



APRIL 3, 2016

ABRAHAM

WEEK 1



OPENING DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What are some of the pre-conceived assumptions you have about money and the Church?
2. What is a positive experience you have had regarding giving in the Church?
3. Why is it difficult to trust people? Why do we have so many trust issues?
4. When was a time when you trusted someone, and it turned out for the positive? What does it take in order for true trust to be present?

KEY POINTS

- God calls us to things we cannot yet see. - Genesis 12:1-3
- God asks us to trust Him so that we put our faith in Him, not in our own ability to chart things out for ourselves. - Genesis 22:2-8
- Stop setting your mind on the things of earth. - Colossians 3:1-4
- God does not want generosity FROM us. He wants it FOR us. He wants it to cause us to be a huge influencing force for Him. - Colossians 1:3-14

FURTHER DISCUSSION FROM SCRIPTURE

Read each Scripture passage and discuss the questions as a group. You may want to have each group member journal their answer first in the lines provided before discussing together, as a means of encouraging all to participate more deeply.

GOD CALLS US TO THINGS WE CANNOT YET SEE

Genesis 12:1-3

The Lord had said to Abram, "Go from your country, your people and your father's household to the land I will show you. I will make you into a great nation, and I will bless you; I will make your name great, and you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and whoever curses you I will curse; and all peoples on earth will be blessed through you."

1. **God called Abraham (Abram at the time) to a life he could not yet see - to a path that was "uncharted." Have you given God a 'blank check' with your life? Do you allow Him to do with your life what He wishes to do? Or do you seek too much to 'chart your own path?'**

2. **To what do you look in order to ensure that your path tomorrow will be ok? Family? Friends? Money? Your career? Your talents and abilities? In what lies your security for the present and for the future?**

GOD ASKS US TO TRUST HIM SO THAT WE PUT OUR FAITH IN HIM

Genesis 22:2-18

Then God said, "Take your son, your only son, whom you love—Isaac—and go to the region of Moriah. Sacrifice him there as a burnt offering on a mountain I will show you."

Early the next morning Abraham got up and loaded his donkey. He took with him two of his servants and his son Isaac. When he had cut enough wood for the burnt offering, he set out for the place God had told him about. On the third day Abraham looked up and saw the place in the distance. He said to his servants, "Stay here with the donkey while I and the boy go over there. We will worship and then we will come back to you." Abraham took the wood for the burnt offering and placed it on his son Isaac, and he himself carried the fire and the knife. As the two of them went on together, Isaac spoke up and said to his father Abraham, "Father?"

"Yes, my son?" Abraham replied.

"The fire and wood are here," Isaac said, "but where is the lamb for the burnt offering?"

Abraham answered, "God himself will provide the lamb for the burnt offering, my son." And the two of them went on together.

When they reached the place God had told him about, Abraham built an altar there and arranged the wood on it. He bound his son Isaac and laid him on the altar, on top of the wood. Then he reached out his hand and took the knife to slay his son. But the angel of the Lord called out to him from heaven, "Abraham! Abraham!"

"Here I am," he replied.

"Do not lay a hand on the boy," he said. "Do not do anything to him. Now I know that you fear God, because you have not withheld from me your son, your only son."

Abraham looked up and there in a thicket he saw a ram caught by its horns. He went over and took the ram and sacrificed it as a burnt offering instead of his son. So Abraham called that place The Lord Will Provide. And to this day it is said, "On the mountain of the Lord it will be provided."

The angel of the Lord called to Abraham from heaven a second time and said, "I swear by myself, declares the Lord, that because you have done this and have not withheld your son, your only son, I will surely bless you and make your descendants as numerous as the stars in the sky and as the sand on the seashore. Your descendants will take possession of the cities of their enemies, and through your offspring all nations on earth will be blessed, because you have obeyed me."

3. Abraham had faith in God, not because of what Abraham could do (because any grown man with any type of love for his son could not do this humanly on his own) but because of what he knew to be true about God. He knew and trusted in the fact that God would provide. What is preventing you from trusting in God and in His charted plan for your life? What is preventing you from being fully committed to Him and trusting Him with something He is asking you to do?

STOP SETTING YOUR MIND ON THE THINGS OF EARTH

Colossians 3:1-4

Since, then, you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things. For you died, and your life is now hidden with Christ in God. When Christ, who is your life, appears, then you also will appear with Him in glory.

4. Look at verse 3: *For you died, and your life is now hidden with Christ in God.* Are you truly living in light of this Truth? Are you truly in Him? Or is your mind elsewhere and set on earthly things? How is this evidenced in your life, either for the positive or for the negative?

GOD DOES NOT WANT GENEROSITY *FROM US*. HE WANTS IT *FOR US*.

Colossians 1:3-14

We always thank God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, when we pray for you, because we have heard of your faith in Christ Jesus and of the love you have for all God's people—the faith and love that spring from the hope stored up for you in heaven and about which you have already heard in the true message of the gospel that has come to you. In the same way, the gospel is bearing fruit and growing throughout the whole world—just as it has been doing among you since the day you heard it and truly understood God's grace. You learned it from Epaphras, our dear fellow servant, who is a faithful minister of Christ on our behalf, and who also told us of your love in the Spirit.

For this reason, since the day we heard about you, we have not stopped praying for you. We continually ask God to fill you with the knowledge of his will through all the wisdom and understanding that the Spirit gives, so that you may live a life worthy of the Lord and please Him in every way: bearing fruit in every good work, growing in the knowledge of God, being strengthened with all power according to His glorious might so that you may have great endurance and patience, and giving joyful thanks to the Father, who has qualified you to share in the inheritance of His holy people in the kingdom of light. For He has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the Son He loves, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.

5. **This step of faith for Christ The Rock is the largest thing we have ever done as a church. It is literally going to change our church, and it is a risk we are willing to take in light of God's word and God's leading. What would it mean for your generosity if you truly had a full view of trusting in Christ and what giving generously actually means? Have you ever experienced this? Do you feel that you have already 'arrived' in this area, or do you still have room to grow? What would it look like for your story of generosity to create a witness that honors and draws more people to Him during this Uncharted season?**
