

Groups of people band together to make life work for themselves, and part of that banding together includes protecting themselves from other groups of people who would like to have the blessings of life for themselves, even if they have to take it away from someone else. Politics is simply the way any group of people figures out how to live together, under one set of laws and protections, in order to be safe, happy and prosperous.

It’s an incongruity, but in order to be safe, happy and prosperous, people have to give up a little of what they value. They give up some independence, they work together, and they protect themselves from the other sinful people in the world. Sometimes they get caught in the crossfire of two groups of people fighting for what they want. That’s politics.

This is nothing new. It’s a part of our world today, and it was a part of Abram’s world, too. In today’s chapter, both Lot and Abram get caught in the crossfire of politics.

1. (:1-12) Who’s who, and who was making war with who?

The 4 kings to the left have conquered the 5 kings below and have demanded they serve them and pay tribute to them for 12 years. In the 13th year the 5 kings below rebel and try to win their freedom.

They end up in a battle in the Valley of Sidim, and the 5 kings end up defeated. Those who don’t die in the battle run to the mountains, and the 4 kings go to the towns of Sodom and Gomorrah and take all the people as slaves and all their goods.

- Amraphel, King of Shinar
- Arioch, King of Ellasar
- Cherdolaomer, King of Elam
- Tidal, King of nations

- Bera, King of Sodom
- Birsha, King of Gomorrah
- Shinab, King of Admah
- Shemeber, King of Zeboiim
- (no name), King of Bela (Zoar)
2. (12) Who got caught up in the crossfire of this political situation?

Because Lot, Abram's nephew, lived in Sodom, both Lot and Abram were affected by the politics (war) of the region.

3. (13) Abram had not chosen to live in Sodom or Gomorrah or any of the other cities being attacked and destroyed in this chapter. Why did he have to get involved?

Abram was not attacked, nor was he a part of either coalition of kings, but he sort of had no choice but to try to rescue his nephew. Family ties were still strong, even when one member of the family (Lot) hadn't been too fair with another member of the family (Abram). (Genesis 13:8)

4. (14-16) What did Abram do, and was he successful?

He organized his trained men. Since he had men already trained for battle, we can conclude that Abram had fought his share of wars. He attacked the 4 kings who had captured Lot and his family. Abram’s warring party chased the 4 kings all the way up into Syria – and then recovered Lot, his family, and all that was Lot’s, and also everyone else from Sodom.

Abram chose not to live in Sodom himself – and we’re going to see later what a desperately wicked place it was – but still, he showed kindness and mercy by bringing them all back to their homes, intact and with all their stuff.

5. (17) Which king showed up to thank Abram for what he had done?

Only the king of Sodom came to thank Abram.

6. (18) Who was Melchizidek, King of Salem? Have we seen him before?

Now here’s a puzzle. Melchizidek is not mentioned anywhere else in Genesis, but he seems to be a pretty big player in the region at this time. He was not only a king, but also one who ministered the truths of the Lord to anyone who would listen, in other words, he was also a priest. He was not a pagan – not an idol-worshipper. He was a genuine worshipper of the One, True God, the same God Abram worshipped. Perhaps he was a left-over from the time of Noah. Perhaps Noah’s truths about God had been passed down to Melchizidek, and he had faith in God and became a valuable servant of the One, True God. We don’t know all
the details because we don't have any history on him – but the one thing we do know is that he was a passionate believer in the One, True God.

7. (:19-20) What did Melchizidek do for Abram? Who gave who a tithe? What does that tell us about Melchizidek? What does that tell us about Abram?

Melchizidek blessed Abram. (The greater blesses the lesser). He recognized that Abram was the up and coming leader of the people who worshipped the One, True God. God Most High had chosen Abram to spread the truth about Him to the world, and Melchizidek somehow knew that.

It was almost like a crowning ceremony. The old king was passing on the crown to the new king.

And Abram understood all of this, too. He openly demonstrated his submission to God by humbling himself to the one who had served the Lord God the longest – by offering him a tenth (tithe) of the proceeds of his battle. He bowed in submission to Melchizidek, stating for all the world to see that Melchizidek was the greater.

This is a true, real-life event, not only a story to teach us something.

But it definitely does teach us something, something referred to in later portions of the Bible. Look at Psalm 110:4 and Hebrews 7:1-10. Both of these passages indicate that Jesus, the King Who was yet to come in Abram’s day, was also going to be a Priest – the same kind as Melchizidek.

So what kind of priest was Melchizidek? He was a priest to the whole world, not just a priest to Israel. The priests of Israel (later on, after the Jews were in the promised land) were important, but they only ministered to Israel. Melchizidek ministered to anyone in the whole world who wanted to worship the One True God. And in the same way, so does Jesus.

Jesus is a priest – the scriptures tell us so. He is, in fact, a Prophet, Priest and King. But He is not priest of only Israel. He is a Priest to the world.

When Abram submitted to Melchizidek he may not totally have understood what he was doing, he just knew it was the right thing to do. But we understand now, looking back, that he was symbolizing the fact that no matter how important and loved the children of Israel would be, they would never be so loved or cared for that God would turn His back on the rest of the world.
The Lord chose the Jewish people for this reason: to show Himself to the world so that the entire world could worship Him, too. The Jewish people were for reaching the world, not for cutting off the world. Melchizedek was for reaching the world, not for cutting off the world. Jesus is for reaching the world, not for cutting off the world.

8. (:21-24) What did the King of Sodom want to give to Abram in thanks for what he had done? Why did Abram refuse?

The king of Sodom wanted his people back, to take them home again. But he told Abram to keep all the stuff, all the possessions, the jewels, the gold, the valuable stuff the 4 kings had taken and Abram had recovered.

He was essentially offering to pay Abram for going to war on his behalf. It was a reasonable, typical offer for that culture.

Abram refused because he knew that if he took the “prize money”, so to speak, people would say he was made rich by the king of Sodom….or that he was made rich by his own power and strength. Abram's commitment to the One, True God was greater than that. He had specific promises from the One, True God, and he wanted the whole world to know that he was not going out and grabbing those promises – they were being bestowed on him by One much greater than any man, One much greater than himself. Abram would be a great and powerful man someday, but he wanted the world to know Who made him that way, and that there was no man who would ever be greater than the One, True God.

Thank you, Abram, for the reminder. That is sometimes easy to forget.

9. Abram showed us what it takes to survive in the world scene…in other words, what kind of behavior God blesses as we deal with political enemies or friends. What can you learn from this chapter about how to walk by faith through political upheaval?

What kind of political behavior does God desire from us?

- Accept the fact that politics is a reality of life. Don’t hide your head in the sand and pretend you will never have to deal with it.

- Think it through. Be prepared to face political situations. Yes, there may be war. Learn how to live with war if you have to. Don’t blame God for what men have brought on themselves.
• As much as you can, be loyal to your family – to those who look to you for support and survival.

• Submit yourself to those greater than you. Submit yourself to authorities. Accept the fact that you are not so tremendously important in the world scene that everyone else has to step aside for what you want.

• Never take credit for what God has done.

• Focus your eyes on the blessings coming from God. Don’t fall into the trap of thinking blessings come from any person, any group, any government agency, any anything…
Lesson 3  
Questions for you to Answer

Genesis 15

Memory verse for this study:  
“Oh, taste and see that the LORD is good; blessed is the man who trusts in Him.” (Psalms 34:8)

1. (:1) The LORD says “Do not fear” ….I wonder why the LORD is saying “Do not fear”? Abram has just finished winning a major battle against powerful adversaries. Why would he be afraid? (answer in vs 2&3)

2. (:2,3) Was your answer to Question #1 right?

3. (:2,3) Who was going to inherit Abram’s fortune if he would have died right then?

4. (:4,5) What was the promise God made to Abram?

5. (:6) What is faith? What does faith do for us? Was Abram righteous before God? Why? (see also Romans 4:1-3)

6. (:7) The LORD is about to “strike a covenant” with Abram. How does He begin?

7. (:7-11) What is Abram told to do to set things up for the “covenant-striking”?
8. (:12) A deep sleep comes upon Abram. Can you remember any other persons in scripture who fell into a deep sleep so that the LORD could do something huge in their life? (Genesis 2:21, Genesis 28:11)

9. Why would God do that?

10. (:13-21) What are the good and bad things God promises will happen to Abram and his descendants?

11. (:16) Why were they someday going to have to be slaves in a foreign land for 400 years?

12. (:17) What action on the LORD’s part sealed this covenant?

13. Was this covenant conditional or unconditional? (In other words, Is there an “if”?) And what difference does that make to us? (Romans 4:11 “And he received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness that he had by faith while he was still uncircumcised. So, then he is the father of all who believe but have not been circumcised, in order that righteousness might be credited to them.”)
Lesson 3

Genesis 15

In this chapter:
- Abram is specifically promised a son from his own body.
- Faith is defined.
- The LORD covenants with Abram unconditionally.
- Abram becomes the father of all who believe.

So far, in Abram’s relationship with God, the Lord God has promised Abram that He would give him a new land, make him a great nation, make his name great, and make him a blessing to the whole world.

Abram believed these promises, evidenced by his willingness to leave the land of his fathers and go to a new place, following the Lord’s direction.

But Abram didn’t have all the specifics – like, for instance, how would God make him a great nation when he didn’t even have a son? Or, would God still give him a son? At one point he must have wondered whether or not Lot would be the one who carried on the family name and received the promises from God….or perhaps a servant in Abram’s household might be the one who carried on the family name (which was an accepted custom in those days).

Now, by this time in the story Abram has figured out that Lot won’t be the one to inherit, so (logical conclusion), perhaps it will be one of Abram’s trusted servants who will inherit the blessings of God.?????

Start out by thinking through this question: What are some of the things which make you afraid? If you are studying this by yourself, take the time to make a list of your biggest fears. If you are studying with a group, come up with a group list of fears. I just want you to go into this chapter having some inkling of how Abram must have felt as he approached the future with no son. He must have felt he had to do something!!! This was a reasonable fear – for with no one to take the family responsibility, the whole family and all the people connected with that family, could perish at Abram’s death.
1. (:1) The LORD says “Do not fear” ….I wonder why the LORD is saying “Do not fear”? Abram has just finished winning a major battle against powerful adversaries. Why would he be afraid? (answer in vs 2&3)

Abram was afraid – since no son had appeared as God had promised. Was the Lord going to abandon Abram someday because of his lack of ability to produce an heir? Yes, Abram was protected by God now, but would God change his mind?

1. (:2,3) Was your answer to Question #1 right?

2. (:2,3) Who was going to inherit Abram’s fortune if he died right then?

Eliezer, his slave, would traditionally have been the next in line.

3. (:4,5) What was the promise God made to Abram?

Very specifically, The Lord God said, “No, it will not be Eliezer or any other servant. It will be a son – a son who comes from your own body, Abram.” And then, to cement the promise firmly in Abram’s mind, the Lord God showed Abram all the stars in the night sky. He promised that the family of Abram would be so numerous they would not be able to be counted…just like the stars.

I can’t imagine being walked outside by the Lord, and told to look up at the heavens He created.

4. (:6) What is faith? What does faith do for us? Was Abram righteous before God? Why?

“Faith…..is the evidence of things not seen” (Hebrews 11:1) Faith is hearing or reading something true and believing it even if you can’t yet see it. Abram’s faith in God was not based on seeing something happen. It was based on believing that if God said it, then it was true – it would happen.

Abram was not having faith in his faith at this point. He was having faith in God. God said it. It was true. Abram had faith in God.

“And he believed in the Lord, and He accounted it to him for righteousness” (Genesis 15:6)
Abram was righteous before God. God looked at Abram and saw a righteous man. Why? Because Abram believed. Not because Abram had never sinned...or because he was never going to sin again after this point....but because God said it and Abram believed it.

“For if Abraham was justified by works, he has something to boast about, but not before God. For what does the scripture say? 'Abraham believed God and it was accounted to him for righteousness.'” Romans 4:2&3

5. (:7) The LORD is about to “strike a covenant” with Abram. How does He begin?

This is going to be a covenant...a contract... between God and Abram. God starts by stating Who He is. I AM. This is going to be a contract between The I AM and Abram.

6. (:7-11) What is Abram told to do to set things up for the “covenant-striking”?

The picture we see here of “striking a covenant” was a commonly accepted practice in Abram’s day. A man would sacrifice animals (signifying the fact that this is a very serious covenant since something had to die to make it happen), then cut the animals in half lengthwise, and lay one half of the animal on one side of a “path”, and the other half of the animal on the other side of the “path”.

Then both parties of the covenant would walk between the cut halves of the animals, down the center of the path, signifying that if they broke the covenant, death would be the result for the one breaking the covenant.

Abram was told by the Lord God to sacrifice a heifer, a goat, a ram, and turtledove and a pigeon, cut them in two (but not the birds – too small), and lay the half-bodies on either side of the path.

Abram guarded the dead carcasses, waiting for the Lord God to arrive to cut the covenant with him. But God didn’t show for a long time. Abram fell asleep – a deep and troubling sleep, and in his sleep the Lord God appeared to him.
8. (:12) A deep sleep comes upon Abram...can you remember any others in scripture who fell into a deep sleep so that the LORD could do something huge in their life?  

- Adam went to sleep so the Lord could create Eve out of one of Adam's ribs.  
- Jacob (grandson of Abram) went to sleep while he was running away from a mess he had created, and the Lord appeared to him.

9. Why would God do that?

In Adam's case it was probably to protect him from the trauma of the “surgery”.  In Jacob’s case it was probably to remove all other distractions so Jacob could hear God's message.  In Abram’s case, the Lord was doing something monumental, and perhaps He was stepping Abram away from all he considered traditional so he would understand this was not “business as usual”.

Does God speak to people in sleep today….or in dreams?  We know the answer to that is yes, because we see it happen every once in a while in scripture.

Does He always speak through dreams? No.  It's up to Him how He wants to communicate with us….not up to us to demand a certain method.  One thing is for sure, though.  God will never tell us in sleep or in a dream to do something which He has already said in His Word (the Bible) not to do.  God doesn’t contradict Himself.

For instance, God will never tell a Christian woman in a dream to marry a man who doesn’t also love Him wholeheartedly.  He has already told us He doesn’t want believers making unbreakable covenants with nonbelievers.  “Do not be unequally yoked together with unbelievers”.  2nd Corinthians 6:14.  He's not going to change what He has already said , for “Jesus Christ is the same, yesterday, today and forever.” (Hebrews 13:8)

10. (:13-21) What are the good and bad things God promised would happen to Abram and his descendants?

As Abram slept, the Lord appeared to him and gave him even more clarity about His promises.  He told Abram:
• Abram would, indeed, have descendants, and they would someday be slaves in a foreign land for 400 years before they inherited the land God promised to Abram.
• Abram would live to a good, old age.
• He described the borders of this land He was giving to Abram and his descendants: River of Egypt on the south, Euphrates River (in present-day Iran) to the north.
• And He named the different nations who would be conquered by Abram’s descendants as they claimed the land the Lord God had given to them.

11. (:16) Why were they someday going to have to be slaves in a foreign land for 400 years?

Apparently the Lord God knew how long it would take before the current occupiers of this promised land would be totally sold out to sin – no more possibility of any of them coming to faith in the One, True God. God would wait until the sin of the Amorites was complete. Total. No going back. Then He would direct the children of Abram to conquer the land.

The land was given to Abram. But possession would not be his (or his descendants) for 400 years.

12. (:17) What action on the LORD’s part sealed this covenant?

Here’s the very interesting part about this covenant between the Lord God and Abram: Whereas usually both parties to the covenant would walk together, side-by-side, on the path between the slain animals, in this covenant only the Lord God Himself walked that path – Abram was still sleeping. The Lord God, looking like a burning torch, walked the path between the pieces of sacrificed animals and made a one-sided promise. There was no “if you do this, I will do this”. The promise was all on God’s side – “I will do this”, guaranteed. Abram could not undo the promise at any point by lack of action or even by future rebellious action. The promise had been made by God. It was irrevocable. He does not ever go against His Word.

13. Was this covenant conditional or unconditional? (Is there an “if”?) And what difference does that make to us?

This was (and still is) an unconditional covenant. No conditions were necessary for fulfillment. Abram had already believed in the One, True God. Now God says: “Watch and see what I will do”.

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This matters to us because our eternity also rests on an irrevocable, unconditional covenant with God. Jesus – God – has told us that He died in our place. He paid the ultimate price for our sin. “But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.” (Romans 5:8).

Part of our unconditional covenant with Jesus is the fact that He not only died, but also rose again, and is alive today, and is coming back for us soon. “I go to prepare a place for you, and if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am there you may be also.” (John 14:2-4)

The question for us is: do we believe what He has said? If we do, then we are righteous in God’s sight. If we do not, we are still ugly sinners (just like the Amorites of old) in God’s sight. “He who believes in the Son has everlasting life; and he who does not believe in the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him” (John 3:36)

If we, like Abram, simply believe what God has said, even though we haven’t actually “seen” eternity, we will go to heaven. And the Lord Himself will make that happen. He will perform it. The promise is His. He says to us, in effect, “You believe Me…I will do the rest”.

Some people think that Abram had to be circumcised in order to receive all the promises of God. But that can’t be true – because in verse 6 of this chapter, Abram is declared forever righteous because of his belief in God, long before he was ever circumcised. The circumcision came later as a sign, so that Abram could openly declare to the whole world what had already happened in his heart – He believed God.

(Romans 4:11 “And he received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness that he had by faith while he was still uncircumcised. So then, he is the father of all who believe but have not been circumcised, in order that righteousness might be credited to them.”)

In the same way Jews were not made righteous by circumcision, we, as Christians, are not made righteous, either, by anything we do, including baptism, communion, church membership, tithing, teaching a Sunday School class…anything. In the moment we surrender our lives to Jesus, believing in Him, we are declared righteous before God. Of course we should definitely be baptized after that, take communion after that, join a church after that…to show the world that we have believed, but the works we do come after the faith, and are because of the faith. The moment of faith is the moment of salvation.
There’s one more reason this matters to us. The promise of the land to the Jews was also irrevocable and unconditional. No matter how badly the Jews (Abram’s descendants) failed, the land was still theirs, from the River of Egypt to the River Euphrates.

