

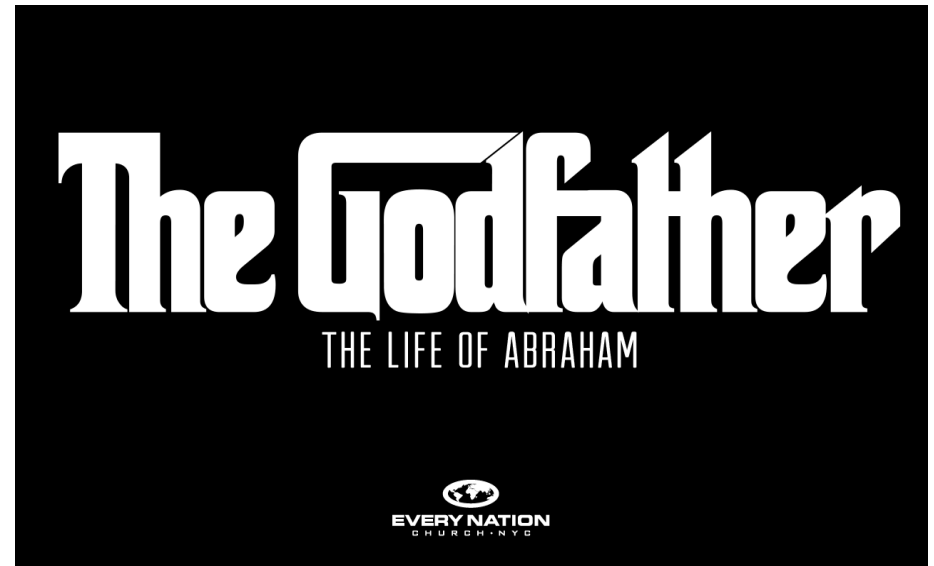
PERSONAL APPLICATION

- God can do the impossible in our lives if we let him. What are some practical ways that you can surrender to God and trust his abilities this week?
- How can you show appreciation this week to someone who has fulfilled a promise to you that has helped you in some way?
- Are there any promises you have made that others are waiting on? What are some steps you need to take to be faithful to your word?

PRAYER

- Spend time thanking God for every area of your life that you've seen him provide, protect, guide and bless you in.
- Ask God to help you accept his way and timing in fulfilling the needs in your life.
- Ask God to help you let go of any substitutes you have made or have become attached to that are NOT the fulfillment of the purposes he has for your life. Ask him to reveal what those purposes are.
- Ask God to redeem any messes you may have made while waiting on his promises.

NOTES



Lessons from the Life of Abraham – Promise Fulfilled

CONNECT

- What are some things you've been waiting on that finally came in? How did you feel when you finally got them?
- What would you do if someone you've been waiting on for help comes through but you've already sought help elsewhere?
- What do you feel will bring you the greatest sense of fulfillment in your life? Can you experience contentment without it?

THOUGHT

Everyone wants to feel fulfilled in life. We all have different things that we are hoping will give us that sense of fulfillment. Yet sometimes, when we finally get what we've been hoping for we find ourselves still empty. Other times, our impatience causes us to take shortcuts that end in disappointment or disaster. God gave Abraham an amazing promise that took much longer to be fulfilled than Abraham had ever expected. Along the way he tried shortcuts that led to problems and pain. Nonetheless, everything God promised came to pass despite seemingly insurmountable odds. Today we'll take a look at that pivotal moment in Abraham's journey of faith – the moment when God comes through on His promise.

WORD

*"¹³Then the Lord said to Abraham, "Why did Sarah laugh and say, 'Will I really have a child, now that I am old?' ¹⁴Is anything too hard for the Lord? I will return to you at the appointed time next year, and Sarah will have a son." **Genesis 18:13-14 (NIV)***

*"Now the Lord was gracious to Sarah as he had said, and the Lord did for Sarah what he had promised. Sarah became pregnant and bore a son to Abraham in his old age, at the very time God had promised him." **Genesis 21:1-2 (NIV)***

1. God's Ability

"¹⁹Without weakening in his faith, he faced the fact that his body was as good as dead—since he was about a hundred years old—and that Sarah's womb was also dead. ²⁰Yet he did not waver through unbelief regarding the promise of God, but was strengthened in his faith and gave glory to God, ²¹being fully persuaded that God had power to do what he had promised. ²²This is why "it was credited to him as righteousness."

Romans 4:19–22 (NIV)

It's hard to believe something can work out when the odds are stacked against it. Even though Abraham was given a great promise of legacy by God it didn't come to pass until he was 100 years old. That's a very old age even in biblical times. Yet Abraham's age did not hinder God at all in fulfilling his promise. God's power and majesty transcends the limits of our mortal bodies, time, and understanding. Sarah, who couldn't have children, gave birth to a son she named Isaac. Do you have promises in your life that seem completely out of reach? What has God done to reassure us that we can trust his promises, that truly, nothing is too difficult for him?

2. Our Hilarity

"Sarah said, 'God has brought me laughter, and everyone who hears about this will laugh with me.'⁷ And she added, 'Who would have said to Abraham that Sarah would nurse children? Yet I have borne him a son in his old age.'"

Genesis 21:6-7 (NIV)

The name Isaac means laughter. Waiting for something makes us appreciate it all the more when we finally get it. There's a sense of relief that quenches the anxiety in our hearts and replaces it with joy. And the more ridiculously difficult, a promise is to keep, the more laughably improbable it is, the greater our joy is when it comes to pass. What's the difference between Sarah's laughter in Genesis 18:13-14, the verses we read earlier and these verses? Which of Sarah's laughters do you identify with in your life?

3. God's Fidelity

*But God said to him, "Do not be so distressed about the boy and your slave woman. Listen to whatever Sarah tells you, because it is through Isaac that your offspring will be reckoned. I will make the son of the slave into a nation also, because he is your offspring" **Genesis 21: 12-13 (NIV)***

At some point in our seasons of waiting on a promise we have all been tempted to try and bring a promise to pass on our own. Abraham and Sarah attempted to bring God's promise to pass using their own schemes and methods and it ended up in the birth of Ishmael. Have you ever struck out on your own, taken matters into your own hands, and horribly messed things up? Abraham and Sarah did, yet God, because of his faithfulness to his promise, makes both of Abraham's sons, Isaac and Ishmael, into great nations. What does the fact that God blessed both Isaac and Ishmael tell us about God's nature?
