

A photograph of a desert landscape at sunset. The sun is low on the horizon, casting a warm glow over the sand dunes. A camel is standing on a dune, and a person is walking behind it. The sky is filled with colorful clouds in shades of blue, orange, and red.

Venturing in Faith

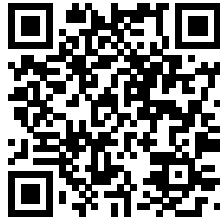
A Study on the Life of Abraham

STUDY GUIDE

**TRUTH
FORLIFE®**

THIS STUDY GUIDE

contains twelve sessions designed to answer the pressing questions that many have about faith and the Christian life. You will get the most out of this study by carefully reading or listening to the sermons from Alistair Begg's series *Venturing in Faith* as you progress. The content for each session focuses on a corresponding message from Genesis 11-22. With Abraham's life as your guide, you will encounter the triumphs and perils of a growing faith lived out amid life's many changes and challenges.



FIND ALL 14 MESSAGES AT
[TFL.ORG/VENTURINGINFAITH](https://www.truthforlife.org/venturinginfaith)

Venturing in Faith: Study Guide
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What is faith? Is it merely a crutch for the weak? Is it believing something even though you know it isn't true? Is it right what people say: "As long as you have faith, that's all that matters"? We can find answers to these questions and more in the Bible's account of Abraham, the father of the Hebrew people and the spiritual forebear of all who believe. Described by the apostle James as "a friend of God," Abraham stands out on the stage of biblical history as an example whose faith should be imitated.

In this study, Alistair Begg invites us to come alongside Abraham on his journey of faith, from the moment God called him out from Ur of the Chaldeans through the ups and downs of his new life in the land of God's promise. Although his walk contained many pitfalls and failures, Abraham learned that with God, failure is never final—and his trust grew with each new beginning as he responded to God in obedience to His call.

Each session includes four parts:

- 1) Getting Started:** a brief summary statement or commentary on the sermon, followed by an introductory question
- 2) Key Scriptures:** important Bible verses that were referenced in the sermon and are flagged for further meditation and memorization
- 3) Going Deeper:** questions to help you process the main ideas of the sermon
- 4) Giving Praise:** either a poem or a hymn that can be committed to memory, incorporated in worship, and used as the basis for prayer about what you have learned and considered



SESSION ONE

“One Man’s Background” | Genesis 11:27–32

Getting Started

We often view the lives we had before knowing God as a kind of baggage—a hindrance to God’s purposes. But when we are introduced to Abraham, or Abram, in Genesis 11, we find something quite different. God used Abraham’s surprisingly ordinary background and simple obedience to fulfill His purposes. God continues to work this way with His people, redeeming and molding us to the image of His Son, Jesus.

Reflect on your own life before knowing Christ. What elements of your background do you fear are a hindrance to your usefulness for God?

KEY SCRIPTURES

“God, who said, ‘Let light shine out of darkness,’ has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.”

2 CORINTHIANS 4:6

“Know then that it is those of faith who are the sons of Abraham. And the Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, preached the gospel beforehand to Abraham, saying, ‘In you shall all the nations be blessed.’ So then, those who are of faith are blessed along with Abraham, the man of faith.”

GALATIANS 3:7-9

Going Deeper

1. The New Testament holds up Abraham as one of the great heroes of the faith. What does Galatians 3:7-9 reveal about Abraham's lasting significance and importance for all believers?

2. What do we learn about Abraham's religious, cultural, and family background in Genesis 11:27-32?

3. How does Abraham's idolatrous background reflect our own hearts before God saved us? From what forms of idolatry has God delivered you?

4. Alistair says that until we respond to God's commands obediently like Abraham, we have not truly begun to walk on the path of faith. Even believers, though, need to be directed back to the path time and again. What areas of your life need to be brought into alignment with the commands and purposes of God?

5. Alistair says, "God ... does not allow Himself to be limited by the backgrounds of people He chooses to bless and use." Why does God use men and women with insignificant or even scandalous backgrounds for His purposes?

GIVING PRAISE

I heard the voice of Jesus say,
"I am this dark world's light;
Look unto Me; thy morn shall rise
Till all thy day be bright."
I looked to Jesus, and I found
In Him my star, my sun;
And in that light of life I'll walk
Till trav'ling days are done.

"I HEARD THE VOICE OF JESUS SAY"

BY HORATIUS BONAR

SESSION TWO

“Pitching Tents and Building Altars” | Genesis 12:1–9

Getting Started

When God called Abraham to go, Abraham believed and went. True faith is always marked by obedience. Through his commitment to trust God in the unknown, Abraham enjoyed communion with Him.

Has there ever been a time when your own trust in God’s promises has led you to take a step of obedience to God’s commands?

KEY SCRIPTURES

“Now the LORD said to Abram, ‘Go from your country and your kindred and your father’s house to the land that I will show you. And I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and him who dishonors you I will curse, and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.’”

GENESIS 12:1–3

“By faith Abraham obeyed when he was called to go out to a place that he was to receive as an inheritance. And he went out, not knowing where he was going.”

HEBREWS 11:8

Going Deeper

1. In Genesis 12:1, God took the initiative in calling Abraham. How should the principle that the initiative lies with God affect how we view His work in creation and redemption?

2. Alistair uses two words to summarize the call Abraham received from God in Genesis 12:1-3. What are they, and what did they mean for Abraham?

3. Alistair describes venturing in faith as a one-way ticket. What did God call you to depart from when you committed yourself to Him? How might those things have hindered your obedience?

4. How does Abraham's response to God's call in Genesis 12:4 differ from Moses's response to a similar call in Exodus 3:10? What can comparing these two accounts teach us about the trust that God desires?

5. Abraham built altars as markers of remembrance and places dedicated to worship. Do you make time in your routine to reflect on God's faithfulness and to worship Him? How might this practice strengthen your faith in the Lord?

6. Take a moment to prayerfully remember God's faithfulness. Write down one or two reasons you have to worship Him.

GIVING PRAISE

When we walk with the Lord
In the light of His Word,
What a glory He sheds on our way!
While we do His good will, He abides with us still,
And with all who will trust and obey.
Trust and obey, for there's no other way
To be happy in Jesus but to trust and obey.

"TRUST AND OBEY"
BY JAMES H. SAMMIS

SESSION THREE

“A Failure of Nerve” | Genesis 12:10–20

Getting Started

It is a short step from faith to fear. Although he initially responded to God’s call with absolute obedience, Abraham quickly became fearful. His failure of nerve is a sobering lesson in the dangers and damage that can come when we fail to trust God.

Can you think of a time when you failed to trust God to meet your needs? What did the Lord teach you through that experience?

KEY SCRIPTURES

“Do not be anxious about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink, nor about your body, what you will put on. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothing? Look at the birds of the air: they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they?”

MATTHEW 6:25–26

“Stand therefore, having fastened on the belt of truth.”