The total completion of that promise (the whole land belonging to the Jews) is yet to be fulfilled. Today’s unbelieving Jewish nation still has a promise waiting to come true for them. The Good News is that when the Lord does fulfill that promise, the descendants of Abram will no longer have their backs turned on their Messiah, Jesus. They will have come to openly believe in Him and will joyfully receive their completed promise from God soon after that!

“In that day a fountain shall be opened for the house of David and for the inhabitants of Jerusalem, for sin and uncleanness” Zechariah 13:1

“Therefore say, ‘Thus says the Lord God: “I will gather you from the peoples, assemble you from the countries where you have been scattered, and I will give you the land of Israel.”’ Ezekiel 11:17

“Yes, I will rejoice over them to do them good, and I will assuredly plant them in this land, with all My heart and with all My soul.” Jeremiah 32:41
Lesson 4
Questions for you to Answer

Genesis 16&17

Memory verse for this study:

“Oh, taste and see that the LORD is good; blessed is the man who trusts in Him.” (Psalms 34:8)


2. (16:4-6) What do you think of Abram’s actions here?
   - Was Abram showing little faith…or was he just doing the best he could with the knowledge he had?
   - Had Abram ever been told “only Sarah”?
   - Had he ever had any hints? (Genesis 12?)
   - What had Abram suggested in chapter 15 as a possible solution to their problem?
   - Should Abram have agreed to Sarah’s plan?
   - Should he have allowed Sarah to abuse Hagar?
   - What mistake did both Abram and Sarah share?
3. (16:7-10) We know from reading further in Genesis that the child of Hagar was not the son God had promised Abram. In fact, the son of Hagar would turn out to be an enemy of the promised son, and still, today is the enemy of the Jews. Why, then, was the angel of the LORD protecting Hagar?

4. (16:11-12) What was the angel’s prophecy about the child Hagar will bear?

5. (16:13-16) How would you describe Hagar’s understanding of the One, True God? Do you think she had faith in God?

6. (17:1-2) How much time went by after the birth of Ishmael before God spoke to Abram again?

7. (17:3-5) What was the significance of this change of name? Abram to Abraham?

8. (17:6-14) Was anything different about this renewal of God’s covenant with Abraham? It has been said that “God has no grandchildren”. What does that mean…and how does this covenant prove that?

9. (17:15-22) God specifically told Abraham Sarah would be the mother of the promised son. Why did God specifically want Sarah, and no one else?

10. (17:23-27) What did Abraham do in response to God’s words to him?
Lesson 4

*Genesis 16&17*

Waiting on God.

Waiting...interminable stretches of time which bring you again and again to the brink of doubt and discouragement. How can you keep on believing in the promise made to you when the fulfillment just never seems to come?

Adoniram Judson felt called of God to be a missionary in 1810. He left for the mission field with his wife, Ann, in 1812, and after a change of plans from India to Burma, they arrived on their field of ministry in 1813. Three years just waiting to finally get to the place God had asked them to go. Three years.

For six years they met and loved and talked to the Burmese people in Rangoon about Jesus. For six years they prayed and believed and adjusted to the heat and the disease. And finally, on the 27th of June, after over seven years of waiting, and almost six years after arriving at Rangoon, Adoniram Judson baptized one convert. One convert after seven years.

Adoniram’s wife, Ann, died while they were ministering in Burma, but still he continued on. He married again and he and his new wife ministered together until her death. He married again and he and his third wife kept ministering the Gospel message to the Burmese people another few years, until, in 1950, Mr. Judson died.

Mr. Judson was imprisoned, tortured, and sick unto the point of death many times. He buried 2 wives and children. He waited and waited and waited to see God perform the promises He had given. At his death, it is said that he left behind him in Burma seven thousand Christians, sixty-three churches, and one hundred and sixty three missionaries.

What if he had given up? What if he had not waited?

In 2013, as I am writing this, over 8,000 Burmese people live on the south side of Indianapolis, most of them having fled their homeland because of religious persecution. Many, many of them have faith in Jesus today because Adoniram Judson waited.

It seems like the first few verses of every chapter help set the “scene” for the reader, doesn’t it? We can answer a lot of questions from these first six verses of chapter 16:

- **Who?** Sarai & Abram, husband & wife
  - Sarai’s maidservant, of Egyptian descent, Hagar

- **What?** What is the story line here? Sarai had not been able to have children. She suggested that Abram produce a child by having sexual relations with her maidservant, Hagar. This was a culturally acceptable and legal act at this time. It was sort of like a “surrogate mother” arrangement today. Abram followed Sarai’s suggestion, and Hagar did indeed become pregnant with Abram’s child. Hagar lost respect for her mistress when this happened, became arrogant, and despised her. Sarai was humiliated. Sarai ended up angry with Abram, angry with God, and angry with her servant, Hagar, who she then abused.

- **When?** This happened ten years after Abram and Sarai first migrated to the land of Canaan, after God had told them to leave their home, and promised them children.

- **Where?** This happened in the land of Canaan. The land God had promised to Abram.

- **Why?** Sarai stated her belief that God had been responsible for her not having children. It looks like she felt it was time to take things into her own hands. Abram complied with her. Why? Maybe he, too, felt that it was time to act….perhaps he was wondering if God had really wanted him to wait. When everything went wrong, Sarai reacts as most people do – she blamed her husband, and lashed out at the woman who was making her feel like a failure. It was a normal reaction– but not a faith reaction.

2. (16:4-6) What do you think of Abram’s actions here?

- Was Abram showing little faith…or was he just doing the best he could with the knowledge he had?
- Had Abram ever been told “only Sarai”?
- Had he ever had any hints? (Genesis 12?)
Abram had two reasons to believe that God’s promise to him would be fulfilled through the union of himself and Sarai:

a) Long before Abram and Sarai, in the beginning of time, God had said: One man, One woman. God’s directive had not changed, and Abram knew that. *Genesis 2:24*

b) In the events of *Genesis 12* Abram saw that God was protecting his wife, Sarai, from being taken as another man’s wife. He must have wondered about that. She was set aside for a special role.

The question is, then: Did Abram “get it”? Let’s look at the facts again:

- What had Abram suggested in *Genesis 15* as a possible solution to their problem?

Abram himself had suggested another way for God to give him an heir. God made it very clear at that time that the son which would be given to Abram would come from his own body.

- Should Abram have agreed to Sarai’s plan?

What is your personal opinion here?

- Should he have allowed Sarai to abuse Hagar?

This was common cultural practice, too. Sarai “owned” Hagar, and could treat her any way she chose. Hagar was crossing a line, and all of Sarai’s contemporaries would have agreed. So what should Abram have done?

- What mistake did both Abram and Sarai share?

Again…what do you think?

Here’s my opinion: The Lord God called Abram and Sarai out of a pagan culture to a relationship with Him. He asked them to leave Ur and go to a place of His choosing, and He asked them to believe the promises He made to them. They did. They believed. They obeyed.

But, along the way, they had much to learn. Even though they had left Ur, they still were a part of a culture which was foreign to the Lord God when they arrived in Canaan. I think God was slowly and effectively cutting them off from their
culture through every new test and every new decision. He was showing them how to do things His way. He was teaching them what He was all about. It took a long time.

They goofed here. They stepped out of His way of doing things. They took things into their own hands when they should have continued waiting.

But in the events of Chapter 12, God protected Sarai from being ruined by another man. He wouldn’t let it happen. And in Chapter 15, God stopped Abram from choosing his servant to be his heir – because this wasn’t God’s plan.

Why, then, didn’t God throw up a roadblock to this act of Abram and Sarai’s? Why not protect them again as they were learning His ways?

This is a good question. We know Abram and Sarai were sinners, making mistakes, wanting to have faith….The question is: Why didn’t God protect them from themselves this time?

The answer follows.

3. (16:7-10) We know from reading on in Genesis that the child of Hagar was not the son God had promised Abram. In fact, the son of Hagar would turn out to be an enemy of the promised son, and still, today is the enemy of the Jews. Why, then, was the angel of the LORD protecting Hagar?

Why did the Lord tell Hagar to return to the camp of Abram and Sarai? Because she and her child would have perished if they had not. The Lord did not want Hagar or her son-to-die! He wanted them to live. He valued their lives, and He saved their lives by sending this angel to protect them and turn them around.

Why? This is a pure picture of the grace of God. God had chosen Abram (and his future son, Isaac) to be the “chosen people”. But the “chosen people” were not chosen to be the only people on whom God would pour out His grace….they were “chosen” to be the people who spread the news about Him to all the other people in the world. They were special for the job they were chosen to do, but not special in the sense that they were the only ones God loved.

God loved the descendants of Hagar, too. His plan was to someday come to the earth as a human being and die for every person who ever lived. His grace always, from the beginning of time, extended to every person on earth - even to Hagar, and even to Hagar’s son, who would be a “wild man”, “his hand against every man”. God loved Ishmael and wanted him to live – and to produce future children – so that God could love them and offer them salvation. Do we honestly
think God would have offered salvation only to the Jews? How crazy is that? The Jews may not have been “wild men”, “whose hands were against every man”, but they were sinners who time and again pulled away from God and His ways. The playing field was level then. It's level now. We are all sinners in need of a Savior. God has simply chosen different places for each of us to be when He pours out his grace and we finally see that need and respond.

4. (16:11-12) What was the angel's prophecy about the child Hagar would bear?

- He would be a son.
- He would be named Ishmael.
- God had heard her cries.
- He would be “wild”.
- He would be a fighter – wars and hatred and revenge would fill his life.
- He would be surrounded with his own people – his name would continue.

What people group came from the union of Abram and Hagar? The Arabs. In Old Testament times they became a wild, savage, cruel people. Worthy of salvation? No. And neither are the Jews. And neither are we.

In the book of Habakkuk, the prophet asked God why He was allowing the Jewish people to live such sinful lives. God answered by saying: “Wait and see what I am about to do, Habakkuk. I am about to punish the Jews for how they are living, and for their lack of faith in Me. And the way I will punish them is to send the cruel, savage children of Ishmael to conquer them and kill them and abuse them”

Habakkuk was horrified. Why, Lord God, would You use such a wild and savage group of people to do such terrifying things to the people You love? Surely You could figure out how to do this differently?

Do you know how God answers? He tells Habakkuk to mind his own business. He is God. He decides what is best. Trust Him. (Habakkuk 2:20)

Read Habakkuk 3:17-19 to see the prophet’s response. God’s grace is all we ever need.
5. (16:13-16) How would you describe Hagar’s understanding of the One, True God? Do you think she had faith in God?

What do you think?

6. (17:1-2) How much time went by after the birth of Ishmael before God spoke to Abram again?

Thirteen years.

7. (17:3-5) What was the significance of this change of name?

“Abram” means “Exalted father”

“Abraham” means “Father of a Multitude”

The Lord was emphasizing again the extent of His blessing. It was going to be mind-boggling.

8. (17:6-14) Is anything different about this renewal of God’s covenant with Abraham? It has been said that “God has no grandchildren”. What does that mean…and how did this covenant prove that?

Every Jewish man from Abraham on would have to individually make the decision to believe in the One, True God. The sign of that belief would be circumcision. The circumcision never “saved” any Jewish person – it was always a symbolic, very personal act which by its nature (very intimate and personal) confirmed the fact that God sought relationship with individuals, not just with corporate nations or religious groups.

“God does not have grandchildren” just tells us that our children do not inherit our faith. They must stand before God themselves, one by one – and make a personal decision to bow the knee to the One, True God. Their faith must be their own. It cannot be ours. Faith is personal.

9. (17:15-22) God specifically told Abraham Sarai (now Sarah) would be the mother of the promised son. Why did God specifically want Sarah, and no one else?
First of all – God wanted Sarah because God wanted Sarah. It was entirely up to Him, and she was the woman of His choice. He loved her and gave her this purpose in life. The mother of Isaac was not just to be a “baby machine”. She was, as are all other mothers, specifically chosen to make an impact on this child. She wasn't just the wife of Abraham, either. She was a “princess”. Her new name meant just what it said. She was royalty in God’s eyes.

And second – God chose Sarah because by the time she would give to birth to the promised son, Isaac, it would be obvious to everyone that it was a miracle of God. Sarah was so old by the time Isaac was born, there would have been no natural explanation for this pregnancy and safe birth.

10. (17:23-27) What did Abraham do in response to God’s words to him?

Abraham’s response was to believe what the Lord God said, and be circumcised. Abraham and his whole household (including 13-year-old Ishmael) were circumcised. We are not told whether they all willingly took this sign of belief in the One, True God. Abraham obeyed the Lord God. The people in his household took the sign of circumcision in obedience to him, but if they also responded in belief in the One, True God, that personal decision of faith was their own. We won’t know until heaven who in that household was a person of faith, and who was simply doing what they were told to do.

We started out this lesson talking about waiting. Waiting on God is sometimes so difficult – but the end result is always hope. Want to dig further about waiting? Look up and think through the following:

The result of waiting: Isaiah 40:31
Psalm 40:1-3

Why does God wait? Isaiah 30:18
2nd Peter 3: 8,9

What to do when it seems God is waiting?
Luke 18:1-8
2nd Peter 3: 11,12
Habakkuk 3:17-19 (memorize this)

Are you waiting on God for anything? How does Abraham's wait help you?
Lesson 5
Questions for you to Answer

Genesis 18&19

Memory verse for this study:

“Oh, taste and see that the LORD is good; blessed is the man who trusts in Him.” (Psalms 34:8)

1. (18:1) Abraham is known as one of the greatest men in the Bible…. What kind of dwelling did he live in?
   - Does this teach us that if we want to be great spiritually we should live in a tent?
   - What does this teach us?

2. (18:2-8) How do we know that one of these three “men” was actually God?

3. (18:9-21) We see two purposes of God in this visit. What are they?
   1. (:9-15)
   2. (:16-21)

   - Abraham is called the “friend of God” in 2\textsuperscript{nd} Chronicles 20:7, Isaiah 41:8, and James 2:23. What about this passage in Genesis would cause you to agree with that?
   - Do you consider yourself a “friend of God”?
   - What is life like for a “friend of God”? 

5. Why did the whole town of Sodom have to die? Ezekiel 33:11&12 says God has no pleasure in the death of the wicked, so surely God didn’t want this to happen, did He?

6. (19:1) Who arrived in Sodom? Who was at the gate?

7. (19:2&3) Was this Middle-eastern hospitality…or something else?

8. (19:4&5) What did the men of Sodom want?

9. Does it seem odd to you that they would be so open about their desires? What does that show us about the condition of that city?

10. (19:6-8) What in the world was Lot doing when he suggested that his daughters come out and satisfy these men?

11. (19:9-10) What would have happened if the two men had not intervened?

12. With things this bad, why do you think Lot still lived in this city?

13. (19:11-16) How many righteous did the LORD find in Sodom?

14. (19:17-22) Why did Lot plead to flee to Zoar, not the mountains?

15. (19:23-26) What did Lot lose because he had lived so long in the midst of sin?

17. What does that tell us about prayer…and about the LORD?

18. (19:30-38) Did the daughters of Lot do something wrong here?

19. How does God look at homosexuality?
   - Leviticus 18:22, 29
   - Leviticus 20:13
   - Romans 1:26&27
   - 1st Corinthians 6:9&10
   - 1st Timothy 1:8-11

20. We’ve seen it before…what is the result of sin?

21. In what ways is our culture just like Sodom and Gomorrah?

22. Should we protect ourselves and our children from our culture? How?

23. Did Lot deserve to be saved from the fire and brimstone?

24. What is that a picture of?
Lesson 5

*Genesis 18&19*

This is such an amazing passage in scripture. First, Abraham met God, face-to-face, and then he dared to “bargain” with God, as he begged for the life of his nephew, Lot. I’m thinking it would be impossible to get myself past the shock of meeting God Himself - and then totally out of the question to be able to somehow wrap my head around the audacity of making a request of Him!

But then, I ask myself, isn’t that just exactly what I do every day when I approach God in prayer? I actually meet with Him…then I ask Him for something. I think I have forgotten the reality of what is happening when I pray.

Three men approached a tent in the desert. We find out that One of them was actually God Himself – the other two were angels (we’ll talk more about that). They had a message to deliver. Abraham, the “friend of God”, was meeting God Himself, in the flesh….and he couldn’t help wondering, “Is this really Him? How could this be? And who are these with Him…and why would He be actually sitting down and eating outside my tent?” The following verse in Hebrews in the New Testament probably refers to this very event: “*Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers, for by this some have entertained angels without knowing it.*” (Hebrews 13:2)

Abraham heard the message from these three men, and suddenly realized he knew for sure Who he was talking to. He (and Sarah) could hardly believe they were seeing and hearing all this!

One of the three men – the LORD - had a special, private message for Abraham. He told Abraham what He was about to do in the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah.

Abraham learned in the next few hours what it meant to make heart-wrenching, intentional, exhausting, “intercessory prayer” for someone he loved, who perhaps didn’t even deserve what he was doing.

Let’s look at these two chapters more closely.
1. (18:1) Abraham was known as one of the greatest men in the Bible…. What kind of dwelling did he live in?

The answer is simple – Abraham lived in a tent. Now this probably wasn’t a pup tent, or even a roomy 6-person camping tent. This was most likely a tent which looked more like a household when you walked into it. But still, it was a tent: moveable and temporary, and surrounded by sand.

- Does this teach us that if we want to be great spiritually we should live in a tent?

The answer, of course, is no. My point is: Make sure you don’t spiritualize what you read in scripture. Just because Abraham lived in a tent doesn’t mean we should, too. We should only live in a tent if God has specifically said in scripture, “Thou shalt live in a tent”. He hasn’t, by the way.

- What does this teach us?

Just remember - these were real people living real lives. All wandering travelers lived in tents in those days. We can believe this passage is literally true without having to think we must live as they did then in order to connect with God the way they did.

What does Abraham living in a tent teach us? Because God wants to connect with us, He’ll make it happen, no matter where we live or how we live. We can connect with God in mighty ways, no matter how ordinary or fantastic our lives might be.

