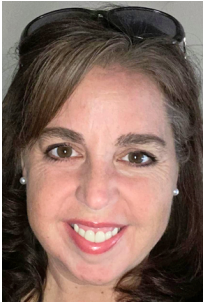


Bible Studies for Life: June 16

God's Promise of Blessing • Genesis 12:1-3; 15:5-7; 17:7-11

By Jessica McMillan



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Genesis 12:1-3

Abram – what an enigma! He was a regular guy with the same human nature that plagues you and me. He was *obedient* – when God said to go to Canaan, he went. God had promised to make his name great and that “all peoples on earth will be blessed” through him (v.3 NIV). We see a few verses later that Abram also was *disobedient* – when he got there and saw there was a famine, he decided to go beyond where God had instructed, and “he went down to Egypt to live there for a while because the famine was severe” (v.10 NIV). **He let his fear overshadow his trust in God’s promise, and God was still faithful anyway.**

Genesis 15:5-7

Abram experienced many ups and downs in his life – much like you and I do, many of which were brought on himself due to his lack of faith. After telling Abram not to be afraid, God drew him outside to look up into the starry sky, reassuring him with a visual image of the promise to give him numerous offspring. Imagine the emotional overwhelm of stargazing in the desert darkness. **Again, Abram had let his fear overshadow his trust in God’s promise, and God was still faithful anyway.**

Genesis 17:7-11

Abram was 75 years old when he set out on his journey to Canaan. He ended up taking the long route through all the twists and turns caused by fear and distrust. When he was 99, God established his covenant reassuring Abram that he would, in fact, live up to his name, “father of many.” The outward sign of the inward commitment was circumcision. This was not a

procedure conducted in a sterile hospital setting under general anesthesia. While Abram had struggled to obey many times before, this time he was quick to obey thoroughly and immediately. He would receive a new name, Abraham, but to make this commitment meant that he and all in his household would experience physical pain, to say the least. **This time, Abraham let his trust in God's promise overshadow his fear, because He trusted that God was faithful.**

We know the history. Abraham truly did live up to his name in becoming "father of many nations" through Ishmael, Isaac, and all who have been added through the blood of Christ.

Paul teaches in Romans that all believers are "grafted in" to the natural olive tree, which is Israel. "Don't be arrogant because you do not naturally belong to God's people. You were an uncultivated, wild shoot, **grafted in** when you chose to believe in Jesus. You had no claim to the benefits of God's people, but now the sap that nourishes your spiritual life and your new status before God is being drawn up from the root of Israel" (Romans 11:17-18a NIV, emphasis added). God's covenant with Abraham brings blessing to everyone. His promises are good and true, and we can trust Him. God promised to bless all people through His chosen people, and we are living proof of that truth!

McMillan is a member of Prentiss Church, Prentiss.