EPHESIANS 6:14

Going Deeper

1. Alistair points out several spiritual factors that prompted Abraham's failure of nerve, such as his failures to trust God for provision, to pray, and to deal truthfully with others. Which of these failures do you most often need to guard against in your Christian walk?

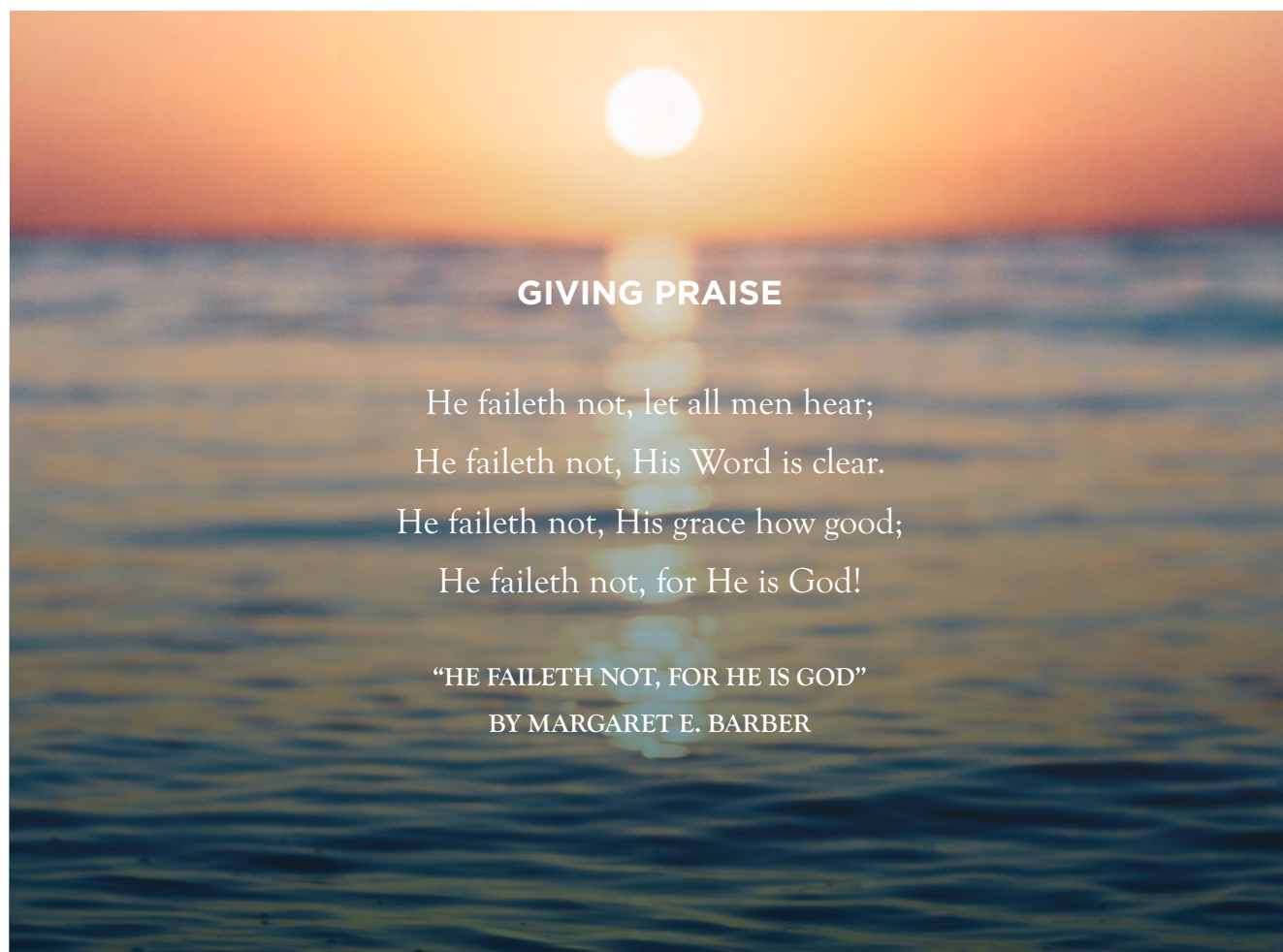
2. How do faith and prayer work together in the Christian life?

3. In Matthew 6:25-34, what assurance does the Lord Jesus offer to strengthen our ability to trust Him for basic provision?

4. In Genesis 12:13, we read how Abraham crafted a deceitful scheme to protect himself in Egypt. What damage did this cause later? What does this teach us about dangers of deceit in our relationships?

5. Even in Abraham's failure of nerve, God displays His unerring faithfulness and patience. Has there been a time in your life when God has shown this kind of faithfulness to you despite your sin?

6. Even Abraham, a great hero of the faith, failed to trust God in a difficult circumstance. What does Abraham's failure of nerve teach us about the nature of true faith?



GIVING PRAISE

He faileth not, let all men hear;
He faileth not, His Word is clear.
He faileth not, His grace how good;
He faileth not, for He is God!

“HE FAILETH NOT, FOR HE IS GOD”

BY MARGARET E. BARBER

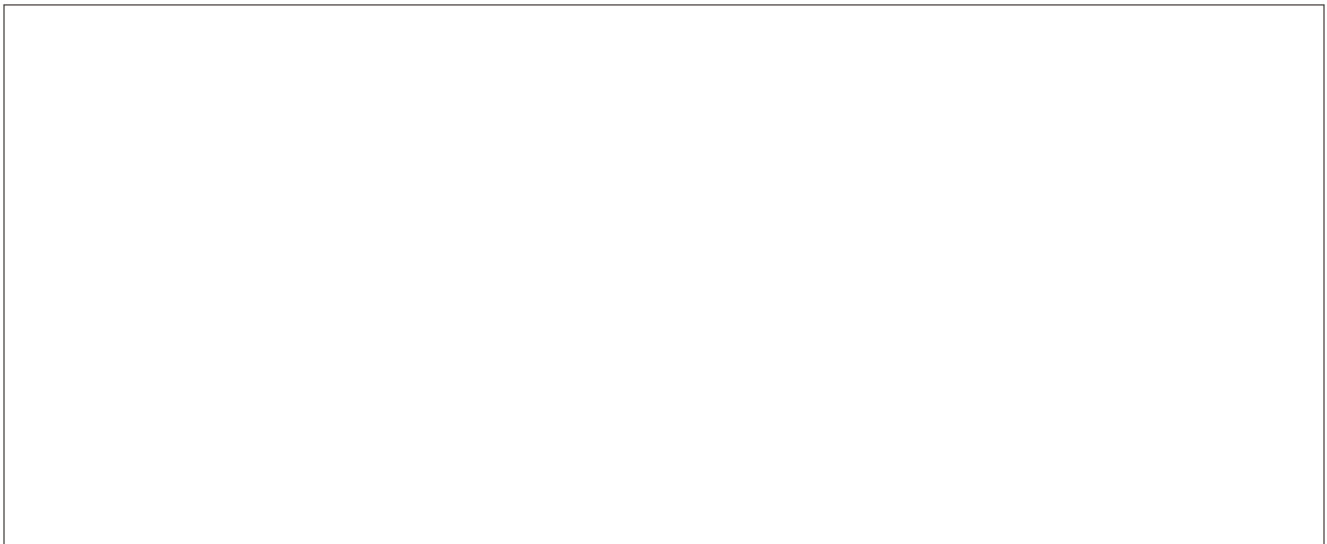
SESSION FOUR

“Let’s Have No Quarrelling” | Genesis 13:1-18

Getting Started

“If you can’t play peacefully together, I’m going to have to separate you.” Maybe you heard something like this as a child—or you’ve said it to your own children. Strife, division, and arguments are nothing new. In an encounter between Abraham and Lot, we see principles for navigating conflict and making peace in a God-honoring way.