2. (18:2-8) How do we know that one of these three “men” was actually God? We can come to that conclusion from the actual Hebrew words used in this passage:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The Hebrew word is:</th>
<th>Its English Equivalent:</th>
<th>How it is written in translations:</th>
<th>It means:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>YHWH</td>
<td>Jehovah</td>
<td>LORD</td>
<td>The personal name of God</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adonai</td>
<td>Master</td>
<td>Lord</td>
<td>A description of a type of ruler</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elohim</td>
<td>Supreme God</td>
<td>God</td>
<td>An attribute: supremeness</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
When the three men first arrived at Abraham’s tent, he addressed one of them as “Lord”. Does that mean he immediately realized this was, indeed, the LORD (YHWH)?

No. In fact, the Hebrew word Abraham used in verse 3 for “Lord” is “Adonai”. That can be a word used for any type of ruler. Abraham saw this man and his companions as having authority, but he still didn’t know exactly Who they were.

But further on in the story, verse 13 to be exact, the writer of Genesis used the Hebrew word “YHWY” for the speaker – YHWY is the actual, personal name of God. So, at this point, the writer let us know this was the LORD Himself who was talking with Abraham. Did Abraham recognize the LORD? Yes – we’ll see, as the chapter goes on, that Abraham becomes very aware of Who he is talking to.

3. (18:9-21) We see two purposes of God in this visit. What were they?

1. (:9-15) - The LORD was re-affirming His promise that Abraham and Sarah would have a son – in fact, this time He was putting a specific date to it. He said “according to the time of life”…in other words, in about 9 months.

2. (:16-21) – And then the LORD was telling Abraham that He was about to bring down judgment on Sodom and Gomorrah, where Abraham’s nephew, Lot, lived.

- Abraham is called the “friend of God” in 2nd Chronicles 20:7, Isaiah 41:8, and James 2:23. What about this passage in Genesis would cause you to agree with that?

This passage in Genesis is so personal! It shows such an intimate relationship between the LORD and Abraham. The LORD had made a promise that He confirmed again He would keep. And the LORD shared with Abraham something that would affect Abraham very much. The LORD decided not to hide these distressing facts from His friend, Abraham.

- Do you consider yourself a “friend of God”? 

Abraham
• What is life like for a “friend of God”?

Abraham’s life was not easy. He was greatly blessed of God, but not with ease and lack of troubles. If you desire to be a “friend of God”, don’t expect life to be easy…expect it to be mind-boggling!

4. (18:22-33) Why did Abraham work so hard to negotiate the lives of the people of Sodom? What is another term for “negotiating” with God?

*Hebrews 4:16.*

Let’s be simple. Abraham was praying. He was talking to the LORD about the situation his nephew, Lot, had gotten himself into. *Hebrews 4:16* calls this type of prayer (for someone else’s need) “intercessory prayer”.

Why was he working so hard at it? Abraham loved this nephew and felt responsible for him, even though Lot had made a bad decisions about living in Sodom, such a colorful but sinful city. Abraham, through no fault of his own, had a heavy burden to carry – his love and care for Lot felt heavy because he couldn’t change Lot, but he still felt responsible for him. So he prayed.

5. Why did the whole town of Sodom have to die? *Ezekiel 33:11&12* says God has no pleasure in the death of the wicked, so surely God didn’t want this to happen, did He?

No, of course He didn’t want them to die. The LORD doesn’t want people to make sinful decisions and to therefore suffer because of the choices they have made. But the LORD cannot have anything to do with sin. He can mercifully wait before delivering judgment for sin. But eventually, it must be done.

When the LORD died on the cross He was judging sin. He was taking the punishment on Himself. The people of Sodom had their chance to believe in the One, True God, and look forward to God solving their sin problem someday trusting that He would take care of them. But most of them did not. Abraham was pleading with the LORD not to destroy those cities if He could even find ten people who were trusting in the LORD and believing His payment for sin would come someday. Would the LORD find ten people?
6. (19:1) Who arrives in Sodom? Who is at the gate?

The two angels (the two men who visited Abraham along with the LORD) came to the city gate. They were on a mission for the LORD. They were going to find out if the sin of Sodom was as bad as they thought. Of course the LORD already knew how bad it was…but Lot didn’t. One of the things the LORD was going to accomplish with this visit of His angels was to firmly fix in Lot’s mind exactly how sinful this place was….so he would be willing to leave.

Not coincidentally, Lot was at the gate as they arrived. Lot had an appointment with the two angels of the LORD that night.

7. (19:2&3) Was this Middle-eastern hospitality…or something else?

This definitely was Middle-eastern hospitality, but it also was Lot knowing how his city was going to respond to visitors. He had no doubt seen it before. Visitors arrived in the city, and as the sun would set the men of the city would find those visitors, wherever they had lodged, and abuse them. They had evil intents.

8. (19:4&5) What did the men of Sodom want?

This city was so far gone in sin that the people of Sodom looked forward to sexually attacking any visitor who entered their city. The men of Sodom wanted to have homosexual relations with Lot’s visitors that night.

9. Does it seem odd to you that they would be so open about their desires? What does that show us about the condition of that city?

Romans chapter 1 tells us about the downward spiral of sin. (Romans 1:28-31). We see that each seemingly small sin leads to an even worse sin, and then to an even more evil sin, spiraling down to the point that those who take part in each worse and worse sin not only make evil acts a habit, but also cheer on others who do them, too. Sodom was at the bottom of the spiral. It looked like only Lot and his family were left to say “no” to each worse sin.

10. (19:6-8) What in the world was Lot doing when he suggested that his daughters come out and satisfy these men?
This part I don’t really understand. I’m guessing that Lot was trying to shame the men of the city. Maybe he knew they would never take him up on his offer because they were all homosexual. But also, it is possible he was willing to offer his daughters for abuse in order to protect himself and his guests. Ugly.

11. (19:9-10) What would have happened if the two men (angels) had not intervened?

The men of the city would have broken down the door and killed Lot, as well as everyone else in the house.

12. With things this bad, why do you think Lot still lived in this city?

Why was this family not so already disgusted and so afraid of the sin around them that they long ago had fled that place? Unfortunately, the reason is probably because they were repulsed but also attracted to the world they lived in. There were fine things to enjoy. Fine entertainments. Beautiful clothes. Sumptuous food. They probably thought they could just ignore the sin and still enjoy the city. But on this night they were forced to honestly look at the cesspool they had been calling home.

13. (19:11-16) How many righteous did the LORD find in Sodom?

Only four - Lot, his wife, and their two daughters. The two men who were betrothed to marry Lot’s daughters practically laughed in Lot’s face when he suggested that they flee the city with them.

14. (19:17-22) Why did Lot plead to flee to Zoar, not the mountains?

He still didn’t want to leave all the comforts of city living. He was hoping to live in the plains so that he could have easy access to a nearby city. He was bargaining with God, but not in the same way Abraham had just the day before. He was asking for his own selfish pleasures. He was addicted to pleasure and could not stand the thought of being totally cut off. In the New Testament, James talks about this very problem in the lives of believers today. The reason many prayers go unanswered is because Christians are making requests of God based on their own selfish pleasures. (James 4:2&3)
15. (19:23-26) What did Lot lose because he had lived so long in the midst of sin?

There is always a price to pay for sin. Yes, Jesus paid the price for sin on the cross – so if we believe in Him the sins we commit cannot send us to Hell. But those sins of ours still leave scars in our lives. It may be hard to believe at this point in this story, but Lot was actually a man of faith (2nd Peter 2:7)! However, his attraction to sin had put him in a precarious position, and he paid a steep price for hanging around that sin for so long.

First, he lost his wife, who could not stand to part from her worldly things. And later, he was used in a plan of incest by his daughters, who probably knew no better, for they had been raised in a world which worshipped sexual sin.


Abraham asked for the whole city to be saved. That could not be done. But the LORD did yank Abraham’s beloved nephew out of the flames. Lot is saved from the judgment and the death.

17. What does this tell us about prayer…and about the LORD?

The LORD loves us and loves for us to pray. He loves it when we plead with Him for the lives and souls of those we love. He answers – but not always in the way we pictured it.

18. (19:30-38) Did the daughters of Lot do something wrong here?

Oh, sure, they did something horrible. This is incest, pure and simple. They were looking out for their own selves, their own future – no matter what. They did not know they could trust the One, True God for their futures – they didn’t know they could obey Him and trust Him for the outcome. Or, if they did know, they decided to do it their own way anyway.

19. Homosexuality comes up in this passage. So let’s ask ourselves: How does God look at homosexuality?

Leviticus 18:22, 29
Leviticus 20:13
Romans 1:26&27
Lesson 5  Genesis 18&19

1st Corinthians 6:9&10
1st Timothy 1:8-11

Let’s suppose someone says to you or me: “I’m gay…and you say that the Bible says being gay is sin….how can a loving God deny me the right to a loving relationship with another person? We’re not hurting anyone else….I can’t help the way I’m made….” How do we answer that?

Look at the verses. God clearly states that homosexual acts are sin. They are not good, they are not OK, they are not just a lifestyle choice, and they are not loving. They are a choice to rebel against the LORD.

Does everyone who participates in homosexual sin actually realize they are sinning against the LORD? Maybe not right away. But they eventually bear in their bodies, in their spirits, the scars which result from sexual sin. It is inevitable.

Do you care for someone who is caught in this particular sin? Then find a way to lovingly and honestly address the facts. The results of your bravery to do that are not guaranteed, but if you don’t, how will they know they are sinners and need a Savior?

20. We’ve seen it before…what is the result of sin?

Suffering and death.

21. In what ways is our culture just like Sodom and Gomorrah’s?

In every way. I think we are also at the bottom of the Romans 1 spiral of sin.

22. Should we protect ourselves and our children from our culture? How?

Yes! Any way we can! It takes thought and prayer and in almost every case a willingness to suffer loss. But we can’t let them end up like Lot's wife and daughters.

23. Did Lot deserve to be saved from the fire and brimstone?

No.

24. What is that a picture of?

It’s a picture of me! I didn’t deserve to be yanked out of the fire, either.
Lesson 6
Questions for you to Answer

Genesis 20&21

Memory verse for this study:

“Oh, taste and see that the LORD is good; blessed is the man who trusts in Him.” (Psalms 34:8)

1. (20:1-5) Here we go again. When have we seen this very same scenario played out before?

2. What was wrong with Abraham? Didn’t he have even more reason at this time to be protecting Sarah from some other man? What was he thinking?

3. (20:6) Why did the Lord keep Abimilech from defiling Sarah?

4. (20:7) Why did the Lord seem to elevate Abraham in Abimilech’s eyes? Hadn’t he just done a really wrong, stupid thing?

5. (20:8-21) What do we learn from Chapter 20

7. What promises are we still awaiting fulfillment of? How do you think we will feel when those promises come true?

8. Let's find some promises of God. Look up the following passages. Read through them and list all the promises you find:
   - Ephesians 1
   - James 1

9. (21:3-7) There was much ________________ going on when Isaac was born!

10. (21:8-21) What happened when Isaac was weaned (probably 3-5 years old)?

11. Do you feel that Ishmael didn't deserve this?

12. How do you think Abraham felt at this point?

13. Did Abraham have a grueling decision to make? Why did he make it?
14. (21:22-33) Neighbor trouble. Abraham, living with daily proof of God’s Almighty hand on his life, still had to live through every-day problems. How did he handle it?

15. Have you ever had a mountain-top experience with God, only to be brought back down to earth by life’s realities? What can you learn from Abraham?
Lesson 6
*Genesis 20&21*

Ok - remember the background here. Abraham knows much more now than he did the last time he played this little game with half-truth. The last time he did this (*Genesis 12:10-20*) he knew the Lord God had promised to make him the father of a great nation. He knew he would sometime in the future have a son who would carry on his family name and inherit the land God was giving him. But he didn’t know then that God was very serious about who this child’s mother was going to be. He didn’t know then that only Sarah would be the appropriate one to bear this child of promise.

But now he knows for sure Sarah is God’s choice to be the mother of the son of promise, just as he is the chosen father. He knows that Eliezer his servant was not the chosen inheritor of all God had promised. He knows trying to produce a child through Hagar was a bad decision. He knows beyond the shadow of a doubt that Sarah is going to be the mother of the child who was going to hold their future in his very existence.

So...for goodness sake....why is he risking Sarah’s reputation and her safety by once again telling the lie..."she is my sister"...in order to save his own life and livelihood? Wasn’t this long-awaited promise from God more important than life itself?

1. (20:1-5). Here we go again. When have we seen this very same scenario played out before?

*Genesis 12:10-20*

2. What was wrong with Abraham? Didn’t he have even more reason at this time to be protecting Sarah from some other man? What was he thinking

We aren’t told in this passage why Abraham did this again. We are only told that he did, so we can only guess as to reasons.
Here are my guesses:

a. Even though Abraham knew in his heart that the promises of God were still coming, his head told him he had to survive if he were ever going to see those promises come to pass. Survival won out over faith.

b. Sarah was not a young girl at this point. Powerful people like King Abimilech did not usually reach out to take old women to be a part of their harem. Maybe he thought Sarah would be safe. Common sense won out over faith.

c. Abraham knew in the back of his mind that he still had Hagar and Ishmael. Yes, the Lord God had said that Ishmael was not the son of promise, but, Abraham did love him so much, and, maybe he had not heard God right. Desires of the heart won out over faith.

d. And finally, maybe Abraham just was weary of waiting. Maybe he hadn’t been communing with the Lord for a few days or weeks. Maybe what he knew in his head was that God had promised, but his faith had been worn down by no fellowship with God. A skimpy walk with God had won out over faith.

3. (20:6) Why did the Lord keep Abimilech from defiling Sarah?

Abimilech said to the Lord in his dream: “I didn’t know! I am innocent of wanting to do anything wrong here!” And God answers him: “I know you did not mean to sin against me.”

If Abimilech had taken this woman into his harem...a woman who already was married to another man...it would have been a sin. Even Abimilech knew that. Not only did he know that, but he also realized the sin would not have primarily been against Abraham and Sarah. The sin would have been first and foremost against the Almighty God of Abraham. Abimilech didn’t want to sin against such a powerful God!

Miracle. God Almighty, the One and Only True God, the God of Abraham, stopped Abimilech from committing a sin which would have meant his death and the death of his people. And that very same God made sure his servant, Sarah, was kept safe to fulfill the role He had chosen for her.

God is not limited by sin, by stubbornness, by fear, by circumstances beyond our control, or by the limitations of our abilities. Since He has chosen each of us for
a purpose, we can be sure He will bring us to the point that we get our chance to fulfill that purpose. (*Ephesians 2:10*)

4. *(20:7)* Why did the Lord seem to elevate Abraham in Abimilech’s eyes? Hadn’t Abraham just done a really wrong, stubborn thing?

Again, this wasn’t about Abraham, was it? God was further protecting Abraham, because Abraham still had a job to do for Him. Abimilech was a man of power in this culture. He could easily have killed Abraham for shaming him in such a way. God elevated Abraham in Abimilech’s mind so Abraham and Sarah could safely leave.

Just a thought here: if it ever seems God is elevating you in other’s minds, it might not be because you are so great, but because He’s trying to get you out of another mess you got yourself into.

5. *(20:8-21)* What do we learn from Chapter 20?

- Even when we are walking by faith we can still sin.
- God has a job for each of us to do. He will accomplish his will.
- This was about God, not about Abraham, not about Sarah. Life is about God, not you or me.
- God protected Sarah when she could not protect herself.
- Abraham was a prophet. A man of prayer. That was more important in the end than anything else.

6. *(21:1-2)* The long-awaited child arrived! Safe and sound. Exactly as God had promised. How do you think Abraham and Sarah felt?

Was it wild, abandoned joy? Was it quiet, sweet wonder?

7. What promises are we still awaiting fulfillment of? How do you think we will feel when those promises come true?

Here’s the promise I think of every day: Jesus is coming back! Will we jump and shout and holler? Will we sigh with relief? Will we dance in the streets? Will we cry? Will we celebrate with all those who have been watching from above and waiting for us? Will we gasp as we rise to meet Him in the air? I don’t know how I will feel then. I only know how I feel now. And right now there is a growing sense of urgency within me – to see His face, soon!
8. Let’s find some promises of God. First, read through the following Ephesians 1 passage. Notice, underlined, all the promises we have from Jesus:

3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ:

4 According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love:

5 Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will,

6 To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved.

7 In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace;

8 Wherein he hath abounded toward us in all wisdom and prudence;

9 Having made known unto us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure which he hath purposed in himself:

10 That in the dispensation of the fulness of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; even in him:

11 In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will:

12 That we should be to the praise of his glory, who first trusted in Christ.

13 In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise,

14 Which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory.
Now, read through the following James 1 passage, and underline the promises for yourself:

2 My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into various trials;

3 Knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience.

4 But let patience have its perfect work, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing.

5 If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all liberally, and without reproach; and it will be given to him.

6 But let him ask in faith, with no doubting. For he who doubts is like a wave of the sea driven and tossed by the wind.

7 For let not that man suppose that he will receive anything from the Lord;

8 He is a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways.

9 Let the lowly brother glory in his exaltation,

10 But the rich, in his humiliation: because as a flower of the field he will pass away.

11 For no sooner has the sun risen with a burning heat, than it withers the grass; its flower falls, and its beautiful appearance perishes: so the rich man also will fade away in his pursuits.

12 Blessed is the man who endures temptation: for when he has been approved, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord has promised to those who love him.”

The point of this little exercise is to remind us that the Word of God is chock-full of promises – they are ours to remember, talk about, and enjoy. Let the promises of God wrap around you when you are discouraged. Let them write your melody when you celebrate.

9. (21:3-7) There was much laughter going on when Isaac was born!
10. (21:8-21) What happened when Isaac was weaned (probably 3-5 years old)?

The identity of the true promised son really finally had to be dealt with. Abraham had to make a gut-wrenching decision. Does he separate himself from the first son of his flesh in order to fully follow the promised son of his faith?

