

## **Week (1) A SEARCH FOR FAITH** **Faith is essential to every worldview.**

**Day 1:** Abraham

**Scripture Reading:** Genesis 12:1-8

**Insight:** Abraham is both the physical and spiritual Father of the Jews and this passage conveys a crucial step of faith in his journey toward an intimate relationship with God. Regarding this account, F. E. Peters said, “The three great *faiths* called Judaism, Christianity, and Islam were born of an event that each remembers as a moment in history, when the One True God appeared to an Iron Age sheikh named Abram and bound him in a covenant forever.” In this passage, Abraham confirms an established relationship with God, but God desires to test Abraham’s faith by asking him to leave all that he knew—land, possessions, friends, livelihood, family, comforts, yes his entire life’s work. All was left behind. However, with God’s call for faith was a reward for obedience. Abraham would be the Father of a great nation and all people of the world would be blessed or cursed based on how they treated his descendants. Abraham illustrated his dependence and dedication by building an altar to God.

**Reflection:**

Why did God have to test Abraham?

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What were the implications of Abraham’s choice?

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How did Abraham know God would follow through on His promise?

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If you were in a current setting of Abraham’s story, what could God request?

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**Principle:** Faith precedes every transforming decision.



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**Day 2:** Ishmael and Isaac

**Scripture Reading:** Genesis 21:1-13

**Insight:** The patriarch Abraham acts in a way that is familiar to all of us. God promised Abraham that his seed would become a great nation, but the reality was that Abraham and his wife Sarah were nearing 100 years old and had no realistic hope of offspring. They began to read into God's words and developed a plan with the purest of motives. With Sarah's encouragement, Abraham would produce a child—Ishmael—by their servant. The birth of Ishmael predicated the emergence of Islam. The Qur'an (Koran) says Ishmael "was an apostle, a prophet...on whom Allah bestowed favors" (19.54, 58). Yet, the Qur'an also confirms, "Follow the faith of Ibrahim" (16.123). In the reading, God kept His promise to Abraham, and Isaac was miraculously born. God emphatically states that Isaac is the realization of Abraham's faith and ultimately his seed would produce Jesus Christ. Everyone has a journey to reach their ultimate view of life, and Abraham provides a glimpse into one of the struggles on his journey.

**Reflection:**

What did God expect from Abraham and Sarah?

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Why did God not allow Abraham and Sarah to have a child for so many years?

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What kind of relationships existed within Abraham's family?

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How fully did God keep His promise?

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**Principle:** Faith is universally demanded and rewarded.



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**Day 3:** Job

**Scripture Reading:** Job 2:1-10

**Insight:** Job probably lived around the same time period as Abraham; he was evidently a very wealthy and influential man in the known world. In God's presence, a struggle ensued as Satan sought to undermine Job's faith in God. Satan noticed Job's faithful devotion to God but attributed it to his many blessings. God allowed Satan to radically test Job in order that his unwavering devotion and faith could be proven. Satan proceeded to take everything from Job: his possessions, family, and health. Job had no clue about the supernatural struggle, just the fact that he had lost everything imaginable—instantly. His very own wife analyzed the situation and concluded that God either did not exist or did not care; Job should curse God and commit suicide. Many people survey life from their human perspective and come to the same conclusion, yet faith is still required to take that risk. Notice Job's unwavering faith in the severest of circumstances. God is reliable and worthy whether life is good or bad.

**Reflection:**

Why would Satan choose Job for his hurtful scheme?

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Why would God allow Satan to perform this plan?

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What did Job know about his problems?

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How did Job resist his wife's recommendation to doubt God?

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**Principle:** Faith is independent of circumstances.



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**Day 4:** Nicodemus

**Scripture Reading:** John 3:1-8

**Insight:** Nicodemus was a member of the most prestigious group of theologians within Judaism and had the best education, associates, and resources available. Undoubtedly, Nicodemus followed the ministry and teachings of Christ, which produced doubts in his own religious system of beliefs. He secretly went to Christ, recognizing Him as a superior teacher come from God Himself. Christ presented him with a seemingly ridiculous requirement to enter the kingdom of God. Nicodemus questions the plausibility of this statement and asks if reincarnation is really worthy of contemplation. Christ has his complete attention and proceeds to explain that being born again is spiritual dedication. The climax occurs at the end of our reading when Christ illustrates the necessity of faith in a spiritual birth. We see the effects of the wind but we cannot actually see the wind. In the same manner, a commitment to Christ produces change but can only be entered and experienced through faith.

**Reflection:**

Why did Nicodemus need to go to Jesus for religious direction?

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What was significant about Nicodemus' secret approach of Christ?

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How would you explain the significance of being born again?

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Does faith in the wind coincide with faith in Christ?

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**Principle:** Faith supersedes religious knowledge.



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### **Day 5:** The Samaritan Woman

**Scripture Reading:** John 4:7-19; 28-30

**Insight:** We don't know her name, but we know something more important—she was a Samaritan woman. Jesus Christ, being a Jew, made it a point to overlook two common views of the day that placed the Jewish race over the Samaritan race and men over women. Jesus Christ crushed the racial and sexual tensions of the day and initiated a conversation with her by asking for water from the well. The dialogue continued until she finally asked for the living water that He offered. Jesus Christ asks her to first bring her husband, and she replies, "I have none." Jesus Christ knows everything and told her that she had five husbands and was living with another. Finally, she began to realize that she was speaking with the promised Son of God—THE Living Water. Much like contemporary culture, her life had been dominated by pleasure, with no regard for morality. However, when she put her faith in Christ, she immediately brought her husbands and much of the city back to meet the Person who had transformed her life forever.

#### **Reflection:**

Why did Christ make it a point to talk to this woman?

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What was meant by the term "Living Water"?

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What was the main motivation in this woman's life?

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How did she react when she realized with whom she was talking?

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**Principle:** Faith in Christ produces a changed life.



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**Additional Study**

*Definition of Faith:* Hebrews 11:1-3

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*Source of Faith:* Romans 10:17

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*Ultimate object of Faith:* John 20:31; Hebrews 12:2

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*Exclusivity of Faith:* Ephesians 2:8-10; Hebrews 11:6

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*Security of Faith:* Nahum 1:7

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*Results of Faith:* James 3:20

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*Potential of Faith:* Matthew 17:20

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*Reward of Faith:* Romans 10:9-10

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*Example of Faith:* Luke 7:7-10

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**Personal Journal**

What are some common ways I demonstrate faith on a daily basis?

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Name the ultimate objects of faith advocated by contemporary religions?

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Do those who claim to reject “faith” still have faith in something? What?

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Where would an outside observer say my faith is placed?

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How do I determine what is worthy of my faith?

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What will faith in God produce?

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**“WITHOUT FAITH IT IS IMPOSSIBLE TO PLEASE GOD”**