How do you tend to deal with conflict? Do you lean into it? Avoid it? How do you see your tendencies affecting your relationship with God and others?



KEY SCRIPTURES

“Then Abram said to Lot, ‘Let there be no strife between you and me, and between your herdsmen and my herdsmen, for we are kinsmen.’”

GENESIS 13:8

“Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God.”

MATTHEW 5:9

Going Deeper

1. Alistair identifies proximity, possessions, and pride as the sources of Abraham and Lot's strife. Why do these factors so often play into our conflict with others? (Note: the ESV uses the word "strife" instead of "quarrelling" in this passage.)

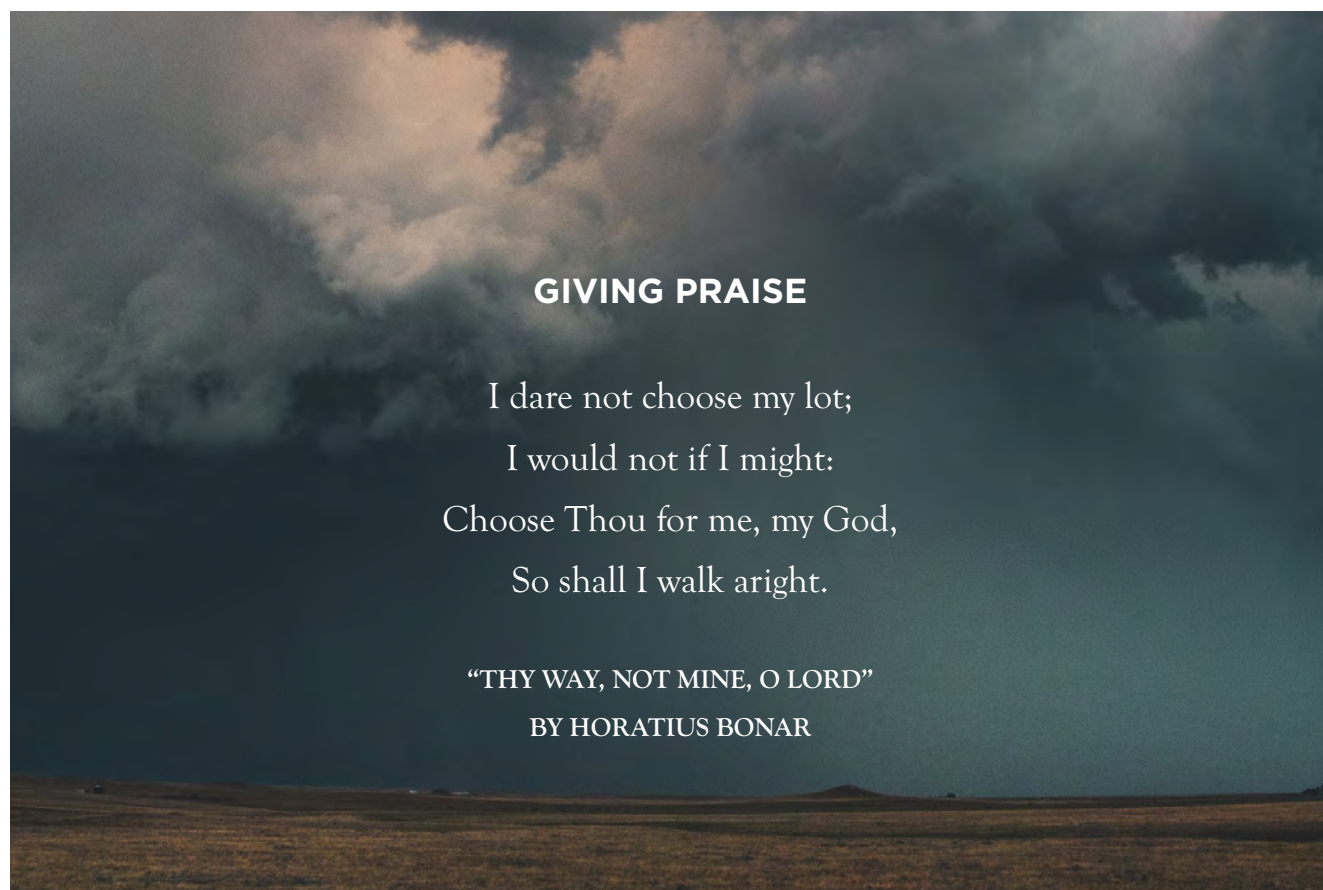
2. The apostle Paul lists "strife" among the works of the flesh in Galatians 5:19-21. What does this tell us about how God views strife in the life of the believer?

3. Alistair identifies initiative as an important element in Abraham's conflict resolution. What role does initiative play in undermining strife?

4. Resolving conflict demands wisdom. According to James 3:16-18, where do we get this wisdom, and what are its characteristics?

5. In his conflict with Lot, Abraham sets a standard that ought to guide God's people today: "Let there be no strife between me and you" (Gen. 13:8). Take a moment to prayerfully consider where there is strife in your relationships. How might initiative and godly wisdom help you seek resolution?

6. In the final moments of the sermon, Alistair points to honesty, obedience, and faith as antidotes to strife. How do these attributes prevent strife and help us address it when it appears?