11. Do you feel like Ishmael didn’t deserve this?

Again….it wasn’t about Ishmael or Isaac. It was about God. What Ishmael deserved is death. What Isaac deserved is death. They were both born sinners. What they got was the hand of God on their lives – totally undeserved. Ishmael had a choice to make. Does he continue on with his life, believing in the God of his father? Or does he turn away from the One, True God and do things his own way. That’s the only decision that counted then, and it’s the only one that counts now.

12. How do you think Abraham felt at this point?

Broken-hearted. But he was obeying the One, True, God. His faith had to feel huge even while his heart was breaking.

13. Did Abraham have a grueling decision to make? Why did he make it?

Because he decided for faith in the God he loved, not sight.

14. (21:22-33) Neighbor trouble. Abraham, living with daily proof of God’s Almighty hand on his life, still had to live through every-day problems. How did he handle it?

This time he handled it well. He said the proper things – worked within his culture to be respectful and get things accomplished. And, he told the truth.
15. Have you ever had a mountain-top experience with God, only to be brought back down to earth by life's realities? What can you learn from Abraham?

Mountain-tops are little glimpses of heaven. Valleys are real life….valleys are going to happen. And, they will keep happening until we are someday in heaven with the One, who, in this life, has gracefully given us the occasional mountain-top.
Lesson 7
Questions for you to Answer

Genesis 22

Memory verse for this study:

“Oh, taste and see that the LORD is good; blessed is the man who trusts in Him.” (Psalms 34:8)

1. (:
1&2) What did God ask Abraham to do? Why would God ask such a thing?

2. (:
3&4) Why would Abraham obey such an order?

3. (:
5-8) What did Abraham expect to happen?

4. (:
9-12) What was God trying to accomplish with this trial?

5. (:
13-14) God provided the sacrifice for Abraham to use once He saw that Abraham would withhold nothing from Him. What does that tell you about the sacrifices God asks from us?

6. What did Abraham learn through this experience?

7. (:
15-18) God’s promise of land and descendants was restated once more to Abraham…and then Abraham returned, with his alive, promised son, to live in that promised land…a land not controlled by Abraham, but controlled by the Philistines. What does that tell you about Abraham’s faith?
8. (v:20-24) Who were these people, and why would Abraham care about them?

9. What did you learn from this chapter?
Lesson 7
Genesis 22

Abraham had much wealth, and many people to care for. He had to make decisions not only for his own well-being, but also for the protection of many others. He had to keep his flocks watered and fed, and his slaves and family fed and clothed. He had to try to keep his enemies from hating him so much for his wealth that they would kill him to get it. And not only all this, but he also had to deal with the heartache of sending away his beloved son, Ishmael, in order to protect his other beloved son, Isaac. Life was sort of a balancing act on a high wire…..

The good news was - there was a way to make those right decisions, a way to have peace when feelings raged inside of him, a way to wisely handle a whole group of people who looked to him for leadership.

That way was faith. Abraham, at this point in his life, had learned to continually trust God to someday give him the land He had promised, even though, as he walked through that land it still technically belonged to someone else. That took faith. That took trusting God’s Words and God’s timing. Abraham was learning to live life by faith.

God has His own time for everything. Our job is to fit into His time, not try to force Him to fit into ours. God’s promise of land to Abraham would not be totally fulfilled in his lifetime. The whole land promised to Abraham will someday belong to his descendants, but it wasn’t totally his by the time he died. Now, how could that promise be fulfilled after Abraham died, and still be considered a promise come true for Abraham? How could that be? - Because Abraham will be there someday when the promise is finally fulfilled! (Isaiah 2:2&3, Zechariah 14:16) Abraham’s earthly body died, but Abraham just kept on living. He lives today. He is eternally alive because He believed in the One, True God. He will be very much alive when he and his descendants fully inherit that land. Death isn’t a problem for God’s promises.

I think Abraham had learned this lesson about the land that would someday be his. But now, in this chapter, there was a faith lesson to be learned about the son who had been promised…Isaac, who was alive and with him…who was to Abraham the greatest gift he had ever received from the LORD…
Abraham needed to learn that the gifts of God must not be loved more than the God of the gifts.

1. (:1&2) What did God ask Abraham to do? Why would God ask such a thing?

God asked Abraham to give back his gift. His son, Isaac, promised to Abraham, for whom Abraham had waited for many years, and who meant more to Abraham than anything in the world…God asked Abraham to give that gift back, to offer his own son as a sacrifice, a literal sacrifice, on an altar.

This idea had to be unthinkable when Abraham first heard it from the LORD. “What? Lord God, you don’t want us to sacrifice our children on an altar like all the heathens do around us!”

“Abraham – trust Me.”

“But Lord God, Isaac means all the world to me!”

“Abraham – more than Me?”

“But Lord God, no one in my family will understand this – I will be hated and shunned forever!”

“Abraham – do you love Me? Trust Me”.

Why would God ask this? We’ll see.

2. (:3&4) Why would Abraham obey such an order?

“But Lord God…how can I? I don’t have it within me to do this! I could not possibly make my feet walk to that place of sacrifice and then tie my beloved son to the altar, and then raise the knife…..”

“Abraham – do you know Who I Am? Don’t you know I would never ask you to do anything that wasn’t totally compatible with Who I Am? Do you believe that I love you? Do you believe that I keep my promises? Do you remember that I promised you would be the father of many nations, and that Isaac would be the way I would fulfill that promise? Do you believe I keep my promises?”
“Yes, Lord, I do.”

“Then obey, Abraham. Trust me.”

“Yes, Lord.”

3. (:5-8) What did Abraham expect to happen?

From these verses it is clear that Abraham may not have known how the LORD God was going to do it, but he believed that he and Isaac would walk back down together from that mount of sacrifice. Did Abraham think the LORD would raise Isaac from the dead after he was sacrificed? We don’t know – all we know is that Abraham was planning on walking back home with his alive son.

4. (:9-12) What was God trying to accomplish with this trial?

I think He was helping Abraham see Who he believed in, and how very far-reaching the promises were that that One had given.

Faith is not for the things we can see, but for the things we can’t. Abraham’s faith had grown as he waited so long for that gift of God, the son of promise. Now that the gift of God was here, there was still so much more to have faith for. There was a whole future for a whole world. There was a Savior to come. There was salvation to be provided. The LORD was giving Abraham the privilege of having faith in the whole promise – not just the first part of it.

5. (:13-14) Once the Lord God saw that Abraham would withhold nothing from Him, God provided the sacrifice for Abraham to use. What does that tell you about the sacrifices God asks us for?

He asks us to make the sacrifice….and He also provides the sacrifice.

6. What did Abraham learn through this experience?

To trust the One, True God for not only the blessings he could see in this lifetime, but also for the ones which were coming far off into the future.
7. (:15-18) God’s promise of land and descendants was restated once more to Abraham…and then Abraham returned, with his alive, promised son, to live in that promised land…a land not controlled by Abraham, but controlled by the Philistines…to wait for many more promises to come. What does that tell you about Abraham’s faith?

Faith isn’t faith if it lives in a safe little bubble. Faith is faith when all around things look impossible. Faith is believing God, taking Him at His word, even when it sure doesn’t look like God is right. Faith is faith. Faith is not sight. Faith is not a good feeling. Faith is trusting what God has said….no matter what. *(Hebrews 11:1)*

8. (:20-24) Who are these people, and why would Abraham care about them?

These people are the family Abraham left behind when he, by faith, followed God’s directions to leave and go to the promised land. Why does Abraham care about them? He is going to choose a wife for his beloved son, Isaac, from amongst these people.

9. What did you learn from this chapter?

God’s promises are for real life right now, and also for the future. We can trust that the promises of God are strong and true even in the worst times of life, and even in death. Abraham, a man of great faith, walked through the worst of life and learned faith as he went.

“...for in it the righteousness of God is revealed, from faith to faith; as it is written, ‘The just shall live by faith’ “  *Romans 1:17*
Lesson 8
Questions for you to Answer

Genesis 23&24

Memory verse for this study:

“Oh, taste and see that the LORD is good; blessed is the man who trusts in Him.” (Psalms 34:8)

1. (23:1) How old was Sarah when she died? How old was Abraham when Sarah died? How old was Isaac when she died? (Genesis 17:17) (Genesis 21:5)

2. Read through the rest of Chapter 23 and answer these questions:

a. How did buying this plot of ground help Abraham as he grieved the loss of his wife, Sarah?

b. The land was his in the sense that the Lord had given it to him. Why would he be so desirous to pay money for it?

c. What did you learn about Mediterranean bargaining from this chapter?

d. What did you learn about the value of a funeral and a burial from this chapter?
3. (24:1-4) What was Abraham asking for when he asked his servant to “put his hand under his thigh”?

4. Which servant did Abraham choose for this job? Why?

5. What was the servant’s job?

6. Why did Abraham not want his son, Isaac, to have a wife from the people who lived near him?

7. (24:5-9) Did Abraham want his son to go back to his native land?

8. Why not?

9. What did Abraham expect to happen so that a woman from his own family would be willing to come away with this servant of Abraham’s?

10. (24:10-14) What does this passage tell you about Abraham’s trusted servant?

11. (24:15-28) What does this passage tell you about Rebekah?

12. (24:29-51) What does this passage tell you about Laban?

13. (24:52-61) Why would Rebekah have been willing to leave so suddenly with a stranger, to leave her home forever and be married to a man she had never met?

14. (24:62-67) What does this passage tell you about Isaac?
Lesson 8
Genesis 23&24

We have seen Abraham waiting on God’s promises and growing in his faith as he waited. In today’s chapters we see a couple of very practical things Abraham does as he waits. He grieves for his wife, Sarah, when she dies. And he makes arrangements for a wife for his son, Isaac.

You see, life goes on as we wait. It’s OK. God gives us many blessings as we patiently wait on Him.

A Few Facts:
- The cave Abraham purchased in which to bury Sarah would also be used to bury Abraham, Isaac, Rebekah, Leah, and Jacob.
- The amount Abraham paid for the cave was high for those days.
- Ephron would have benefitted tax-wise if he sold Abraham the field as well as the cave
- The journey to Mesopotamia was over 500 miles
- Watering 10 camels was hard work
- The veil was a sign of modesty and respect

1. (23:1) How old was Sarah when she died? How old was Abraham when Sarah died? How old was Isaac when she died? (Genesis 17:17) (Genesis 21:5)

Just a little Bible math: Sarah was 127 when she died. If we do a little math, we can answer these other questions. We know from Genesis 17:17 that Sarah was 90 when Isaac was born, and Abraham was 100. So Abraham was 10 years older than Sarah. That means Abraham was 137 when Sarah died. And Isaac was 37 when Sarah died.
2. Read through the rest of Chapter 23 and answer these questions:

a. How did buying this plot of ground help Abraham as he grieved the loss of his wife, Sarah?

I would guess it was a help to Abraham to know that he was doing the last thing he could do for her – giving her a place to rest in the land God had promised to the both of them.

b. The land was his in the sense that the Lord had given it to him. Why would he be so desirous to pay money for it?

The land was not his yet. He knew that it would be his, and his family's some day, but they didn't yet have all the rights to the land. They had not purchased it, nor had they won it in battle. There were still people living in that land who considered it theirs. Abraham wanted a clear and uncontested title to this little part of that land. He was willing to wait for God to work out His promises about the land as a whole, but for now he knew he needed title to this piece where he could bury Sarah.

c. What do you learn about Mediterranean bargaining from this chapter?

It seems to me that the people who lived here were extremely polite and complimentary in everything they said to Abraham, and offered him land for free – but that Abraham was wise to insist on paying for it – since that is probably what the owners of the land were wanting all along. The bargaining included a lot of flowery praise which was just for the purpose of making everyone feel good, but was not to be taken at face value as the bargaining moved toward its logical conclusion – a sale.

d. What do you learn about the value of a funeral and a burial from this chapter?

I think a burial and funeral are essential parts of the healing which is so badly needed at the death of a loved one. From my own personal experience, having laid to rest a Mom and a Dad, and a Mother-in-law and a Father-in-law, the pain of putting a loved one in the grave begins the release process for the one left behind to go
on living. It doesn’t put that loved one “away” where they won’t be thought of anymore, of course. But it does help the healing process for the one who must find a way to keep living life. I think it probably helped Abraham to have a plot of ground he could go back to again and again - a “connection” somehow with this woman who had walked by his side for so long. And I know that it helped future generations of the children and grandchildren of Abraham and Sarah to have a place they could point to and remember her – to proclaim to themselves and to the world that she had lived and died and was real.

3. (24:1-4) What was Abraham asking for when he asked his servant to “put his hand under his thigh”?
This was a personal, intimate act, reserved for times when the most personal of promises were made.

4. Which servant did Abraham choose for this job? Why?
This man was the oldest servant, the one who had been with Abraham the longest, and no doubt the one Abraham trusted the most. This was the most important job Abraham had to do right now. Choosing the right wife for his son, Isaac, one who would also love and respect the One, True God, would mean the family would go forward in the right direction. To choose the wrong wife might mean the end of a family of faith.

5. What was the servant's job?
Search for the right woman amongst the people of Abraham.

6. Why did Abraham not want his son, Isaac, to have a wife from the people who lived around them?
The people who lived around Abraham and Isaac were Canaanites, idol worshippers. It was highly unlikely a Canaanite woman could be found who worshipped only the One, True God.
7. (24:5-9) Did Abraham want his son to go back to his native land?

No – Isaac was not to go back there.

8. Why not?

Abraham would take no chances that Isaac would never come back to live in the promised land. Abraham took very seriously his promises from God of a land and a future and descendants. He was willing to do everything possible to stay right where the Lord had put him.

9. What did Abraham expect to happen so that a woman from his own family would be willing to come away with this servant of Abraham’s?

He expected an angel of God to go before his servant and prepare the way for this woman to be found and brought back to Isaac.

10. (24:10-14) What does this passage tell you about Abraham’s trusted servant?

Well first, it tells me he was trusted for a reason. He fulfilled all that Abraham asked him to do. But more than that, it tells me this servant was also a God-fearer. This servant was also a believer in the One, True God.

11. (24:15-28) What does this passage tell you about Rebekah?

She was gutsy. She was strong. She was thoughtful of others and could be counted on. She was a people-person. She was brave. And she, also, wanted to know and have faith in the One, True God.

12. (24:29-51) What does this passage tell you about Laban?

Laban was smart. He had an eye for money. He knew how to bargain. He had some idea of Who the One, True God was.
13. (24:52-61) Why would Rebekah have been willing to leave so suddenly with a stranger, to leave her home forever and be married to a man she had never met?

Practically speaking, we can assume the culture she lived in was going to eventually ask her to marry and live with her husband’s family. That idea was not new to her. Perhaps she was ready to make the marriage decision. Maybe she was ready for an adventure. And last, and this is just a guess, I think she was longing for a life full of people who knew and sought after the One, True God. This servant spoke easily of God. His master must be the same. She knew it would be hard and frightening, but she was up for it. I think she had been prepared by God for this next step in her life.

You see, God cared who the wife of Isaac would be. The choice of the woman was just as important as the choice of the man. We saw that with Sarah, and we’ll see it with many more wives and mothers to come in the long genealogies of the Jews.

14. (24:62-67) What does this passage tell you about Isaac?

I picture Isaac as a sensitive man – emotional. His new wife helped him get on with life after his mother’s death. We see in the next few chapters of Genesis that Isaac never really had great accomplishments attached to his name. I think he was a lover, not a fighter. 😊

If we wait in faith, God strengthens us. (Psalm 27:14, Isaiah 40:31). If we wait in faith, His Word gives us hope. (Psalm 130:5). If we wait in faith, God wants to give us more than we ever thought He was going to, and He wants to bathe our lives in so much love that we sigh for joy. (Isaiah 30:18). God knows how hard it is for us to wait. (Psalm 40:1).

If waiting is hard for you, it’s ok. Just do it anyway. It’s worth it.
Lesson 9

Questions for you to Answer

Genesis 25&26

Memory verse for this study:

“Oh, taste and see that the LORD is good; blessed is the man who trusts in Him.” (Psalms 34:8)

1. (25:1-6) How many other wives did Abraham have besides Sarah?
2. How many sons did Abraham have with his wife, Keturah?
3. Were those sons Jews? Are their offspring Jews today?
4. (25:7-11) How old was Abraham when he died? How long did he live after Sarah died? Who saw to his burial? Where was he buried?
5. (25:12-18) How old was Ishmael when he died? How many sons did he have?
6. (25:19-21) What did Rebekah have in common with her deceased mother-in-law, Sarah?
7. (25:19-28) How long did Isaac and Rebekah have to wait for their first children to be born? What were the names of the twins? How were they different from one another?
8. (25:23) What prophecy did the Lord give to Rebekah about the twins?
9. (25:29-34) What does this passage tell us about the character of Esau? The character of Jacob?

10. (26:1-5) What important thing did Abraham have, which Isaac inherited?

11. (26:6-11) What not so great thing did Isaac inherit from Abraham?

12. (26:12-14) What happened to Isaac, just like it happened to Abraham?

13. (26:13-18) Just as the surrounding peoples were _____________ of Abraham, so they were also _____________ of Isaac.

14. (26:19-22) What did Isaac do in the same way Abraham had done it? (see Genesis 21:22-34)

15. (26:23-25) What did the Lord do for Isaac, just as He had done for Abraham?

16. (26:26-31) Did Isaac relate to his neighbors the same way Abraham had?

17. (26:32-33) Why was water so important?

18. (26:34-35) Which of Isaac's sons was definitely not following in his father's footsteps? Why wasn't he?

19. What heritage are you passing on to your children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren?

20. What are some practical, fun ways parents can pass on the heritage of loving the Word of God to future generations?
Lesson 9
*Genesis 25&26*

1. (25:1-6) How many other wives did Abraham have besides Sarah?

   Only one other wife: Keturah. Sarah had died, and Abraham married again.

2. How many sons did Abraham have with his wife, Keturah?

   Abraham had 6 sons with his second wife, Keturah. From these verses it looks like Abraham also had concubines (don’t know how many), and those concubines also had sons.

