

Then Abraham fell on his face and laughed and said to himself, "Shall a child be born to a man who is a hundred years old? Shall Sarah, who is ninety years old, bear a child?"

- **GENESIS 17:17**

FELLOWSHIP

(Start the conversation and get to know more about the people in the group. You can choose to answer one question.)

1. *What kind of gift do you love receiving during special occasions?*
2. *When you were growing up, did you share your toys while playing or just keep them for yourself?*

MEDITATE AND PROCLAIM

(Scripture to be gleaned from and how we can apply the Word in our lives and encourage others to do the same)

For this lesson, we will be focusing on Genesis 17:15-27. After God gives more clarity to the covenant and instructs Abraham about circumcision, He now gives Abraham His promises for Sarai. The Lord's promises are not just for Abraham but will also be fulfilled in and through Abraham's covenant relationship, his wife Sarai. What should our response be when God gives His promises for us and also those who we are in covenant relationship with?

AS FOR SARAI

And God said to Abraham, "As for Sarai your wife, you shall not call her name Sarai, but Sarah shall be her name. I will bless her, and moreover, I will give you a son by her. I will bless her, and she shall become nations; kings of peoples shall come from her."

- **GENESIS 17:15,16**

Up until this point, God had promised Abraham a son but had not specifically identified the mother of the promised offspring. Abraham had been convinced by Sarai and circumstances that it must be Hagar. However, God makes it clear that a son will come through Sarah. God changes Sarai's name to Sarah (both names mean "princess") but now, Sarah is blessed by God and will not just be a princess of her own people but a mother for multitudes of people. Kings and nations will

come forth from this key covenant relationship - the marriage of Abraham and Sarah.

Then Abraham fell on his face and laughed and said to himself, "Shall a child be born to a man who is a hundred years old? Shall Sarah, who is ninety years old, bear a child?" - **GENESIS 17:17**

This was Abraham's inner and immediate response to God's proclamation. We are not sure whether Abraham's response was out of delight or disbelief. The promise was an incredible one and that is probably the reason for the laughter. However, we see Abraham falling on his face again, which suggests adoration and worship of the Almighty God and also amazement, as he thought about this promise that seems too good to be true.

But, as it is written, "What no eye has seen, nor ear heard, nor the heart of man imagined, what God has prepared for those who love him - "
- **1 CORINTHIANS 2:9**

Great is the Lord, and greatly to be praised, and his greatness is unsearchable. One generation shall commend your works to another, and shall declare your mighty acts. On the glorious splendor of your majesty, and on your wondrous works, I will meditate. - **PSALM 145:3-5**

DISCUSS: WHAT INCREDIBLE THING ARE YOU BELIEVING ALMIGHTY GOD FOR?

AS FOR ISHMAEL

And Abraham said to God, "Oh that Ishmael might live before you!" - **GENESIS 17:18**

Abraham could have been pushing Ishmael to the Lord to be the promised one. Scripture does not give Abraham's motivation for this statement. However, what we can see is Abraham asking God to bless his Ishmael. In a way, Abraham was being a selfless, good father - not asking for more for himself, but a blessing for his son. All of God's promises to Abraham are really about others (see Genesis 12:3).

As for Ishmael, I have heard you; behold, I have blessed him and will make him fruitful and multiply him greatly. He shall father twelve princes, and I will make him into a great nation. - GENESIS 17:20

The spiritual blessings will come through Isaac but God will not overlook the love of Abraham for his son Ishmael. Abraham is a father who wants what is best for his son. God is a father too that will not forsake His children. God remains faithful to His own promise to Hagar as well (see Genesis 16:10-12). Ishmael would become a great nation but the spiritual blessings could only come through Abraham's promised son, Isaac (see Galatians 4:21-31).

But I will establish my covenant with Isaac, whom Sarah shall bear to you at this time next year. - GENESIS 17:21

The steadfast love of the Lord never ceases; his mercies never come to an end; they are new every morning; great is your faithfulness. - LAMENTATIONS 3:22,23

He who calls you is faithful; he will surely do it. - 1 THESSALONIANS 5:24

DISCUSS: HOW HAS THE LORD SHOWN YOU HIS FAITHFULNESS THROUGH ALL THESE YEARS?

AS FOR ABRAHAM

When he had finished talking with him, God went up from Abraham. Then Abraham took Ishmael his son and all those born in his house or bought with his money, every male among the men of Abraham's house, and he circumcised the flesh of their foreskins that very day, as God had said to him. - GENESIS 17:22,23

Abraham immediately and completely carried out God's instructions; making himself ready to receive and experience God's miracle. Verses 22 to 27 stress the importance of obedience in our lives. Obedience is precious to our Lord. Because of this, the circumcision of Abraham, Ishmael, and all of the men in Abraham's household was recorded for us to see wholehearted commitment and trust in God. Think about the trust of everyone in Abraham also as he carries out this command from the Lord! The response of faith to God's commands is always trust and obedience. Theologian Charles Spurgeon said, "That obedience which is not voluntary is disobedience, for the Lord looketh at the heart, and if He seeth that we serve Him from force, and not because we love Him, He will reject our offering."

And this is love, that we walk according to his commandments; this is the commandment, just as you have heard from the beginning, so that you should walk in it. - 2 JOHN 1:6

DISCUSS: WHAT IS THE LORD ASKING YOU TO DO? WILL YOU TRUST AND OBEY HIM IN FAITH?

PRAY

(Remember to do this. Pray for one another; for everyone to live out the Word and for any other specific prayer needs)

Ask the Holy Spirit to empower you to obey our Lord Jesus' commands and be a blessing to someone He is leading you to. If you are feeling you have been forgotten, pray for the Father's comfort and be reminded that He will never leave you nor forsake you (see Hebrews 13:5).



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