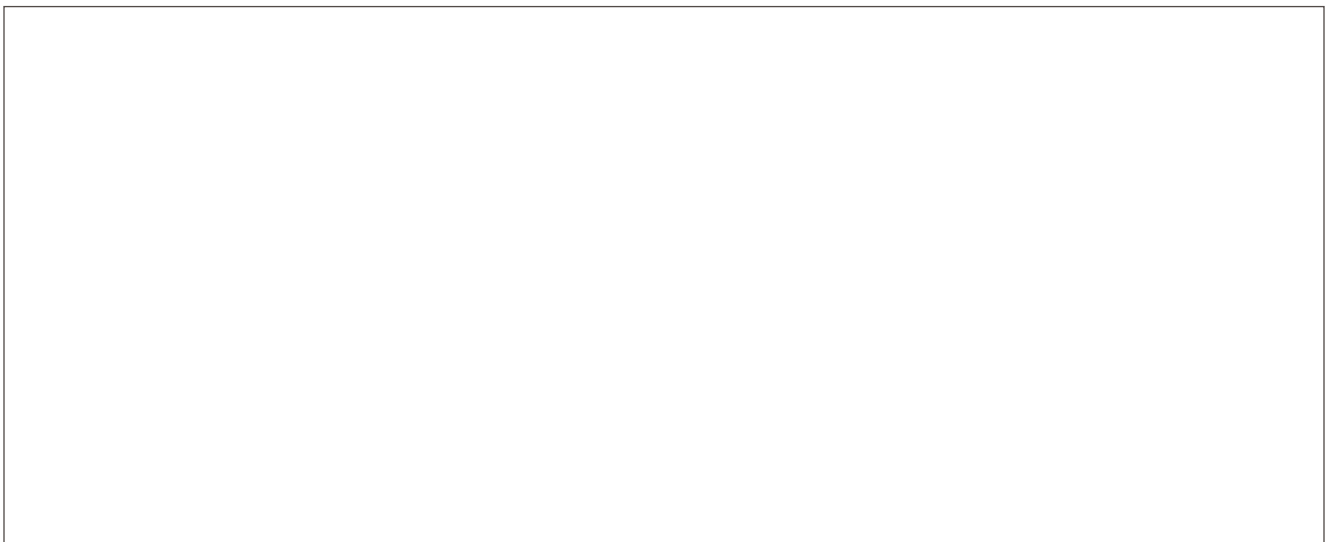
SESSION FIVE

“Abram to the Rescue” | Genesis 14:1-24

Getting Started

In the aftermath of a battle, Abraham set out on a rescue mission to save the captive Lot. Just as Abraham sought to rescue his nephew, so Christ came to seek and save us. The Lord Jesus now calls His people to play a role in rescuing those who are perishing in the world.

When you hear the word *evangelism*, what comes to mind? Do you often share the good news about Jesus Christ with others? Why, or why not?



KEY SCRIPTURES

“Brothers, if anyone is caught in any transgression, you who are spiritual should restore him in a spirit of gentleness. Keep watch on yourself, lest you too be tempted.”

GALATIANS 6:1

“Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world—the desires of the flesh and the desires of the eyes and pride of life—is not from the Father but is from the world. And the world is passing away along with its desires, but whoever does the will of God abides forever.”

1 JOHN 2:15-17

Going Deeper

1. In Genesis 13:10-13, we are told that Lot settled in Sodom. What do you know about Sodom, and what might this imply about Lot's spiritual condition?

2. Alistair points out that Lot, in a moment, lost everything Sodom had to offer (Gen. 14:12). What does this tell us about the nature of possessions? What role should possessions play in walk of faith?

3. What does it look like, practically, for believers to love God more than the things of the world?

4. Genesis 14:14-20 describes Abraham's journey to rescue Lot. In light of the recent conflict between them (Gen. 13:2-7), why do you think Abraham chose to rescue Lot anyway?

5. How is Abraham similar to the shepherd in the parable of the lost sheep (Luke 15:3-7)? How does Abraham foreshadow the work of Christ in His rescue mission?

6. According to Galatians 6:1 and James 5:19-20, what is the Christian's responsibility to struggling or backsliding believers?

7. In his sermon, Alistair encourages us to ask ourselves, "Who do I know who needs to be rescued?" Prayerfully consider this question, and write down any names that come to mind. What practical steps can you take to help rescue them?

GIVING PRAISE

But all through the mountains, thunder-riven,
And up from the rocky steep
There arose a cry to the gates of heaven,
"Rejoice! I have found My sheep!"
And the angels echoed around the throne,
"Rejoice, for the Lord brings back His own!
Rejoice, for the Lord brings back His own!"

"THE NINETY AND NINE"

BY ELIZABETH CECILIA CLEPHANE

SESSION SIX

“How Can I Be Right with God?” | Genesis 15:1–6

Getting Started

How can sinners be made right with a holy God? This is the question of the ages. Countless answers have been given, and all but one are inadequate. We read in Genesis 15:6 that Abraham “believed the LORD, and he counted it to him as righteousness.” The clear witness of the Bible is that we are made right with God by faith alone in Christ alone.

What are some of the inadequate answers you hear to the question of how we can be made right with God? How do these ideas fall short?

KEY SCRIPTURES

“And he believed the LORD, and he counted it to him as righteousness.”

GENESIS 15:6

“As it is written: ‘None is righteous, no, not one.’”

ROMANS 3:10

Going Deeper

1. Many believe that we are made right with God by our works. What are the dangers of this view as it relates to the Gospel?

2. When Scripture tells us Abraham “believed” God (Gen. 15:6), what does that mean? Is it enough to believe that what God says is true?

3. Alistair observes four implications of sin: it makes us *insensitive* to God's Word, *unrighteous* before God's law, *unable* to do God's will, and *unfit* for God's presence. How have you seen evidence of sin's implications in your own life?