3. Were the sons of Kerurah and the concubines Jews? Are their descendants Jews today?

   Here’s the thing to realize from these verses: Abraham did have other children besides Isaac…but Isaac was the one and only “son of promise”. Isaac was the only son of Abraham through whom the promises of God would pass. Isaac was the only “Jew”. The other children of Abraham were loved by and blessed by their father, but only the son of promise would be the one to fulfill the promises of God to Abraham – a land and descendants greater in number than the sand of the sea.

   Let’s take this a generation further: Isaac grew up, married, and had two sons: Esau and Jacob. But only one of those sons, Jacob, was a believer in the One, True God. Only Jacob would be the one through whom the promises would flow, the promises God had made to Abraham and confirmed to Isaac. Jacob was a “Jew”, Esau was not.

   Therefore, Jews throughout history are defined as any people who are descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. None of the other sons of Abraham or Isaac were then or are now Jews. The promises and commandments of God specifically for the Jews are only for the descendants of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.
4. (25:7-11) How old was Abraham when he died? How long did he live after Sarah died? Who saw to his burial? Where was he buried?

Abraham was 137 when Sarah died. And then he died himself at the age of 175. So he lived 38 years after her death. His sons, Isaac and Ishmael, buried him in the same cave Abraham had purchased 38 years previously when he buried Sarah.

5. (25:12-18) How old was Ishmael when he died? How many sons did he have?

Ishmael lived to 137 years. He had 12 sons.

6. (25:19-21) What did Rebekah have in common with her deceased mother-in-law, Sarah?

Rebekah was also barren. She could not conceive. The twins born to her were a result of prayer. The pregnancy was a work of God.

7. (25:19-28) How long did Isaac and Rebekah have to wait for their first children to be born? What were the names of the twins? How were they different from one another?

From verses 20 and 25 we see that Isaac was 40 when he married Rebekah, and 60 when the twins were born. So they waited 20 years for children. The twins’ names were Jacob and Esau, and they couldn’t have been more different…in appearance, interests, emotional make-up, and most of all – in their desire to know and believe in the One, True God.

8. (25:23) What prophecy did the Lord give to Rebekah about the twins?

The Lord told Rebekah that the older of her twins (Esau) would end up serving the younger (Jacob). He also told her that these two men would both produce strong, powerful nations.

9. (25:29-34) What does this passage tell us about the character of Esau? The character of Jacob?

Esau loved the world. Jacob was a schemer.
10. (26:1-5) What important thing did Abraham have, which Isaac inherited?
The blessing of God.

11. (26:6-11) What not so great thing did Isaac inherit from Abraham?
The sin of deviousness.

12. (26:12-14) What happened to Isaac, just like it happened to Abraham?
Prosperity.

13. (26:13-18) Just as the surrounding peoples were _____ Jealous____ of Abraham, so they were also ____Jealous____ of Isaac.

14. (26:19-22) What did Isaac do in the same way Abraham had done it? (see Genesis 21:22-34)
He dealt wisely and kindly with his hateful neighbors. He did not have a fighting spirit

15. (26:23-25) What did the Lord do for Isaac, just as He had done for Abraham?
He renewed the covenant

16. (26:26-31) Did Isaac relate to his neighbors the same way Abraham had?
Exactly the same. Respect. Caution

17. (26:32-33) Why was water so important?
Couldn’t live without it. Water is actually every bit as important today, but in America we don’t have a sense of urgency about it because it is so readily
available, and protected by law through our governmental agencies. In Isaac’s day each group of people had to find and protect their own water sources.

18. (26:34-35) Which of Isaac’s sons was definitely not following in his father’s footsteps? Why wasn’t he?

Esau married idol-worshippers.

19. What heritage are you passing on to your children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren?

20. What are some practical, fun ways parents can pass on the heritage of loving the Word of God to future generations?

Here are a few ideas I’ve thought of...some of them I used with our children as they were growing up, and some I wish I had:

1. Read the Word of God to them.

2. Let them know you personally love the Word of God and read it every day.

3. Memorize scripture together.

4. Quote your memorized scripture to them

5. Have Bible Memory contests

6. Use scripture when answering questions.

7. The Bible in 90 Days. www.Biblein90days.org

8. Buy them great Bible study books or games:

9. Plan a special meal, and invite them to come, letting them know the reason for the evening is so you can tell them your story of how you came to know Jesus and what are your favorite verses in the Bible.

10. Tell them stories from the Bible about Families, and the value of handing down the truth of the Word of God from one generation to the next. (Like the story of Ruth)
11. Put together a unique photo album. On the left side of the page put a picture, and on the right side, write the story of that picture....what was happening, who is in the picture...and what you learned from God during that time.

12. Compile a family genealogy, and indicate what you know about each person’s relationship to Jesus. Ask your children or grandchildren to help with the research or the compiling.

13. Be sure your children see you praying.

14. Sing scripture choruses together.

15. If you play the piano, grab a hymnbook and let them turn the pages...talk about the words of the hymns. Learn some hymns together. Teach them to harmonize.

16. Take them on a short-term mission trip with you. What a rich experience for them to meet other kids their own age, in a different culture, who also love the Bible (in their own language) and Jesus.

17. Teach them a verse or two in another language. Pray for children who speak that language.

18. Take them to a baseball game, or fishing, or gardening...and talk about the things you are learning from the Lord.

19. Turn them on to a good Christian kids' website.

20. Invite their friends over for dinner. Welcome them into the fellowship of your family as you pray before a meal, and talk about Jesus and scripture passages as you eat.

21. Are you fully committed to doing things God’s ways until the end of your life? Do your children know that? Psalm 119:112 says “I have inclined my heart to perform Your statutes forever, to the very end.”

22. Do your children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren know you spend time in the Word every day? Tell them what you read and learned today.

Proverbs 13:22 “A good man leaves an inheritance to his children’s children...”
Lessons 10
Questions for you to Answer

Genesis 27 & 28

Memory verse for this study:

“Oh, taste and see that the LORD is good; blessed is the man who trusts in Him.” (Psalms 34:8)

1. (27:1-4) What “growing old” challenges was Isaac experiencing?

2. What did Isaac want to do for his son, Esau, before he died?

3. What kind of food did Isaac especially like?

4. (27:5-10) Which son was Rebekah most fond of?

5. What did Rebekah want Jacob to do?

6. What did Rebekah want for Jacob?

7. (27:11&12) How did Jacob react to his mother’s plan?

8. (27:13-17) Was Rebekah doing a wrong thing?
9. Did she have any reason to think she might have the right to do this? 
   *(Genesis 25:23)*

10. (27:18-29) Was Jacob doing a wrong thing?

11. Did he have any reason to think he might have the right to do this? 
   *(Genesis 25:29-33)*

12. What was wrong with Jacob and his mother that they were so willing to 
    deceive Isaac in order to get what they wanted?

13. What blessings did Isaac give to Jacob (unaware that this was not Esau)?

14. Were those blessings still going to belong to Jacob even though he got 
    them through deceit?

15. (27:30-40) What happened?

16. Why do you think Isaac was “trembling” when he found out what his 
    younger son had done?

17. Why couldn’t Isaac just take back his blessing to Jacob?

18. What blessings did Isaac give to Esau?

19. (27:41 – 28:5) How did Esau react to this situation?

20. How did Rebekah react to Esau’s emotion?

21. What did Rebekah do to get Isaac to go along with her plan?
22. Where was Jacob being sent?

23. What blessing did Isaac give him before he went?

24. What does this blessing tell you about Isaac’s feelings for Jacob now?

25. (28:6-9) How did Esau react to Jacob’s escape?

26. What does that tell you about Esau?

27. (28:10-15) What was happening here?

28. Jacob already had been given the blessing of Abraham by his father, Isaac. Why did God repeat this blessing to Jacob?

29. (28:16-22) What was Jacob’s response to this dream?

30. Is it ever right to do something wrong in order to make something right happen?

31. What is the difference between “knowing about God & believing He exists”, and “having a personal relationship with God”?

32. Does God want a personal relationship with us?

33. What was God willing to do to make sure you had a personal relationship with Him?
Lesson 10

Genesis 27 & 28

1. (27:1-4) What “growing old” challenges was Isaac experiencing?

Probably the very same ones we face today. His eyesight was dimming – his whole body was dimming.

2. What did Isaac want to do for his son, Esau, before he died?

He wanted to pass on the family fortune, basically. Normally, a double portion of the inheritance should have gone to Esau as the oldest. He should have inherited the right to lead and to have authority over the whole household. And also, in the special case of these people who had a covenant relationship with the One, True God, Isaac might have wanted to pass on the special blessing of God to his oldest son – the blessing that said a land and a huge nation would come from them.

There’s a problem here, though. Well, actually, two problems. One is that Esau had already given away his birthright – remember? – when he was so hungry he sold it to Jacob for a bowl of stew?

The second problem is that Esau was not a worshipper of the One, True God. How could Isaac have been so “blind” that he did not realize he could not pass on the blessings of the One, True God to his son who was not a believer in Him?

3. What kind of food did Isaac especially like?

Meat and potatoes.

4. (27:5-10) Which son was Rebekah most fond of?

Rebekah loved Jacob the best.
5. What did Rebekah want Jacob to do?

Rebekah wanted Jacob to lie to his father so that he could inherit the blessing he technically already had the right to – Esau had sold him the birthright.

6. What did Rebekah want for Jacob?

She wanted hope and a future for him. She was going about it the wrong way.

7. (27:11&12) How did Jacob react to his mother’s plan?

He wasn’t sure he could pull it off – he didn’t want to get caught lying to his Dad – but he did want all the blessings to pass on to him –

8. (27:13-17) Was Rebekah doing a wrong thing?

Yes.

9. Did she have any reason to think she might have the right to do this?

(Genesis 25:23)

She might have believed Jacob had the right to get the inheritance, and so why not deceive to get what is supposed to be yours?….But she must have known the deviousness was wrong. She might have been so sunk into her desire for things and security that she didn’t care if it was wrong. She might have believed in the One, True God…but she sure wasn’t walking with Him through this situation.

10.(27:18-29) Was Jacob doing a wrong thing?

Yes.

11. Did he have any reason to think he might have the right to do this?

(Genesis 25:29-33)

Yes. But he was going about it the wrong way. We’ll see what happens – he will pay for this dearly.
12. What was wrong with Jacob and his mother that they were so willing to deceive Isaac in order to get what they want?

They didn’t seem to have a walk with God. They were not communicating with Him, or caring about Him. Jacob, I think, might have said he believed in the One, True God at this point, but later chapters will show us he didn’t.

13. What blessings did Isaac give to Jacob (unaware that this was not Esau)?

Everything.

14. Were those blessings still going to belong to Jacob even though he got them through deceit?

Yes.

15. (27:30-40) What happened?

Now the cork pops out of the bottle.

16. Why do you think Isaac was “trembling” when he found out what his younger son had done?

I think there might have been a couple of reasons: First, he was mad that he had been deceived in something which meant so much to him. But second, I think it’s also possible he was trembling with fear of God – suddenly realizing how close he came to giving God’s own blessings to one whom he knew did not respect or fear God.

17. Why couldn’t Isaac just take back his blessing to Jacob?

The law of the Patriarch was the law of the land. Once spoken, never to be undone.
18. What blessings did Isaac give to Esau?

He had to really stretch to come up with 3 things:
- You will live off the land
- You will be a fighter
- You will someday throw off the yolk of Jacob.

19. (27:41 – 28:5) How did Esau react to this situation?

He was so angry he planned to kill Jacob once their father had died.

20. How did Rebekah react to Esau’s emotion?

She was afraid for Jacob, and wanted to get him to a safe place.

21. What did Rebekah do to get Isaac to go along with her plan?

She reminds Isaac of Esau’s flaunting of his Canaanite girlfriends. Does Isaac want Jacob to stay and follow the evil ways of his brother?

22. Where was Jacob being sent?

To live with Rebekah’s brother, Laban.

23. What blessing did Isaac give him before he went?

He gave him the blessing of Abraham. He officially passed on to Jacob the family blessing from God and covenant relationship with God. He made a point of it.

24. What does this blessing tell you about Isaac’s feelings for Jacob now?

I think we see here that Isaac cared deeply for Jacob, even though they didn’t have as much in common as Isaac and Esau. And I think Isaac realized Jacob was the one God had put His hand on for the future of the family.
25. (28:6-9) How did Esau react to Jacob's escape?

He was mad and took the opportunity to take out revenge on his parents by hurting them deeply – by marrying a Canaanite woman.

26. What does that tell you about Esau?

He was not just mad at Jacob. He was not just mad at his parents. He was mad at God. He was not a believer in the One, True God. Yes, he knew God existed, and he wanted blessings from God, but no, he didn't want to bow his knee before God. Believers bow before the One, True God.

27. (28:10-15) What was happening here?

Jacob personally encountered the One, True God for the first time in his life.

28. Jacob already had the promise of the blessing of Abraham being passed on to him – his father, Isaac, had given him that blessing. Why did God also give the blessing Himself?

The Lord was making sure Jacob knew this had to be a personal relationship between God and himself, not just an inheriting of his father’s relationship.

29. (28:16-22) What was Jacob’s response to this dream?

Jacob had a lot to learn about the One, True God. He realized now the reality of God. He was beginning to understand the importance of the promises….but he didn’t yet want to have a personal relationship with Him. He basically was saying at this point: “If God will give to me, I will believe in Him. He will be my God if He will meet my needs.”

He had a long journey to make before he someday would fall on his knees before his amazing, patient Lord, and actually believe in Him.
30. Is it ever right to do something wrong in order to make something right happen?

No.

31. What is the difference between “knowing about God, believing He exists” and “having a personal relationship with God”?

Big difference. The personal relationship is all that counts. The “knowing about God” and “believing He exists”, which are only in the head, are not at all what God wants from us.

32. Does God want a personal relationship with us?

Oh, yes.

33. What was God willing to do to make sure you had a personal relationship with Him?

“For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.” John 3:16
Lesson 11
Questions for you to Answer

Genesis 29

Memory verse for this study:

“Oh, taste and see that the LORD is good; blessed is the man who trusts in Him.” (Psalms 34:8)

1. (:1-3) What was the first thing Jacob went toward as he approached the land of his destination?

2. What was a very practical reason Jacob would seek out a well?

3. If you were new to an area, where would you go first to get your bearings?

4. (:4-6) Was it just a coincidence that Jacob met up so soon with the very people he was seeking?

5. (:7-10) What did Jacob do for these shepherds?

6. Did he have a motive other than just being helpful to a group of shepherds?

7. (:11&12) Why was Jacob so emotional?

8. (:13-15) Why all the kissing?
9. How long did Jacob stay with his uncle Laban, as his guest?

10. Even though Jacob was Laban’s guest for this month, does it look like he was also working for Laban? Why would he do that?

11. Was Laban offering Jacob a job?

12. (:16&17) What was the difference between Laban’s two daughters?

13. (:18-20) What “wages” did Jacob ask of Laban in exchange for staying on and working for him?

14. Why was he willing to work this hard and this long?

15. What are some of the hard things we are willing to do because of love?

16. What was Jesus willing to do because of love? (Romans 5:8)

17. (:21-25) How could Jacob not have realized he was with the wrong sister?

18. (:26-30) What do we now realize about Laban?

19. How was Jacob a lot like Laban?

20. Did Jacob get the girl he loved in the end?

21. What else does Jacob get?

22. (:31-35) Who were the first 4 children born to Jacob?
23. Who was their mother?

24. What did Rachel have in common with Sarah and Rebekah, her grandmother-in-law, and her mother-in-law?

25. What do you suppose the LORD was teaching Jacob?

26. What do you suppose the LORD was teaching Rachel?

27. What good things were coming out of a bad situation?
Lesson 11

Genesis 29

Memory verse for this study:

“Oh, taste and see that the LORD is good; blessed is the man who trusts in Him.” (Psalms 34:8)

Meet the Ultimate Dysfunctional Family:

- It started out so fine: Isaac and Rebekah loved the Lord God and wanted to have a Godly family.
- They had twins, Jacob and Esau…and downhill it went.
- Rebekah loved Jacob the best.
- Isaac loved Esau the best.
- Rebekah stooped to lying and cheating (manipulating) in order to make her husband do what she wanted him to do.
- Jacob, also a manipulator, cheated his brother, Esau.
- Esau wanted to kill Jacob.
- Jacob had to run away from his home.
- Esau did not love the One, True God.
- Jacob loved the One, True God, but he lived a life full of sin.
- Esau married ungodly women in order to spite his mother and father.
- We will see…Jacob ended up with 2 wives…Esau had many
- Jacob in turn would be cheated and lied to by his uncle, Laban.
- Jacob in this chapter would bring four children into the world, all from a wife he did not love.
- The wife Jacob did love could not have children.

How did it get so bad? Isaac was the “son of promise”. All of God’s magnificent promises to Isaac's father, Abraham, passed on to Isaac. The land was his….the innumerable descendants would come from him….the future blessing of the world rested on his shoulders.

How did this little family full of the future get so off-track?
What had happened to the sweet relationship with the One, True God that Abraham had? (we will see the answer to this in future chapters)

1. (:1-3) What was the first thing Jacob went toward as he approached the land of his destination?

He headed toward a well.

2. What was a very practical reason Jacob would seek out a well?

He was probably thirsty – in fact, a well was probably the first place of stopping for most travelers, since a traveler had a basic need which could not be denied for long – thirst.

And, if he had been looking for social contact, the well was the place to find it. He could find out exactly where he was, how far he was from where he was heading, and he would learn the latest news of the area. The well was a social place – comparable to the corner coffee shop, or the Post Office in small town, America.

3. If you were new to an area, where would you go first to get your bearings?

4. (:4-6) Was it just a coincidence that Jacob met up so soon with the very people he was seeking?

No, of course not. We see over and over again that there are no coincidences in God's world. God’s hand is always on every situation we find ourselves in.

5. (:7-10) What did Jacob do for these shepherds?

He rolled the stone away and watered their flocks. A very kind and unexpected thing for a traveler to do.

6. Did he have a motive other than just being helpful to a group of shepherds?

I think the very pretty shepherdess who had just arrived might have had something to do with his generosity.
7. (:11&12) Why was Jacob so emotional?

For one thing, he was probably tired. He was away from home. He had found the little community of people he had been seeking. He was probably relieved that his journey was over. He might have been lonely. He might have been homesick and happy that he was once again with family.

