

# Trust

## Chapter Summary

### Weekly Win

- The win for this week is for participants to understand that God moved toward humanity and a right standing with him is available to all of us.

### Bottom Lines

- The introduction of sin into the human experience left God with a choice. Instead of walking away, he waded into the mess.
- God's solution to the problem of sin began with three promises he made to one man.
- The righteousness available to Abraham through faith is also available to us.

## Before the Meeting

### PRAY

Continue to pray for your group members individually. Ask God to help your group members choose to trust him in spite of their circumstances.

### CONTACT GROUP MEMBERS

Contact your group members individually by email, phone, or text. You might also want to invite them to coffee or a meal sometime soon. Remember, what happens outside your group is sometimes more important than what happens in the group. Also, remind those who are sharing stories this week so they come prepared.

We've created this [email template](#) to use as you contact your group members each week. We recommend sending an email a few days before your group to serve as a reminder.

### PREPARE THE ENVIRONMENT

Prepare a welcoming environment for the group members by being available before and after group. Hopefully, by this point, your group members will start talking more with one another as they come into the room and even start welcoming each other.

### COMMUNICATE WITH CO-LEADER(S)

As leaders, you should address the following items:

- Evaluate the second meeting with your co-leaders soon after it's over. Talk about what

you feel went well and what you think needs to be adjusted for the next meeting.

- Decide who will be facilitating which parts of the discussion for the next week.
- Clarify which leader will follow up with any group members who you feel need individual attention.
- Make a plan for your social gathering if you haven't done so already.

## Discuss Section One

### God's Dilemma

#### Section Win

The win is for participants to understand that God's plan to address the separation caused by sin began with Abraham.

#### Section Summary

God gave humanity free will, which was used to choose disobedience, forcing God to decide either to destroy sinful humanity or to find a path to restoration. God's plan of restoration began with a person— Abraham.

#### Expanded Leader Notes

##### Questions for Reflection

1. Why do you believe what you believe? Consider people, circumstances, places, etc.
2. Have your personal experiences ever caused you to doubt or change your beliefs?
3. Why is sin so problematic for God?

##### Leading the Discussion

- **Question 1:** This question is designed to create a discussion around how much of our faith is built on personal experience. After you have heard what the participants have to share, you may want to encourage them to think about how personal experiences have influenced their faith. Ask: What are the advantages and disadvantages of personal experiences influencing your faith?
- **Question 2:** This question is designed to allow participants to share about a time when a personal life experience challenged their personal faith. You may hear some great examples that illustrate the point of how fragile faith that is primarily or exclusively built on personal experience can be.
- **Question 3:** Before we advance this discussion, it is important for participants to understand why God takes sin so seriously. The facilitators may have to introduce concepts like the holiness of God and that the penalty for sin is death. Sin did not just harm our relationship with God; it created a separation that could only be restored

through the death of a substitute.

## Discuss Section Two

### God's Promises

#### Section Win

The win is for participants to understand that God chose Abraham and made him three important promises so outstanding they were difficult to believe.

#### Section Summary

The account of Abraham's life reveals that God was not waiting for a perfect person to begin his plan of restoration. God made Abraham three huge promises that were difficult to believe given his circumstances (Gen. 12:2–3).

### Expanded Leader Notes

#### Questions for Reflection

1. Do you think it was hard for Abraham to believe God's promises? Why or why not?
2. What do you think of God choosing someone as imperfect as Abraham?
3. If you could hear one promise from God, what would it be?

#### Leading the Discussion

- **Question 1:** This question helps reveal if the participants truly grasped the gravity of the promises God made to Abraham\* and the amount of faith it would have taken to believe them. You may need to review some of the details of the account to remind them that Abraham and Sarah were well past the age of childbearing when Abraham heard these words from God. After a recap of Abraham and Sarah's life a follow up question could be, "What are some challenges with these promises?"
- **Question 2:** This question is designed to help the participants realize that God is not interested in working with perfect people and that Abraham might be more like them than they ever realized.
- **Question 3:** This question helps reveal how participants view God. Ultimately, we hope they ask God for forgiveness and restoration, but what they want to hear from God can tell you a lot about how they see him. Pay special attention to areas where you may have an opportunity to suggest a different perspective on God in later conversations.

*\*Be prepared to discuss the name change from Abram to Abraham as participants may wonder why it is different in different passages.*

## Discuss Section Three

### Coming Clean

#### Section Win

The win is for participants to understand that based on Abraham's example, righteousness (right standing with God) is based on faith.

#### Section Summary

As Abraham worried about the fulfillment of God's promises, God reassured him that what he had said would come to pass. Abraham responded to this reassurance with belief. In that moment of faith, God declared him righteous (having right standing or reconciled). Thousands of years later, Paul tells Christians that, like Abraham, our righteousness is based on faith as well.

### Expanded Leader Notes

#### Questions for Reflection

1. How do you know when someone really believes something?
2. What is the significance of Abraham being declared righteous?
3. What do you believe it takes for God to accept someone?

#### Leading the Discussion

- **Question 1:** This question is designed to explore what makes faith in someone or something authentic. Authentic faith is often seen clearest when circumstances tempt a person not to believe. Abraham's circumstances forced him to choose between believing in what God said and believing in his current reality.
- **Question 2:** This question allows you to make sure participants understood the significance of this passage. We all want to know what it is going to take for God to accept us. Most of us wonder just how good do we have to be. This moment shows us that God's acceptance is not based on our behavior, but on faith. If participants are not able to articulate that answer, you may want to spend some additional time reviewing the account with them. Consider showing the [60 Seconds on Trusting God](#) video.
- **Question 3:** This question helps reveal what participants believe about salvation. Make special note of the answers. You may want to revisit them during the grace discussion in week 6. You do not need to directly address a works-based answer, but you may want to ask, "How does your view differ from what you see in the life of Abraham?"

#### Follow-Up Question

- What is the difference between belief and trust?

## Wrap-Up

### Review Bottom Lines

- The introduction of sin into the human experience left God with a choice. Instead of walking away, he waded into the mess.
- God's solution to the problem of sin began with three promises he made to one man.
- The righteousness available to Abraham through faith is also available to us.

### Stories

If you chose not to have a social gathering to share stories, or you didn't get through them all at the gathering, ask for volunteers to share in your next group meeting. Remind them of the Appendix: *What's Your Story?* to help them prepare their stories if needed.

### Resource Reminder and Preparation for Next Week

Wrap up by reminding the group of the additional resources on the website to go deeper on what was discussed. They can prepare for next week by answering the questions in the guide and listening to the message for Chapter 4: "Rules."

### Prayer

Every time you pray in your group, you model the nature of prayer and your relationship with God. So, keep it short and simple, don't use fancy religious words, and be authentic. Also, don't ask for prayer requests in the group setting until you sense that people are comfortable sharing personal matters.