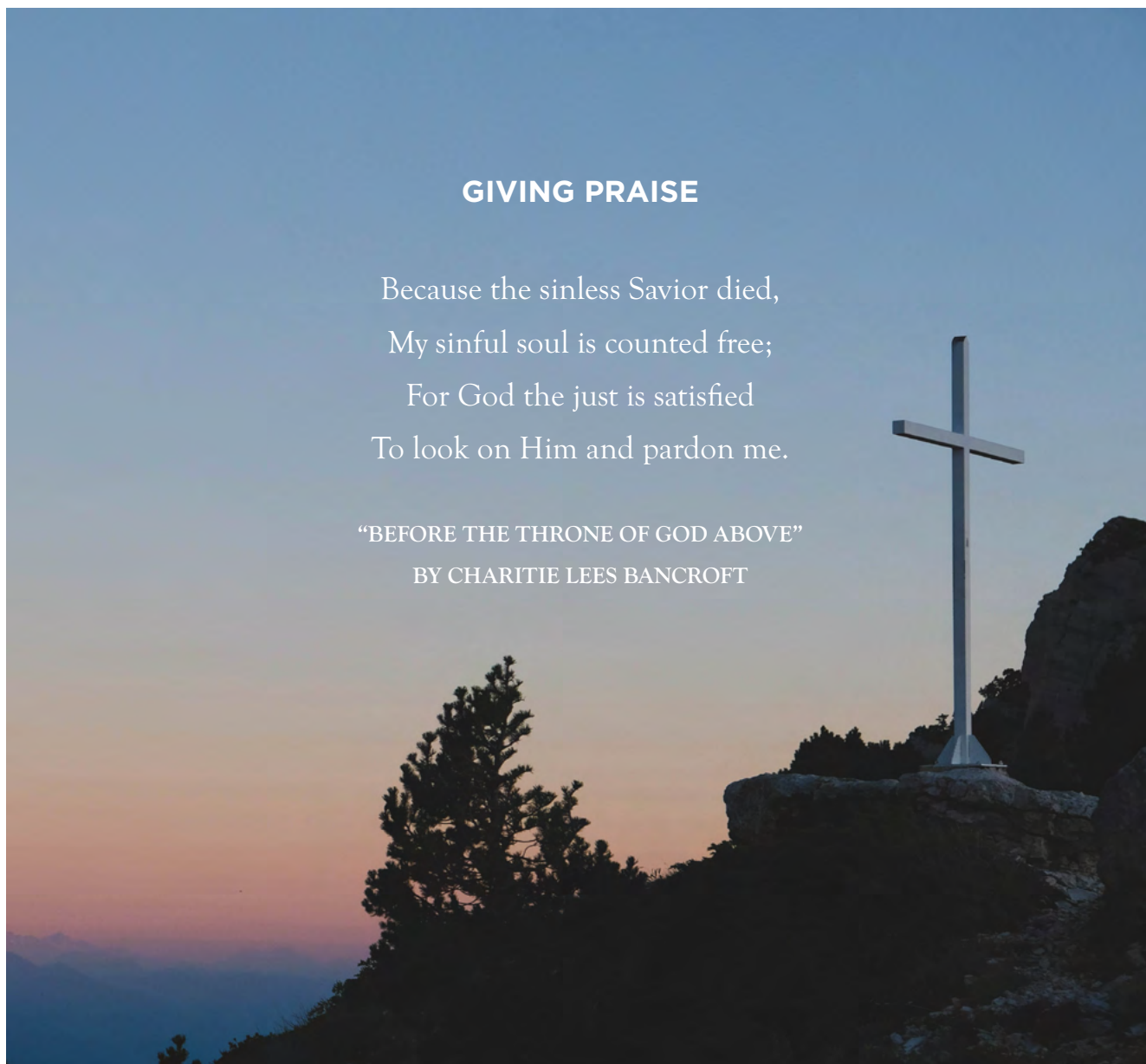
4. Alistair remarks that without sin, people do not see their need for a Savior. Why do you suppose this is the case? How have you found this to be true in your experience?

5. Alistair says the doctrine of justification by faith should lead to humility. Why is this the case? In what areas of your life might you need to repent of pride?

GIVING PRAISE

Because the sinless Savior died,
My sinful soul is counted free;
For God the just is satisfied
To look on Him and pardon me.

“BEFORE THE THRONE OF GOD ABOVE”
BY CHARITIE LEES BANCROFT



SESSION SEVEN

“Faith in the Waiting Room” | Genesis 16:1–15

Getting Started

Faced with a problem, Abraham and Sarah hastily took matters into their own hands. Chaos ensued. Like Abraham and Sarah, we are prone to disregard God’s plans and pursue our own. But venturing in faith requires waiting on the Lord—on His plan, promises, and timing.

Think of a time when you took matters into your own hands rather than waiting patiently for God’s provision. What was the result? What did you learn about God and yourself in the process?

KEY SCRIPTURES

“And behold, the word of the LORD came to him: ‘This man shall not be your heir; your very own son shall be your heir.’ And he brought him outside and said, ‘Look toward heaven, and number the stars, if you are able to number them.’ Then he said to him, ‘So shall your offspring be.’”

GENESIS 15:4–5

“But they who wait for the LORD shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings like eagles; they shall run and not be weary; they shall walk and not faint.”

ISAIAH 40:31

Going Deeper

1. What was the problem Abraham and Sarah faced in Genesis 16, and how did they try to solve it? (See Genesis 15:1-6 for context.)

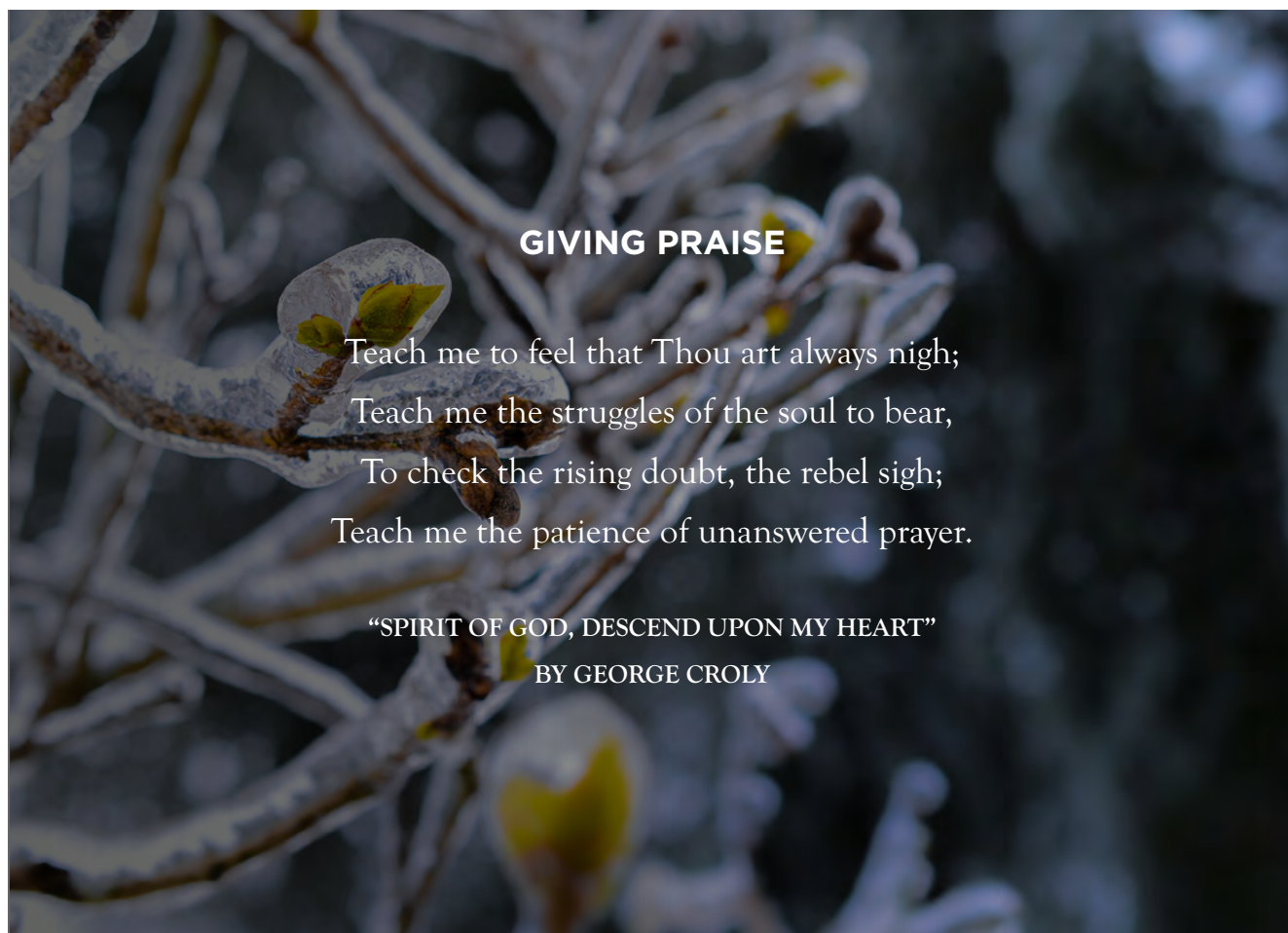
2. Setting aside what was culturally acceptable at the time, what made Sarah's plan (Gen. 16:2) and Abraham's compliance with it a bad decision?