And – as we have already seen and will see in future chapters – Jacob was a very emotional guy. That’s how God had wired him up.

8. (:13-15) Why all the kissing?

This was not romantic kissing – but simply an expression of “hello”.

9. How long did Jacob stay with his uncle Laban, as his guest?

One month.

10. Even though Jacob was Laban’s guest for this month, does it look like he was also working for Laban? Why would he do that?

It was common practice to work alongside your host when you stayed with him. Of course…what else would you do? There were not a whole lot of vacation or recreational choices for what to do with yourself during the day.

11. Was Laban offering Jacob a job?

Yes.

12. (:16&17) What was the difference between Laban’s two daughters?

One was pretty – one was not.
13. (:18-20) What “wages” did Jacob ask of Laban in exchange for staying on and working for him?

Jacob couldn’t go back home – so staying was a pretty good idea. And it would only have been right for Laban to pay him,. So the “wages” Jacob most wanted he asked for: He wanted to marry the daughter of Laban – the pretty one – Rachel.

14. Why was he willing to work this hard and this long?

Love.

15. What are some of the hard things we are willing to do because of love?

16. What was Jesus willing to do because of love? (Romans 5:8)

17. (:21-25) How could Jacob not have realized he was with the wrong sister?

It was dark. They had been partying. She must have been very quiet – no conversation. Oh well – who knows? He definitely was surprised at seeing Leah beside him in the morning.

18. (:26-30) What do we now realize about Laban?

He was devious.

19. How was Jacob a lot like Laban?

Also devious.

20. Did Jacob get the girl he loved in the end?

Yes.
21. What else did Jacob get?

He got a situation he did not ask for, a wife he did not want. He now was the husband of two wives, which was a disobedience to God’s rules. A whole keg of trouble would now open up as Jacob jumped headfirst into another dysfunctional lifestyle - polygamy.

22. (:31-35) Who were the first 4 children born to Jacob?

Reuben, Simeon, Levi & Judah.

23. Who was their mother?

Leah.

24. What did Rachel have in common with Sarah and Rebekah, her grandmother-in-law and her mother-in-law?

She was barren. There would have to be a miracle for her to conceive and have a baby. Why so many barren women in this family? I think they were probably God’s way of opening up opportunities for miracles – so that this little dysfunctional family would keep remembering Who was really in charge.

25. What do you suppose the LORD was teaching Jacob?

26. What do you suppose the LORD was teaching Rachel?

27. What good things were coming out of a bad situation?

This dysfunctional family will embarrass us and make us mad as we read through the rest of their history. We will want to spank them, to lecture them, to throw our hands in the air….and we will be tempted to ask God to abandon them! But through them will come startling works of God. We will be shocked at God’s plan for this crazy family, crippled with sin:

- The 12 sons of Jacob will become the 12 tribes of Israel – the nation of Israel.
• All 12 tribes will be miraculously brought out of Egypt at the time of the Passover.
• They will inherit the land of Israel – splitting it up into 12 different sections.
• From one of these sons (Judah) will come the Messiah of Israel (about 2,000 years later)
• The New Jerusalem in the New Heaven and the New Earth will have 12 gates – each of them bearing the name of one of the 12 sons of Jacob.
Lesson 12
Questions for you to Answer

Genesis 30

Memory verse for this study:

“Oh, taste and see that the LORD is good; blessed is the man who trusts in Him.” (Psalms 34:8)

By way of review, from chapter 29, verses 31-35, what were the names of Jacob’s first 4 children? And who was their mother?

What do you think: What was Leah thinking through all these births? Was God’s hand obvious to Leah?

1. (:1-2) Jacob and his favorite wife, Rachel, were having a little marital disharmony. What were they arguing about?

2. (:3-8) What was Rachel’s solution to their problem? Have we seen this solution before? How did it turn out last time?

   What was Rachel thinking through these two births? Was God’s hand obvious to Rachel?

3. (:9-13) When Leah saw Rachel blessed with sons, even though they were from Rachel’s handmaid, and not from Rachel’s own body, what was her reaction?
What was Leah thinking through these 2 births? Was God’s hand obvious to Leah?

4. (:14-21) What happened next?

What was Leah thinking through all these births? Was God’s hand obvious to Leah?

5. (:22-24) What finally happened?

What was Rachel thinking through this birth? Was God’s hand obvious to Rachel?

6. (:25-30) Jacob now had 2 wives, 2 concubines, and 12 children (11 sons and 1 daughter). What did he want to do?

7. What had happened to the wealth of Laban while Jacob had been with him?

8. (:31-36) What plan did Jacob come up with when he agreed to stay a little longer with his Uncle Laban?

9. Why was he willing to stay?

10. Was Jacob trying to cheat his Uncle Laban? Was his Uncle Laban trying to cheat him?

11. (:37-43) What do you learn about Jacob as you read these verses?

12. After all this time with Jacob living with him, what did Laban not realize about Jacob?
See if you can fill in this table of the 11 sons and 1 daughter of Jacob so far, beneath the names of their mothers, in their order of birth:

<table>
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<th></th>
<th>Leah</th>
<th>Bilhah</th>
<th>Zilpah</th>
<th>Rachel</th>
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Yet to come: There would be one more son of Jacob - Benjamin, born of Rachel, just as she hoped. His birth would be later, on their way back to the land of Jacob’s birth. Rachel would die at his birth. That would make 12 sons in all.
Lesson 12  
*Genesis 30*

The Lord God gave “boundaries”, or “laws” to the people of the world. These were not “suggestions” for happy living. No – these were Laws, which, if disobeyed, would bring sorrow and death to the ones who disobeyed, and quite often also to the other people in their lives. It was not unusual to find that there were “innocent victims” of the disobedience of those who rebelled against God’s laws.

So the Lord God, foreseeing such sorrow and suffering coming upon innocent people, laid down a few additional rules and guidelines to protect the innocent. The rules and guidelines basically said: “You shouldn’t do such and such, but if you do, here are a few more rules to tell everyone how to behave in the difficult situation you have created.”

At first look, it might seem that the Lord God is saying: “I don’t want you to do this, but I know you will, so I guess I’ve changed my mind – you can do it.”

But that’s not at all what the Lord God was saying. For instance:

God’s Law said “One man, one woman, one flesh”. *Genesis 2:24*. From the beginning the definition of marriage was: One man, one woman, one flesh. Multiple wives were not OK.

But God, knowing the rebellious hearts of men and women, and knowing that they would, indeed, break the laws of marriage, put another law in place to protect children born into marriages between a man and multiple wives. *Deuteronomy 21:15-17* specifically protects the firstborn of a union between a man and the wife who is not his favorite.

Divorce also falls into this category. God hates divorce. But He put a “certificate of divorce” (*Deuteronomy 24:1-4*) into place in the days of Moses because He knew that divorce, though terrible, would definitely happen, and there would be innocent people to protect. See *Matthew 19:3-9*. When God allowed a “certificate of divorce” was He saying divorce was OK? Nope. He was saying the innocent parties should have some protection.
So, here in Chapter 30, we see a situation where multiple wives produced multiple children. We know without being told that there is going to be much strife, hurt, jealousy and unfairness as a result.

The Lord God actively worked in these lives – both the innocent and the guilty – protecting and helping and teaching – not because He suddenly decided multiple wives was permissible, but because He was protecting the innocent.

And – we will see as we read – He also was keeping His hand of protection on the guilty – who someday would realize their sin and come for forgiveness.

By way of review, from chapter 29, verses 31-35, what were the names of Jacob’s first 4 children? And who was their mother?

Reuben Leah
Simeon Leah
Levi Leah
Judah Leah

What was Leah thinking through all these births? Was God’s hand obvious to Leah?

My heart breaks for Leah. She seemed, all the way through this whole process of the birthing of the family of Jacob, to be so deeply wanting the love of her husband. She knew he loved Rachel best. She gave God the credit, again and again, for giving her one more chance to be loved.

1. (v:1-2) Jacob and his favorite wife, Rachel, were having a little marital disharmony. What were they arguing about?

Rachel was to the breaking point. She desperately wanted children, and stooped to the meanness of blaming Jacob for her infertility. Infertility is a painful, deep ache in the hearts of many women.

Jacob lashed back – it wasn’t his fault! (evidenced by the other four children he and Rachel’s sister, Leah, had already brought into the world)

Jacob and Rachel’s love for each other was tested here. Rachel had to have been wondering - was it enough to have the love of a good man when no children would ever come from their union? My answer would be yes! But I have
five children. I don’t know how to put myself in her shoes. It seems that for Rachel there was no simple answer to this grief and sense of failure and shame which would not go away.

2. (3-8) What was Rachel’s solution to their problem? Have we seen this solution before? How did it turn out last time?

Rachel said, “Fine, then! Take my maid and have children by her, and those children will legally be mine! I will not technically be barren if you can do this for me.”

Jacob complied (just as his grandfather, Abraham, had complied years before). And not only did he comply once – but it seems he complied at least twice:

| Dan      | Bilhah  
|          | (Rachel) |
| Naphtali | Bilhah  
|          | (Rachel) |

What was Rachel thinking through these two births? Was God’s hand obvious to Rachel?

She credited these two births to God – and she saw them as a victory over her non-barren sister!

3. (9-13) When Leah saw Rachel blessed with sons, even though they were from Rachel’s handmaid, and not from Rachel’s own body, what was her reaction?

True to the dysfunctional nature of this little family, Leah responded in jealousy to Rachel’s blessing. She therefore took her own maid, Zilpah, and gave her to Jacob so that he could produce children through her for Leah. She probably was assuming she was through bearing children herself. And, maybe there was a little “anything you can do I can do better…”.

| Gad      | Zilpah  
|          | (Leah) |
| Asher    | Zilpah  
|          | (Leah) |
What was Leah thinking through these two births? Was God’s hand obvious to Leah?

Leah was happy because of two more sons for herself, but does not credit God. Was she growing calloused and bitter? Were her own sinful actions and attitudes closing her off to the sweet presence of God? Had God’s blessings in her life gone uncared for? Was it because she still knew she was not the main love of Jacob’s life?

4. (14:1-21) What happened next?

Leah’s oldest son, Reuben, was old enough to be helping with the family business, and came in from the field with a gift of something delicious for his mother. Now it was Rachel’s turn to be jealous. She wanted Reuben to get the same delicious gift for her, and offered to let Jacob sleep with Leah again in return. Perhaps Jacob had begun favoring Rachel totally at this point. Yikes! Husband services for sale!

Leah brings forth not one more child, but three! Two sons and a daughter.

Issachar  Leah
Zebulun  Leah
Dinah  Leah

What was Leah thinking through all these births? Was God’s hand obvious to Leah?

Leah credited God with her newest two sons. There is no mention of how she felt about her daughter. She felt that surely now Jacob would at least give her as much attention as he did Rachel. She longed for him to “dwell” with her.

5. (22:21-24) What finally happened?

Suddenly, out of nowhere, a son was born to Rachel. Not to her handmaid. To Rachel herself. Her shame was over. The longing of her heart was satisfied.

Joseph  Rachel
What was Rachel thinking in this birth? Was God’s hand obvious to Rachel?

She credited God with the miracle. And she expected that another son would come someday, too.

6. (:25-30) Jacob now had 2 wives, 2 concubines, and 12 children (11 sons and 1 daughter). What did he want to do?

It was time to head back to a permanent home while his father was still is alive.

7. What had happened to the wealth of Laban while Jacob had been with him?

Laban’s wealth had increased greatly while Jacob served him. He knew very well that Jacob had been the reason for his prosperity.

8. (:31-36) What plan did Jacob come up with when he agreed to stay a little longer with his Uncle Laban?

Laban wanted to get a little more benefit from Jacob’s abilities, and Jacob agreed to stay a little longer. Jacob had his own reasons for doing so. Jacob suggested that the imperfect sheep and goats in Laban’s flock be given to him — and that he stay on to increase Laban’s and his own flock even more. Laban agreed — how could he lose?

9. Why was he willing to stay?

Jacob was willing to stay in order to increase his own wealth before he stepped out on his own. You see, Jacob knew something - he knew about a talent he had acquired and nurtured in the years of serving Uncle Laban.

10. Was Jacob trying to cheat his Uncle Laban? Was his Uncle Laban trying to cheat him?

Was Jacob cheating…or just being a shrewd businessman? He knew he could accomplish a great increasing of his own flock by ensuring that many, many of the future baby lambs and goats were imperfectly colored. Was he cheating? Was he simply being a good businessman? You decide.
And then, how about Laban? Did he have something up his sleeve? Further chapters will tell us – yes!

11. (:37-43) What do you learn about Jacob as you read these verses?

He had a terrific sense of how to care for and prosper a flock! Today we would call it “husbandry”. He had gone to the college of husbandry in Laban’s fields.

12. After all this time with Jacob living with him, what did Laban not realize about Jacob?

Laban did not realize Jacob’s great talent with the animals. He did not realize Jacob had perfected a way to determine the look of each animal produced. And, much bigger than that, Laban did not realize it was God hand of blessing on Jacob which had led to his own prosperity.

Here’s a look at the 11 sons and 1 daughter of Jacob so far, and their mothers, in their order of birth:

<table>
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<tr>
<td>Reuben</td>
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<td>Simeon</td>
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<td>Dan</td>
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<td>Dinah (girl)</td>
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<td>Joseph</td>
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Yet to be: There would be one more son of Jacob – Benjamin, born of Rachel, just as she hoped. His birth would be later, on their way back to the land where Isaac lived. Rachel would die at his birth. That would make 12 sons in all.

13. How did God protect the innocent?
14. How did God protect the guilty?

15. Can you see, in your own life, how God has protected you when you were innocent? And how about the times God has protected you when you were guilty?

16. How does that make you feel about God?
Lesson 13

Questions for you to Answer

Genesis 31

Memory verse for this study:

“Oh, taste and see that the LORD is good; blessed is the man who trusts in Him.” (Psalms 34:8)

1. (:1-3) What do you see in these verses which would have been encouraging for Jacob?

2. (:4-13 ) Why did Jacob’s “husbandry” work so well? Would that same technique work today?

3. (:14-16) Were Jacob’s wives OK with Jacob’s plan? Why?

4. (:17-21) Why was Jacob sneaking away? Why had Rachel stolen her father’s household idols?

5. (:22-24) Was God protecting Jacob as he ran away? Why?

6. (:26 – 32) Why was Laban so angry with Jacob? What reason did Jacob give for running away secretly?

7. (:33-35) What would have happened to Rachel if she had been caught with her father’s household idols?
8. (:36-42) What had caused this relationship to go so bad?

9. (:43-50) What was going to save this relationship? Is verse :49 a statement of love?

10. (:51-55) Where can this relationship go from here?

11. What can we learn from this chapter about relationships?
Lesson 13
Genesis 31

1. (:1-3) What do you see in these verses which would have been encouraging for Jacob?

Jacob might have been discouraged when he heard the sons of Laban complaining about him – and speaking untruthfully about him. He also might have been discouraged when he realized that Laban didn't like him that much anymore, even though Jacob had worked hard for Laban.

What was encouraging in this deteriorating family situation for Jacob? The Lord had spoken to him and had told him where to go and what to do. If we have direction from the Lord everything falls into place. God was interested in Jacob – watching his life closely – and God had a plan for Jacob’s life. I can’t think of anything more encouraging.

Sometimes it’s so easy to see the next move God would have you make…and then sometimes He seems to be silent. I prefer the times when I know God is showing me what to do next. I am learning to wait through the other times.

For Jacob, after 20 years of working for Laban and growing his not-so-little family, the time had come. God was speaking.

2. (:4-13) Why did Jacob’s “husbandry” work so well? Would that same technique work today?

Jacob had learned a lot about husbandry in his 20 years of serving Laban. He had become a very accomplished breeder of flocks. But in verse 9 Jacob makes it clear that he knows it is God who has blessed him. He doesn’t give praise to his own abilities.

Any technique the Lord wants to bless will be blessed. In all areas of our lives we must not be so much about knowledge and technique as we are about thankfulness to the Lord God for blessing us with unmerited gifts of love and protection.
3. (:14-16) Were Jacob’s wives OK with Jacob’s plan? Why?

Yes, they were. It looks like they were just as disillusioned with their father and his treatment of them as Jacob was. Also, they seemed to have felt that the wealth which Jacob had accumulated while in Haran was their right. They felt they deserved to inherit some money from their father anyway, so why not just take all the blessings God had bestowed on them and leave?

4. (:17-21) Why was Jacob sneaking away? Why had Rachel stolen her father’s household idols?

Jacob snuck away because he had learned not to trust Laban any farther than he could throw him. And Rachel...why was Rachel stealing household idols from her father? Maybe she saw them as a part of the wealth she deserved. Or maybe she was putting some belief in those idols. Whatever the reasons, sneaking away and stealing are good indications that this 20-year family relationship had eroded down to nothing.

5. (:22-24) Was God protecting Jacob as he fled? Why?

Yes, again we are seeing God’s protection for Jacob – seemingly whether he deserved it or not.

6. (:26-32) Why was Laban so angry with Jacob? What reason did Jacob give for running away secretly?

Laban accused Jacob of running away, robbing Laban of even having a chance to say goodbye to his daughters and grandchildren. Laban would have treated Jacob violently for this running away, but the Lord Himself had come to Laban in a dream and warned him not to retaliate.

Jacob tried to justify his actions by telling Laban he feared the father would not let his daughters and grandchildren leave.

7. (:33-35) What would have happened to Rachel if she had been caught with her father’s household idols?

If she had been caught she possibly could have been killed. Would her father have done that? I don’t know. But Jacob, when he made that rash statement, surely had no idea that his beloved Rachel was the idol thief.
8. (:36-42) What had caused this relationship to go so bad?


But – all those unspoken hurts and feelings and distrusts are getting voiced right now in these verses – Jacob is finally “telling it like it is”. Is it too little too late? Can Laban react to the truth and change? Can Jacob change?

Is there always a happy ending in relationships gone bad? Not necessarily. Just because an honest conversation begins to take place doesn’t mean the people involved are going to do the right thing or become close friends.