3. Alistair observes that in the Bible, faith and waiting go hand in hand. Why do you suppose God often works through our waiting rather than our attempted resourcefulness?

4. Abraham and Sarah's impatience caused chaos within their family (Gen. 16:4-6). What sins are on display in the actions and attitudes of Abraham, Sarah, and Hagar respectively?

5. Despite Abraham and Sarah's disobedience, God intervenes with grace. What does this reveal to us about the nature and character of God?

6. When faced with a problem, we often prioritize reason over faith in God's promises. What are the dangers of this approach? What is the proper way to use our reasoning while also remembering God's promises?



SESSION EIGHT

“The Covenant Confirmed” | Genesis 17:1-2

Getting Started

At ninety-nine years old, Abraham had walked with God through triumphs and trials of faith. In Genesis 17, God confirms His covenant with Abraham and consecrates him for the promise. Today, God continues to redeem, consecrate, and empower His people for His work.

A central part of the Christian life is to be *consecrated*, or set apart, for God. What are some of the ways believers are set apart from the world?

KEY SCRIPTURES

“When Abram was ninety-nine years old the LORD appeared to Abram and said to him, ‘I am God Almighty; walk before me, and be blameless, that I may make my covenant between me and you, and may multiply you greatly.’”

ROMANS 12:12-13

“What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us? He who did not spare his own Son but gave him up for us all, how will he not also with him graciously give us all things?”

ROMANS 8:31-32

Going Deeper

1. Summarize the key elements of the Abrahamic covenant based on Genesis 12:1-3, 15:12-21, and 17:1-21.

2. Abraham “fell on his face” in response to God’s revelation (Gen. 17:3, 17). How do you think we are to understand his response, and how might it be instructive for believers today?

3. God gave Abraham the sign of circumcision as the outworking of his heart attitude (Gen. 17:9-14). What three things did circumcision signify?

4. Alistair notes that God’s purpose in redeeming us is that we would be consecrated to His purposes, controlled by His power, and committed to His people. Practically, what does each of these look like in the lives of believers today?

5. Abraham's obedience to God's command was immediate (Gen. 17:23). Prayerfully reflect upon your own obedience to the Lord. Do you show the same urgency to obey as Abraham?

6. Are there areas of your life in which it's hard for you to trust God's promises? What aspect of God's character might you dwell on to strengthen your faith in Him?



GIVING PRAISE

Standing on the promises that cannot fail,
When the howling storms of doubt and fear assail,
By the living Word of God I shall prevail,
Standing on the promises of God!

“STANDING ON THE PROMISES”

BY RUSSELL KELSO CARTER

SESSION NINE

“The Principles and Practice of Intercession”

Genesis 18:16–33

Getting Started

S. D. Gordon said, “You can do *more* than pray, *after* you have prayed. But you can *not* do more than pray *until* you have prayed.”¹ Abraham’s intercession for Sodom is both an example of intercessory prayer and an encouragement for us to devote ourselves to the ministry of prayer.

If the quality of your relationship with Christ were judged by the quality of your prayer life, what would the result be?

KEY SCRIPTURES

“Far be it from you to do such a thing, to put the righteous to death with the wicked, so that the righteous fare as the wicked! Far be that from you! Shall not the Judge of all the earth do what is just?”

GENESIS 18:25

“No longer do I call you servants, for the servant does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all that I have heard from my Father I have made known to you.”

JOHN 15:15

¹S. D. Gordon, *Quiet Talks on Prayer* (New York: Fleming H. Revel, 1904), 16.

Going Deeper

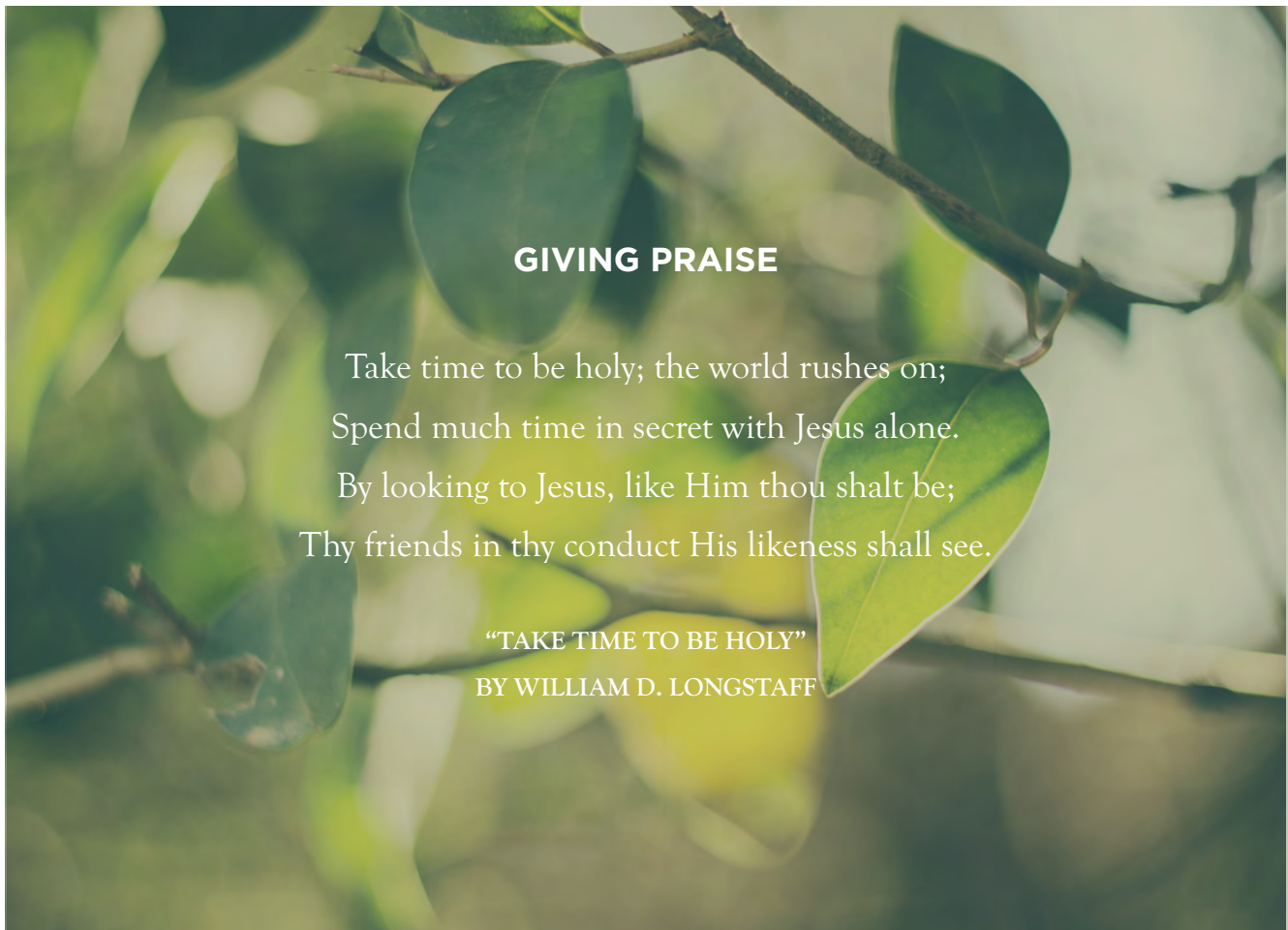
1. What is intercession? How is it different from other kinds of prayer, such as adoration, confession, or petition?