9. (:43-50) What was going to save this relationship? Is verse :49 a statement of love?

No, this wasn’t a sweet restoral of friendship. It was a boundary. It was these men’s way of saying – “Here’s the line, I will continue to trust you if you don’t step over it.” In verse 49 I think they are actually calling on the Lord to keep them apart. Safe from each other.

10. (:51-55) Where can this relationship go from here?

Together these relatives/enemies build an altar to the One, True God. They worship there together, and then leave the altar as they go their separate ways. They are agreeing on the most important truth – their mutual belief in the One, True God. And, they are establishing a boundary – this land is mine, that land is yours - admitting to God and each other that living together will never work again for them.

Maybe this is not the happy ending sitcoms are made of – but to me it actually seems like a happy ending anyway. It looks like these two men have made a decision before God about how to protect themselves from each other and yet still stay in the will of God.

11. What can we learn from this chapter about relationships?

In my experience I’ve found that sometimes relationships blossom and grow, turn into friendships, and give great pleasure. But sometimes circumstances or personalities or other things just stand in the way. In that case, I think it’s OK to be kind, draw some boundaries, and get on with life. You have a responsibility to
be loving and kind to those with whom you have contact, but you don’t have to be friends with everyone.

As believers in Jesus, we are citizens of the Kingdom of Heaven. This citizenship asks us to live differently than the world. So, whether we are talking about a relationship with boundaries, or a friendship, our citizenship in the Kingdom asks us to maintain our relationships on a much higher level.

Here are some verses which will help us look at our relationships with the eyes of God:

*Matthew 5:21&22*

*Matthew 5:38-42*

*Matthew 5:43-44*

*Matthew 6:14&15*

*Matthew 7:1-5*

*John 13:13&14*

*John 13:34&35*

*Romans 13:7*

*Romans 14:13*

*Ephesians 5:19-21*

*Philippians 2:3&4*

What did you see as you read through the above verses? “Just enough to get along” is not the standard Jesus wants us to meet, is it? Whether we are talking about a relationship with boundaries, or a friendship, the standard is still quite high, in fact, sometimes it may seem impossible.

When we find it to be just that – impossible – that’s when we bow our knee at the cross and ask Jesus to change us. He’s the only one who can.

Next week we’ll see Jacob finally understanding what it means to have a personal relationship with his God.
Lesson 14
Questions for you to Answer

Genesis 32

Memory verse for this study:

“Oh, taste and see that the LORD is good; blessed is the man who trusts in Him.” (Psalms 34:8)

1. (:1&2) What do you think it means when it says: “the angels of God met him.”?

We’ve seen before in Genesis that sometimes the Bible uses the term “Angel of the Lord”, or “Angel of God”, and we realize it’s not talking about just “angels”. Sometimes the meaning of the phrase is better understood as: “Heavenly Being”, which means God Himself.

Look up the following passages about “angels of God” or “angels of the Lord” and see if you can tell when it is referring to “angels”, and when it is referring the Lord Himself:

(hint: sometimes your Bible will help you with this – check to see if “angel” is capitalized – if it is, then the passage is referring to God Himself.)

- Genesis 22:3-12
- Numbers 22:22-35
- 2nd Kings 6:8-17
- Psalm 34:7
- Hebrews 1:14

2. (:2) The word “Mahanaim” means: “Double camp”. Why did Jacob name it this?
3. (:3-5) Jacob was on his way to reunite with his father & his mother in the land of Canaan, and his brother Esau in the land of Edom. Why was Jacob sending word and animals on ahead before he arrived?

4. (:6-8) What was Jacob’s reaction to hearing that Esau was coming to meet him?

5. (:9) As Jacob began his prayer to the LORD, what did he first remind the LORD of?

6. (:10) What was the next thing Jacob said as he prayed?

7. (:11-12) What next did he ask for? And how did he end this prayer?

8. (:9-12) Jacob’s prayer to the LORD, in verses 9-12, is a good model for us when we have urgent requests of the LORD. What were the simple parts of his prayer?
   a. (:9)
   b. (:10)
   c. (:11-12)
   d. (:12)

9. (:13-23) What did Jacob do as he finished praying?

10. Describe how you think Jacob felt this night as he waited to see what would happen when Esau arrived:

11. (:24-32) In this famous passage of scripture Jacob was wrestling with someone. Who was that someone? Why were they wrestling?
12. (:24) If this "Man" was the LORD, couldn't He have easily stopped the wrestling match any time He wanted to? Why didn't He?

13. What is the lesson for us here? Does starting a relationship with God sometimes feel like “wrestling” with God?

14. What kind of a change do you think we will see in Jacob from this point on?
Lesson 14

Genesis 32

Jacob knew about the One, True God. He had learned all about Him from his family and his growing up years. He even worshipped the One, True God. He had encountered the One, True God before. (Genesis 28:10-22 – Jacob’s ladder).

But before this wrestling match in Chapter 32 had Jacob actually known the One, True God? Had he actually ever committed his life to the One, True God?

1. (:1&2) What do you think it means when it says: “the angels of God met him.”?

We’ve seen before in Genesis that sometimes the Bible uses the term “Angel of the Lord”, or “Angel of God”, and we realize it’s not talking about just “angels”. Sometimes the meaning of the phrase is better understood as: “Heavenly Being”, which means God Himself.

Look up the following passages about “angels of God” or “angels of the Lord” and see if you can tell when it is referring to “angels”, and when it is referring the Lord Himself:

(hint: sometimes your Bible will help you with this – check to see if “angel” is capitalized – if it is, then the passage is referring to God Himself.)

- Genesis 22:3-12 The Angel of the Lord stops Abraham from slaying Isaac on the altar. This is God Himself.
- Numbers 22:22-35 The Angel of the Lord stands in front of the donkey and does not let him pass. This is God Himself.
- 2nd Kings 6:8-17 The mountain full of horses and chariots that Elisha’s servant saw were actual angels.
- Psalm 34:7 This verse could either be an actual angel protecting the people of God, or God Himself doing the protecting. Not sure.
• *Hebrews 1:14* This verse is talking about actual angels (ministering spirits) who take care of people who believe in Jesus, even before their actual time of belief.

2. (2) The word “Mahanaim” means: “Double camp”. Why did Jacob name it this?

I think it’s because Jacob was camped there with his family, but also he realized God was camped there, too.

3. (3-5) Jacob was on his way to reunite with his father & his mother in the land of Canaan, and his brother Esau in the land of Edom. Why was Jacob sending word and animals on ahead before he arrived?

He was sending them on to Edom where he knew Esau lived. The last time Jacob had seen Esau, Esau was promising to retaliate for the sneaky things Jacob had done. I think Jacob was trying to smooth the way for his meeting with Esau, and maybe to feel out whether his brother still hated him enough to kill him.

4. (6-8) What was Jacob’s reaction to hearing that Esau was coming to meet him?

Fear! He instinctively divided his travelling group into two groups – hoping that separating the two groups might mean at least one group would be able to run away and survive if Esau came with murder in his heart.

5. (9) As Jacob began his prayer to the LORD, what did he first remind the LORD of?

First, he reminded God that it was His idea for Jacob to come back home. And he reminded God also that He had promised He would bless Jacob for obeying and coming back home. In other words, Jacob fell before God and said – “You brought me here, please don’t let me die here!”

6. (10) What was the next thing Jacob said as he prayed?

He reminded himself and God that he was not worthy of any blessings from God.
7. (:11-12) What next did he ask for? And how did he end this prayer?

He cried out “deliver me!” – and then he reminded God once again of His promise to make a great nation out of the descendants of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. There was not going to be a great nation if Esau wiped out the encampment of Jacob!

8. (:9-12) Jacob’s prayer to the LORD, in verses 9-12, is a good model for us when we have urgent requests of the LORD. What were the simple parts of his prayer?

   a. (:9) He remembered God’s promises.
   b. (:10) He admitted his own unworthiness – he didn’t deserve what God had promised to do for him.
   c. (:11-12) He asked God to meet his need.
   d. (:12) He remembered again God’s promises.

9. (:13-23) What did Jacob do now that he had finished praying?

He made a plan the best he could. He was depending on God for the outcome, but still, he knew he was responsible to do all he could to take care of his traveling household. He sent many, many presents on ahead to Esau.

10. Describe how you think Jacob felt this night as he waited to see what would happen when Esau arrived:


11. (:24-32) In this famous passage of scripture Jacob was wrestling with someone. Who was that someone? Why were they wrestling?

Here’s another case in scripture where the Lord Himself appeared, and yet He is not called Lord. In this passage He is not called an angel, either. He is just called a Man. (but notice that the M in Man is capitalized).

Why were they wrestling? Because Jacob was struggling greatly with the Lord. Jacob had trusted in himself and himself alone all of his life…and now here he was in a situation where he had to decide if trusting in God was enough. He was
wrestling with God. Was God actually able to handle Jacob’s future? Jacob was finding out. Was God stronger than Jacob? Did God know better?

12. (:24) If this “Man” was the LORD, couldn’t He have easily stopped the wrestling match any time He wanted to? Why didn’t He?

Because this was a wrestling match God knew Jacob had to have.

13. What is the lesson for us here? Does starting a relationship with God sometimes feel like “wrestling” with God?

Maybe it doesn’t feel like that for everyone…but for many it does. For some, there is a painful, prolonged period of time when there must be a struggle – a wrestling – with what it means to trust God…and whether or not to do it.

14. What kind of a change do you think we will see in Jacob from this point on?

Jacob knew about the One, True God. He had learned all about Him from his family and his growing up years. He even worshipped the One, True God. He had encountered the One, True God before. (Genesis 28:10-22 – Jacob’s ladder). But before this wrestling match and this very dark, frightening night, had Jacob actually known the One, True God? Had he actually ever committed his life to the One, True God?

No, he hadn’t. Everything in his life up to this point was for the purpose of this night’s meeting and wrestling with God. Everything after this point would be different. After this night Jacob would choose to trust God instead of being forced to trust God. After this night Jacob would run lovingly back to God when he strayed, instead of fighting all the way.

You, or someone you love, may be just like Jacob. You may have all the facts about Jesus. You may even pray to Jesus and worship Him in church. You might even have had a time when you felt like you realized He was real and was interested in you. But the important question is: have you ever committed your life to Jesus? Have you ever come to the end of yourself and given your life to Him? If not, you have a really wonderful experience waiting for you.

If this is you, above, I suggest you get alone with God and tell Him you want to “wrestle” with Him. Tell Him all your doubts and fears. Don’t hold back. If you
wonder that He really exists, or wonder if He really cares about your life, or wonder how He can allow such pain and sin in the world, tell Him!.

I think this story teaches us that the LORD Jesus wants our honest feedback and conversation. He wants us to be ourselves and meet with Him. He knows how weak and powerless we are, but He values us enough to want to talk with us and wrestle with us through life’s difficulties. He wants us to wrestle with Who He is, and to experience the supreme joy of realizing we have met with the One, True God and lived!!!!

Jacob was injured in the wrestling match that night. He walked with a limp for the rest of his life. That limp always reminded him of his own foolishness and weakness. But it also reminded him of His powerful, wonderful LORD – who was willing to wrestle until daylight so that Jacob could finally know Him.
Lesson 15
Questions for you to Answer

Genesis 33

Memory verse for this study:
“Oh, taste and see that the LORD is good; blessed is the man who trusts in Him.” (Psalms 34:8)

1. (:1) What was the first thing Jacob saw as he looked off into the distance?

2. (:2-3) How did Jacob feel as he saw Esau coming and as he got ready to meet him?

3. Have you ever felt this same way?
4. (:2-3) How did Jacob line up his family? What does that tell you?

5. (:4) What surprising thing happened? How in the world could this have come to pass?

6. (:5-7) Was the family of Jacob treating Uncle Esau with respect? Do you think they were afraid, too?

7. (:8-11) What was Esau objecting to? Why did he eventually accept the presents from Jacob? Who got the credit for Jacob’s prosperity?

8. As far as we know, was Esau a believer in the One, True God? Do you think this show of God’s hand in Jacob’s life, and this testimony from Jacob that it is God Who blessed him, might have begun to change Esau’s heart toward God?

9. (:12) It was time to move on, now, toward home. What did Esau suggest?

10. (:13-15) Why did Jacob want to go separately from Esau? Did he still not trust Esau…or was there something else Jacob had in mind?

11. (:16) Where did Esau go? What was the name of his home? Did he think Jacob would be following him there?

12. (:17-20) Where did Jacob go? Was he going to the same place Esau was going? Why not?
Lesson 15

Genesis 33

1. (:1) What was the first thing Jacob saw as he looked off into the distance?

His brother, Esau, and 400 men with him.

2. (:2-3) How did Jacob feel as he saw Esau coming and as he got ready to meet him?

This is the moment Jacob had feared since he started out on the journey ordered by God.

Jacob was afraid and also determined to somehow keep going and survive. He had sent gifts and presents on ahead to Esau. He had planned and schemed. He had wrestled with God alone at night.
And now he organized his family into, well, the best way to say this is just to say it: he put his favorite wife and son at the back, the most out of harm’s way, and he put his least favorite concubines and their children at the front.

He was pretty sure he and his family were staring into the face of annihilation. He had decided to trust the One, True God, Whom he now knew as he never had before….but he was still afraid.

3. Have you ever felt this same way?

Here’s the question: Does having faith in God mean you are not afraid? My experience says: no. Sometimes the fear just won’t go away even when I am living and walking by faith. Now, the Bible does say “perfect love casts out fear”, but, again, my experience reminds me that often it takes time for God’s perfect love to cast out my fear. And while I am waiting for that to happen, I still feel fear.

Here’s a verse that helps me during those times: “But those who wait on the Lord shall renew their strength. They shall mount up with wings like eagles. They shall run and not be weary, they shall walk and not faint.” Isaiah 40:31

Why does this help me? During those times when I know I am trusting God and yet still feel fear, I have this promise, above: Don’t worry about what you feel. Just wait on God. Keep running. Keep walking. You’ll make it. Your feelings aren’t what counts. It’s God Who counts. You can trust Him no matter how you feel.

I wonder if Jacob felt this way at this moment he had feared for over 20 years?

4. (:2-3) How did Jacob line up his family? What does that tell you?

Like I said, he put his favorite wife and son in the safest position. That tells me Jacob was human. He had favorites. It happens. Was it right…or wrong? I don’t know. Someone had to be at the front, and someone had to be at the back.

5. (:4) What surprising thing happened? How in the world could this have come to pass?

Esau came running, not to kill him, but to hug him!!!! They both cried. Wow. What a moment. How did this happen? God. The One, True God, Whom Esau didn’t even believe in, made it happen. God was preparing the way for Jacob to live once again in the land He had promised to Jacob’s grandfather so many
years ago. God is God. He can and will do anything in order to work out His plan for the world.

6. (:5-7) Was the family of Jacob treating Uncle Esau with respect? Do you think they were afraid, too?

I’m very sure they were afraid right along with Jacob. You can’t all live together in one, big traveling family and not know what is driving your leader. They all must have known Jacob was mortally afraid, and they all must have felt that fear, too.

Now they were bowing before and showing respect to Jacob’s long-lost brother. So how were they feeling as they greeted him? Relieved? Distrustful? Still afraid?

7. (:8-11) What was Esau objecting to? Why did he eventually accept the presents from Jacob? Who got the credit for Jacob’s prosperity?

Esau asked why Jacob sent ahead all that great wealth of animals, and Jacob said he just wanted to show Esau how much he loved and respected him. Esau said, no – I have plenty of animals and wealth of my own. But Jacob insisted that he keep the gifts because Jacob was just so grateful that he had the blessing of God in his life, including the forgiveness of his brother whom he had cheated so long ago. Esau accepts.

8. As far as we know, was Esau a believer in the One, True God? Do you think this show of God’s hand in Jacob’s life, and this testimony from Jacob that it was God Who blessed him, might have begun to change Esau’s heart toward God?

We don’t ever see in scripture any proof that Esau came to believe in the One, True God. I’m assuming he never did turn his heart to God. Even with all the proofs of God’s working in Jacob’s life, and even with this great reconciliation of the brothers, engineered by God, still Esau probably didn’t repent and become a follower of God. Why not? Because it is a hard, hard thing to admit you need a Savior. Yes, even in Jacob and Esau’s time people needed to first admit they were sinners and needed God to save them from their sin. Even in those times people didn’t want to do things God’s way. Even in those times people could see all the miracles of God and still choose not to trust Him.
9. (:12) It was time to move on, now, toward home. What did Esau suggest?

Esau wanted he and his 400 men and Jacob and his family, to all travel together to Sier (or Edom), where Esau lived.

10. (:13-15) Why did Jacob want to go separately from Esau? Did he still not trust Esau…or was there something else Jacob had in mind?

Jacob declined the offer of traveling with Esau and his men, citing the impossibility of the big family group going as fast as Esau and his men would want to go. So Esau offered to leave a few of his men with Jacob—probably for safety. But again Jacob declined and suggested they each leave and travel at their own pace—Jacob and his group would arrive much later. Esau agreed.

As we read on in this passage, we see that Jacob did not go toward Seir at all. He traveled west, not south toward Edom. Is that what he had in mind all along? We don’t know. I suppose any number of circumstances might have turned Jacob away from the direction of Seir. But I do wonder if Jacob all along knew he wanted to make peace with Esau, and then take his family back to the land of his birth instead of to Esau’s land.

11. (:16) Where did Esau go? What was the name of his home? Did he think Jacob would be following him there?

Esau headed back home, south to Sier (Land of Edom). On the surface it would appear Esau expected Jacob to follow at a slower pace. But I wonder if Esau, also, knew all along that Jacob really didn’t want to come live near him. I think he knew all along the two of them would never trust one another enough to live near each other.

12. (:17-20) Where did Jacob go? Was he going to the same place Esau was going? Why not?

Jacob traveled west and stopped first at Succoth, then kept traveling on to Shechem. He was on his way to Bethel, the place where he had first met God (Genesis 28).