2. In his intercession, Abraham appeals to the character of God through two questions (Gen. 18:23, 25). How does understanding God's character relate to the ministry of intercession?

3. We often wonder if our prayers make a difference. How does Genesis 18:22-33 speak to this matter?

4. How does God stir up His people to intercede? What keeps you from praying more zealously and more often?

5. Briefly consider the lives of men like Moses, Elijah, Ezra, and Daniel. What role did prayer play in their leadership of Israel, and how are their examples instructive for the church today?



GIVING PRAISE

Take time to be holy; the world rushes on;
Spend much time in secret with Jesus alone.
By looking to Jesus, like Him thou shalt be;
Thy friends in thy conduct His likeness shall see.

**“TAKE TIME TO BE HOLY”
BY WILLIAM D. LONGSTAFF**

SESSION TEN

“The Peril of Inconsistency” | Genesis 20:1-18

Getting Started

Consistency is fundamental to a believer’s walk. In Genesis 20, Abraham faltered when his faith was challenged. But even Abraham’s failure is instructive for us. It points out perils we should avoid and principles of faith we should follow.

In what areas of your life has consistency proven to be important?

KEY SCRIPTURES

“O LORD, you have searched me and known me! You know when I sit down and when I rise up; you discern my thoughts from afar.”

PSALM 139:1-2

“None of us lives to himself, and none of us dies to himself.”

ROMANS 14:7

Going Deeper

1. What are some similarities and differences between the incidents described in Genesis 20:1-18 and Genesis 12:10-20?

2. Abraham compromised his faith when faced with a change in circumstances. Why do you suppose times of change often cause us to waver?

3. How did Abraham's inconsistency affect Sarah and Abimelech? What should this teach us about how our own inconsistency affects others?

4. According to Genesis 20:11-13, what are some of the mistakes and assumptions Abraham made that led to his failure?

5. Alistair notes that the greatest threat in the American church is “chameleon Christianity”—failing to be distinct from the world. How does this kind of lifestyle impact our witness?

6. Reflect for a moment on your life. Are there any areas in which you are being inconsistent in your walk with God? What sins do you need to repent of, and what promises of God do you need to hold on to?

GIVING PRAISE

Sing, pray, and keep His ways unswerving,
So do thine own part faithfully,
And trust His Word; though undeserving,
Thou yet shalt find it true for thee;
God never yet forsook at need
The soul that trusted Him indeed.

“IF THOU BUT SUFFER GOD TO GUIDE THEE”

BY GEORG NEUMARK, TRANS. CATHERINE WINKWORTH

SESSION ELEVEN

“Faith Put to the Test – Part One” | Genesis 22:1-8

Getting Started

In Abraham’s ultimate test of faith, God asked him to sacrifice his only son, Isaac. Abraham resolved to trust God with his son’s life, teaching us by example that true faith often involves trusting God over our own common sense, affections, and ambitions.

How do you find yourself reacting when God’s Word says something you find hard to understand or believe?

KEY SCRIPTURES

“Abraham said, ‘God will provide for himself the lamb for a burnt offering, my son.’ So they went both of them together.”

GENESIS 22:8

“By faith Abraham, when he was tested, offered up Isaac, and he who had received the promises was in the act of offering up his only son, of whom it was said, ‘Through Isaac shall your offspring be named.’”

HEBREWS 11:17-18

Going Deeper

1. What is significant about God using Isaac in Abraham's test of faith?

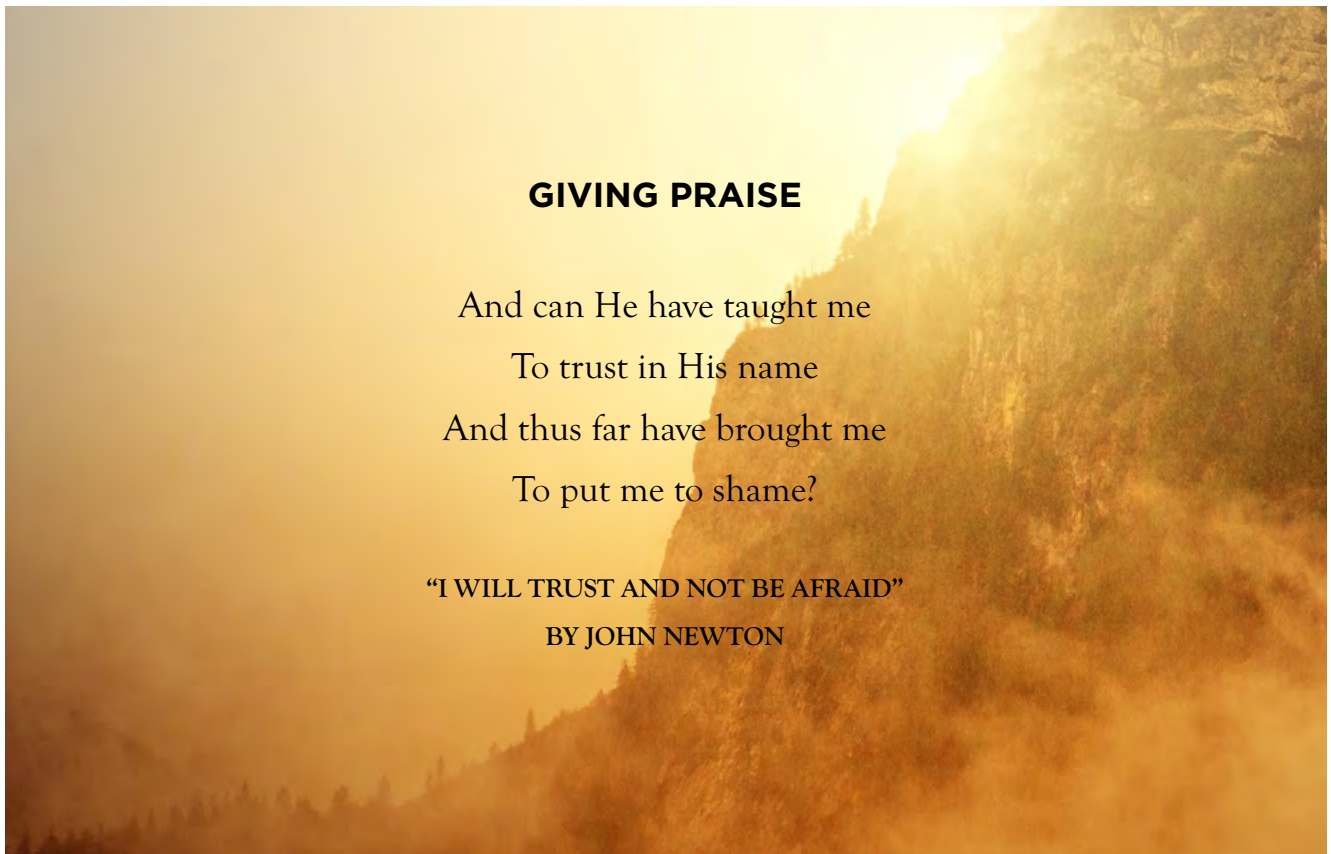
2. Alistair says that faith is to be lived in the realm of the will, not the emotions. Why are emotions an unreliable foundation for faith?

3. Genesis 22:3 says that Abraham got up early to journey to Moriah, the place where God had instructed him to go. What does this tell us about Abraham's attitude toward God's instruction, and what might we learn from it?

4. What can we learn about the character of God from Abraham's response to Isaac (Gen. 22:8)?

5. Throughout the Bible, God often tests His people to strengthen their faith. Consider Exodus 14:1-31 and Joshua 6:1-27. What are some similarities between these tests and Abraham's?

6. Are there any areas where your common sense, affections, or ambitions are keeping you from obeying God's commands or trusting His promises?



SESSION TWELVE

“Faith Put to the Test – Part Two” | Genesis 22:9-19

Getting Started

Abraham journeyed to the place of obedience at Moriah, trusting that God would provide in his hour of greatest need. In this account, we can see a picture of Jesus Christ, who, like Isaac, was obedient to His Father’s will. Jesus trusted in God’s provision even to the point of death, becoming the sufficient sacrifice for sins.

How does your understanding of the Gospel inform and impact how you comprehend the story of Abraham and Isaac?

KEY SCRIPTURES

“And Abraham lifted up his eyes and looked, and behold, behind him was a ram, caught in a thicket by his horns. And Abraham went and took the ram and offered it up as a burnt offering instead of his son.”

GENESIS 22:13

“Christ also suffered once for sins, the righteous for the unrighteous, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh but made alive in the spirit.”

1 PETER 3:18

Going Deeper

1. How is Abraham a positive example of faith in Genesis 22:9-19?

2. Read John 14:15 and Luke 9:23. What roles do obedience and sacrifice play in the life of faith?

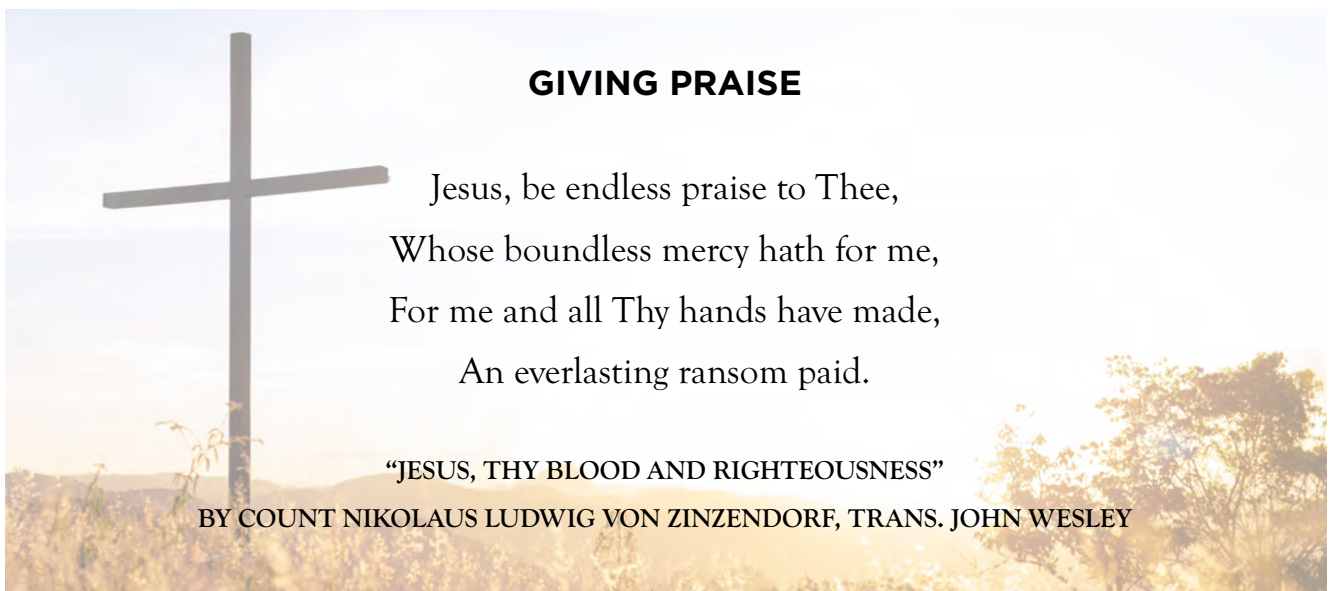
3. Abraham fully trusted that God would provide (Gen. 22:8; Heb. 11:19). How did Abraham's trust in God make it possible for him to obey such a difficult command?

4. How did the prior events of Abraham's life prepare him for this ultimate test?

5. After Isaac was spared, Abraham named the hill “the LORD will provide.” How did God provide for Abraham?

6. What worldly desires most frequently lure and entice you away from walking by faith? What have you learned in this study about how trusting God’s provision can guard you from sin?

7. Having ventured on the pathway of faith, Abraham died “in a good old age” (Gen. 25:8). Do you see yourself on a path of faithfulness for the rest of your life? What course corrections might you need to make?



ALISTAIR BEGG is the Bible teacher on the daily program Truth For Life and serves as the senior pastor of Parkside Church near Cleveland, Ohio.

Originally from Scotland, Alistair began pastoral ministry in 1975. He teaches directly from the text of the Bible and relies on the Spirit of God to do the work of God through the Word of God in the lives of those who listen.

Alistair's teaching reaches a global audience through radio, social media, truthforlife.org, and the Truth For Life mobile app. He has written several books and routinely speaks at conferences around the world.

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