When he got to Shechem he made it more of a permanent stop than he should have….and trouble was coming to his family because of it.
Lesson 16
Questions for you to Answer

Genesis 34, 35 & 36

Memory verse for this study:

“Oh, taste and see that the LORD is good; blessed is the man who trusts in Him.” (Psalms 34:8)

In these chapters we’re going to wrap up the story of Jacob – the Bible’s emphasis on Jacob is finished here, and from this point on we follow the lives of the 12 sons of Jacob.

There are shameful things to be seen in this family history – and Chapter 34 is one of the worst.

In Chapter 35 Jacob finally arrived where God had been telling him to go, and he and his brother, Esau, shared the heartache of burying their father, Isaac.

Chapter 36 chronicles the family of Esau, who were eventually called the Edomites.

Chapter 34 begins in Shechem:
1. (34:1) Dinah was a daughter of Jacob by which mother? Were there other daughters of Jacob?

2. (34:2-4) What happened to Dinah? Was this a violent act? Do you think Shechem was just doing what everyone else in his culture did? So, was it wrong?

3. (34:5) What was Jacob waiting for?

4. (34:6&7) How did the eleven sons of Jacob feel about what had happened to Dinah?

5. (34:8-12) Did Shechem and his father, Hamor, seem to be trying to be reasonable?

6. (34:13-17) What did the eleven brothers suggest, and were they being genuine? Why were they still so angry, when Shechem and Hamor were suggesting marriage?

7. What was the truly despicable thing which happened here? How would we handle such a situation today?

8. (34:18&19) Did Shechem actually love Dinah?

9. (34:20-24) Were the men of Shechem actually making a commitment to be believers in the One, True God?

10. (34:25-29) What did two of the brothers of Dinah do, and was this wrong? Which brothers did this? Do you think they all agreed to it?

11. (34:30&31) What was Jacob concerned about? What were his sons concerned about? Who was right and who was wrong?
In **Chapter 35** Jacob was finally going where God had always wanted him to go – **Bethel**, the place where he had first met God (Jacob’s ladder) (*Genesis 28*)

12. (35:1) Have you ever been in what seemed like the wrong place and finally made it back to what felt like home?

13. (35:2-4) What had happened in the family of Jacob as they stayed in Shechem?

14. (35:5-7) How did the inhabitants of the land view the family of Jacob?

15. (35:9-15) What new thing happened in this latest encounter between Jacob and his God?

16. (35:16-29) What things happened to the family of Jacob now that they were in the right place? What does that show you about trouble in this life?

**Chapter 36** gives us the history of Esau in the **land of Edom**

17. Why was Esau important in God’s plan?

18. Where do we see the family of Esau again in Bible history?
   *Exodus 17:8-16*
   *Esther 3:1*
Lesson 16

Genesis 34, 35 & 36

This is where we wrap up the story of Jacob – the Bible’s emphasis on Jacob is finished here, and from here on out we follow the lives of the 12 sons of Jacob.

There are shameful things to be seen in this family history – and Chapter 34 is one of the worst.

In Chapter 35 Jacob finally arrived where God had been telling him to go, and he and his brother, Esau, shared the heartache of burying their father, Isaac.

Chapter 36 chronicles the family of Esau, who were eventually called the Edomites.

Chapter 34 begins in Shechem:

1. (34:1) Dinah was a daughter of Jacob by which mother? Were there other daughters of Jacob?

As far as we know, Dinah was the only daughter of Jacob – her mother was Leah.

2. (34:2-4) What happened to Dinah? Was this a violent act? Do you think Shechem was just doing what everyone else in his culture did? So, was it wrong?

Shechem had pre-marital sex with Dinah. It is not clear from the passage that this was an act of violence. Shechem actually had an attraction to Dinah – a “love” for Dinah – which
evidenced itself by the fact that he spoke kindly to her and wanted to marry her. We don’t know whether or not Dinah wanted him, too, but there is no doubt that it was sex before a marriage covenant was in place – and Shechem was responsible.

Yes, perhaps Shechem was doing what his culture felt was normal. But this was not normal for Dinah. Whether or not she was attracted to him, she knew beyond the shadow of a doubt that this was wrong, wrong, wrong. She also probably knew how her family would react to Shechem’s actions. Scripture doesn’t tell us how she felt or what she was thinking.

If Shechem was only doing what was considered normal in his culture, was it wrong? After all, he wasn’t a Jew, and didn’t know the standards of the Lord.

Oh, yes, it was wrong. Right and wrong are not determined by our cultures. If they were, then people would simply do whatever they wanted to do with no way to judge or stop those actions. Cultures would then be constantly changed and shaped by those decisions, and there would be a fatal, downward spiral of sin. No culture could survive if right and wrong were determined simply by each man doing what he wanted to do. (And yes, that’s exactly what’s happening in our culture today.)

Right and wrong are determined by a standard higher than culture…something separate from anyone’s cultures. Right and wrong are determined solely by Who God is and What He is like. He decides what’s right and what’s wrong based on His own character. In other words, lying is wrong because God does not lie. Unfaithfulness is wrong because God is always faithful. Sexual impurity is wrong because God is pure. Standards of what’s really right or really wrong are never simply a comparison of people’s actions. An action is not right because most people do it. A thought is not right because most people think it.

According to God’s standards, this act of sex before a marriage covenant – or rape (whichever it was) – was wrong. It was wrong even though Shechem didn’t believe in the One, True God. It was wrong even though Shechem may not have known any better. God’s standards of right and wrong do not change based on whether or not a person knows Who He is. God’s standards of right and wrong do not change at all, ever….because Who He is does not change at all, ever.

3. (34:5) What was Jacob waiting for?

He wasn’t going to react alone. He wanted the strength of his family behind him.
4. (34:6&7) How did the eleven sons of Jacob (Benjamin has not been born yet) feel about what had happened to Dinah?

Anger, shame, rage. They had been humiliated by this ungodly act.

5. (34:8-12) Did Shechem and his father, Hamor, seem to be trying to be reasonable?

Yes, it looks that way, doesn't it? They were willing to do something to make it right.

6. (34:13-17) What did the eleven brothers suggest, and were they being genuine? Why were they still so angry, when Shechem and Hamor were suggesting marriage?

The proposed marriage might have seemed to make everything smooth over, it might have made the two cultures friendly with each other, but it wouldn't have made the brothers' rage at being so deeply offended go away, and it wouldn't have made the act itself right. Just because Shechem and his father were ready to smooth things over doesn't mean they had repented of their sin against God. It doesn't even mean they had admitted it was a sin. And if there was no repentance, then, of course, there was every reason to believe it would happen again.

So...the brothers suggest that their “religious” sensitivities had been offended, and that the way to make that right would be for the men of Shechem’s city to all be circumcised. They said that then the marriage could take place and all would be well between the two peoples.

But they didn’t mean it. Truthfully, they were not as much concerned about God, as they were about themselves. These brothers were filled with hate and moving forward to do something about it.

The brothers here are a good picture of us. We might be offended at what someone else does wrong, especially if it is done to us. But when we strike out in retribution, most of the time we step over the line. We step from being rightfully offended to being wrongfully vengeful. The Lord says over and over again in scripture that He is the One Who has the right to act in vengeance...not us. “Beloved, do not avenge yourselves, but rather give place to wrath; for it is written, “Vengeance is Mine, I will repay”, says the Lord.” (Romans 12:19)
We want to hurt the one who has done this to us, and our indignation is not righteous. It is simply the anger of a man…and that doesn’t do anything to bring about the righteousness of God. “…for the wrath of man does not produce the righteousness of God.” James 1:20

7. What was the truly despicable thing that had happened here? How would we handle such a situation today?

A young girl had been defiled….she was no longer a virgin. If the rape was forcible this was a crime of violence. In that day it meant her value as a wife to a Jewish man was gone forever, and, of course, she had also been emotionally or physically damaged as an individual.

Today in America, what would our reaction be? We might pursue justice in the courts and counseling for the young girl. Or we might just tell everyone to move on and put the “indiscretion” behind them, so that the people involved could someday pursue their normal lives.

Are those the right reactions? Should we be more upset? Should we be as angry as these brothers were 4,000 years ago?

8. (34:18&19) Did Shechem actually love Dinah?

Love? Real love? There’s no way to know for sure – the scripture doesn’t make it clear. Maybe he was attracted to her and thought she was awesome. Maybe he even wanted to marry her after this. But love? I say no. I say love means respect. Respect for her and for her family and for her beliefs.

I’ll go even further with a comment about love today. I think romantic “love” which doesn’t also include love and respect for the One, True God is not true romantic love. Is a young man willing for the one he loves to have sex with him or live with him before marriage? That’s not love. Or, are two men or two women willing to live in a homosexual relationship? That’s not love.

9. (34:20-24) Were the men of Shechem actually making a commitment to be believers in the One, True God?

No – there is no indication that they were. They were just doing the political and religious thing that seemed to be required. There didn’t appear to be any heart-change here.
10. (34:25-29) What did two of the brothers of Dinah do, and was this wrong? Which brothers did this? Do you think they all agreed to it?

Levi and Simeon snuck up on the men of Shechem while they were still weak and in pain from their circumcisions and killed them all. They killed the man who raped their sister. They took all the possessions of the whole town and made them their own. Were all the brothers involved? The passage doesn’t make that clear. My opinion? I think they all knew.

11. (34:30&31) What was Jacob concerned about? What were his sons concerned about? Who was right and who was wrong?

It seems like father Jacob was mostly concerned about how dangerous the family’s life was going to be from this point on. He was afraid that the surrounding peoples would have lost respect for him and his sons because of what they did and attack them. There doesn’t seem to be any pleading for the mercy of God or wisdom from God.

In Chapter 35 The family of Jacob was finally going where God had always wanted them to go = **Bethel, the place where Jacob had first encountered God (Jacob’s ladder) (Genesis 28)**

12. (35:1) Have you ever been in what seemed like the wrong place and finally made it back to what felt like home?

That’s what happened here. Jacob was finally back where the Lord first met him. The Lord had told him to go to Bethel, the location of “Jacob’s Ladder” way back in Chapter 28.

Sometimes when life gets difficult the absolute best thing to do is to remember what God has told you to do; keep it simple. Realize it’s all about knowing and loving and trusting your God. It’s often good to put aside all you’ve earned, all you’ve accumulated, all you’ve wished you could forget…and just obey, knowing you are safest and healthiest when you are listening to and responding to Him.
13. (35:2-4) What had happened in the family of Jacob as they stayed in Shechem?

Wow. This answers a lot of questions about their awful murdering attack on the family of Shechem, doesn’t it? The whole group of these children of Jacob were in the wrong place, and had begun to let idols and idol-worship and the hateful culture surrounding them slip into their lives. They were living far away from the presence of the One, True God. They weren’t asking God to direct their lives – they were making their own, disastrous decisions.

14. (35:5-7) How did the inhabitants of the land view the family of Jacob?

The inhabitants of the surrounding cities were not going to attack after all! They actually had developed a real fear of the Jews and their God – and that was giving this crazy, dysfunctional family some safety.

15. (35:9-15) What new thing happened in this latest encounter between Jacob and his God?

The Lord God gave Jacob a new name. From now on he would be called Israel. From now on this whole family would be called the Israelites. And the Lord re-affirmed all the promises He had made in the past to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob.

Why? Why didn’t the Lord just give up on this crazy family at this point? Look at all the sinning they had done. Look how quick they were to stop trusting God and start trusting in the false God’s of the people around them. Why did the Lord God keep giving these people chance after chance after chance? Why did He respond favorably to their repentance? Why was He still willing to keep his promises?

Why? Because God’s promises long ago had never been based on the goodness of the people He was promising to. His promises had always been grounded in Who He was, not in who they were.

God never changes. He is faithful. His promises are sure, no matter how ridiculous our actions.
16. (35:16-29) What things happened to the family of Jacob now that they were in the right place? What does that show you about trouble in this life?

Life wasn’t perfect just because the Israelites had gotten their lives back in line with God. Tragedies were still a part of their every-day existence.
   a. Rachel’s nurse died. She had been with her for many, many years.
   b. Rachel gave birth to Jacob’s 12th son, Benjamin, but then she died in childbirth. What a tragedy this must have been for Jacob.
   c. Reuben, Jacob’s oldest, had sexual relations with Jacob’s concubine, Bilhah. She was the mother of a few of Reuben’s half-siblings. This must have been a horrible situation for the whole family.

Life is messy. It doesn’t get perfect ever in this world. Heaven…perfect life…comes later.

Chapter 36 gives us the history of Esau in the Land of Edom.

17. Why was Esau important in God’s plan? Exodus 17:8-16 and Esther 3:1

At least some from the family of Esau grew up hating the family of Jacob (the Israelites). In fact, in the story of Esther, we see that wicked Haman is a descendant of Esau through his son, Amalek. (Genesis 36:16, 1 Samuel 15, Esther 3:1 (Agagites were from the family of Amalek)

Let’s compare Jacob’s dysfunctional family with Esau’s dysfunctional family and see what the difference is:

**Esau** was important to the One, True God, but he was a rebel who (as far as we know) never put his faith in Him. He never did acknowledge his failure and need of God. His family passed on hatred and cruelty as their heritage.
Jacob was important to the One, True God, and though he was a failure and a sinner - no doubt about it - he did have faith in the One, True God. He did acknowledge his failure and his need of God. His family also passed on failures and sin….but also love and mercy and faith and hope as their heritage.

The difference? Faith.

There’s a pretty obvious conclusion here for us.
Genesis Quiz for Chapters 12-36

1. The man with whom God first made His covenant, promising a land, and a blessing to all nations, was ____________________________.

2. That covenant was:
   a. Conditional
   b. Unconditional

3. This woman allowed her husband to conceive a son with her maidservant:
   a. Sarai
   b. Leah
   c. Rachel
   d. All of the above

4. This man devised a brilliant scientific plan of animal husbandry:
   a. Laban
   b. Joseph
   c. Isaac
   d. Jacob

5. These man forbade their sons to marry from the daughters of Canaan:
   a. Abraham
   b. Isaac
   c. Jacob
   d. Adam

6. Keturah was the mother of Midian and the second wife of ____________________________.

7. Esau was ____________________________’s favorite son.

8. This woman prepared savory food for her husband as part of a plot to trick him into transferring the birthright to her favorite son:
   a. Sarah
   b. Rebekah
   c. Rachel
   d. None of the above.
9. Laban tricked Jacob into marrying ___________.

10. She stole an idol from her father: ________________.

11. Name the only daughter of Jacob: _________________.

12. This wife of Jacob had 6 sons, but was never loved. _________________.

13. This man was the last son of Jacob ___________.

14. The Bible says the LORD is the God of: ________________, ________________, and _________________.

15. ___________ was loved of God, but never believed in Him, and because of that, many in his family always hated the descendants of ___________, and still do, today.

16. Name one person who was not dysfunctional in the book of Genesis: _________________.


Answers for Genesis Quiz Chapters 12-36

1. The man with whom God first made His covenant, promising a land, and a blessing to all nations, was ____Genesis 12______.

2. That covenant was:  __Genesis 15:6__
   a. Conditional  
   b. Unconditional

3. This woman allowed her husband to conceive a son with her maidservant:
   a. Sarai  
   b. Leah  
   c. Rachel  
   d. All of the above

4. This man devised a brilliant scientific plan of animal husbandry:  
   __Genesis 29-31__
   a. Laban  
   b. Joseph  
   c. Isaac  
   d. Jacob

5. These men forbade their sons to marry from the daughters of Canaan:
   a. Abraham  
   b. Isaac  
   c. Jacob  
   d. Adam

6. Keturah was the mother of Midian and the second wife of ____Genesis 25:1-6______.

7. Esau was ____Genesis 25:27&28____’s favorite son.
8. This woman prepared savory food for her husband as part of a plot to trick him into transferring the birthright to her favorite son:
   a. Sarah
   b. **Rebekah** *Genesis 27*
   c. Rachel
   d. None of the above.

9. Laban tricked Jacob into marrying *Genesis 29* .

10. She stole an idol from her father: *Genesis 31:19* .

11. Name the only daughter of Jacob: *Genesis 30:21, 34:1* .

12. This wife of Jacob had 6 sons, but was never loved. **Genesis 30** .

13. This man was the last son of Jacob **Genesis 35:16-20** .


   ____ Abraham ,
   ____ Isaac , and
   ____ Jacob __

15. **Genesis 36** was loved of God, but never believed in Him, and because of that, many in his family always hated the descendants of _________, and still do, today.

16. Name one person who was not dysfunctional in the book of Genesis: ____________________________.
A Suggestion for your Next Bible Study

Now that you've finished Genesis Part 2, the history of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, you've just got to go on and finish the whole story by reading Genesis Part 3, the Story of Joseph.

The dysfunctional family of Abraham, which you've met in Genesis Part 2 is going to continue, in Genesis Part 3, to sin, make mistakes, and yet try to love and serve the One, True God.

Joseph, the 11th son of Jacob, had it all and lost it all. This story is full of pride, desire, jealousy, hatred, violence, miracles, and, eventually, love and forgiveness.

The Lord made Joseph the favored son of Jacob and Rachel, knowing his ten older brothers would be jealous. God gave Joseph dreams of personal grandeur, knowing his brothers’ long-simmering jealousy would turn to rage. God had Jacob send Joseph out to find his brothers in the fields, knowing they would act on their rage that day. God kept those furious brothers from killing Joseph.

And then God brought along that Egyptian caravan on the very day the brothers were trying to figure out what to do with Joseph, and gave God gave them the idea to sell Joseph to the caravan owners, despite Joseph’s terror-filled pleas. God blessed Joseph in Potiphar’s house and then in a dungeon. God gave Joseph the ability to interpret dreams in that same dungeon. God came to Joseph and taught him and soothed his spirit in every terrifying situation.

God taught Joseph all about Himself and His ways. God gave the troubling dreams to Pharaoh. God reminded the butler of Joseph’s ability to interpret dreams. God changed the heart of Pharaoh to trust a prisoner with the fortunes of his entire country.

What was God doing? I think you’ll see in Genesis Part 3 that God knew exactly what He was doing all through Joseph’s life, not only for the Jews, but also for you and me. I am convinced that God wanted to save all of our lives and He orchestrated Joseph’s life to do just that.

Read about it in Genesis, Part 3, the Story of Joseph.