

## SCRIPTURES FOR 3/12/06 LIFEGROUP LESSON

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### **Hebrews 11:8-12**

By faith Abraham, when called to go to a place he would later receive as his inheritance, obeyed and went, even though he did not know where he was going. By faith he made his home in the promised land like a stranger in a foreign country; he lived in tents, as did Isaac and Jacob, who were heirs with him of the same promise. For he was looking forward to the city with foundations, whose architect and builder is God.

By faith Abraham, even though he was past age—and Sarah herself was barren—was enabled to become a father because he considered him faithful who had made the promise. And so from this one man, and he as good as dead, came descendants as numerous as the stars in the sky and as countless as the sand on the seashore.

By faith Abraham, when God tested him, offered Isaac as a sacrifice. He who had received the promises was about to sacrifice his one and only son, even though God had said to him, "It is through Isaac that your offspring will be reckoned." Abraham reasoned that God could raise the dead, and figuratively speaking, he did receive Isaac back from death.

### **2 Corinthians 4:18**

So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen. For what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal.

### **2 Corinthians 5:7**

We live by faith, not by sight.

### **Philippians 3:14**

I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus.

### **Jeremiah 29:11**

For I know the plans I have for you, says the Lord, They are plans for good and not for disaster, to give you a future and a hope.

### **2 Peter 3:9**

The Lord is not slow in keeping His promise, as some understand slowness. He is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance.

### **James 2:21-22 (Message)**

Wasn't our ancestor Abraham made right with God by works when he placed his son Isaac on the sacrificial altar? Isn't it obvious that faith and works are yoked partners, that faith expresses itself in works?

<p>NOTE TO LEADER: There is a lot of material here. Familiarize yourself with it so you know which stuff you are most comfortable with and what you will cut if you get short on time. Try to keep the lesson/discussion 20-30 minutes in length. Good luck and let me know if you have any questions. - Ed</p>
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**NOTE TO LEADERS:** All items in *italics* are for your information and not designed to be read aloud.

### INTRODUCTION:

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This week, we talked about practical, daily faith. Does our faith cause us to respond? Does our faith work? Do we trust God even when it doesn't seem to make sense?

*Have someone read Hebrews 11:8-12, 17-19.*

### THE FAITH OF ABRAHAM

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How is faith demonstrated or explained in each of the three examples from Abraham's life (*he went to the Promised Land, had a son when he was 90, and was willing to sacrifice his son*)?

What obstacles had to be overcome?

What changed for him? For his family?

*Have someone read 2 Corinthians 4:18 & 5:7.*

So, we want to live by faith not by sight, like Abraham did, but our culture encourages us to trust our eyes. We always want to see the proof, get a second opinion, or take a poll. Non-Christian people either say they don't believe anything they can't see or they will believe anything.

What are some things people do every day that require faith in the unseen or faith in things they have no control of (*e.g., fly in a plane, drink tap water, turn on a light switch, skydive, etc.*)?

What did Steve Bartkowski, former QB for the Atlanta Falcons, mean when he said, "If you don't stand for something, you will fall for anything?"

### OUR RESPONSE

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Abraham's example shows us a faith that trusts God even when we are unsure of the when, where, how, or why.

If you were Abraham, which would have been the hardest for you to deal with – not knowing when, where, how, or why? Explain.

Should we risk everything by placing that much faith in God? Paul says, "I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus." Does that make it worth the risk?

*Have someone read Jeremiah 29:11 & 2 Peter 3:9.*

Do you ever struggle with trusting God's plans for you?

It says God is patient with you and He is faithful in keeping His promise. Has trusting in God's patience and faithfulness changed your life in any way? If so, what did that trust cost you?

Have you ever had an "Abraham" in your life whose faith really inspired you?

### CONCLUSION

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*Read James 2:21-22 from the Message (see attached).*

If we trust that God will honor His promise and that He has plans for us that will prosper us, then our actions, like those of Abraham, should express that trust.

What are some simple steps you could take to show that you have placed your trust in God?

Fortunately, God does not call us all to Abraham's level of faith. He tries to show us when, where, how, and why. But once we sense His plan for us, we must act. Faith and works are inextricably linked and each must inform the other. Is your God big? Are you willing to do things that, without God's help, could not possibly succeed?

### OPTIONAL EXTRA-CURRICULAR ACTIVITY

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Discuss the possibility of your group adopting a shut-in and starting a rotation to visit that shut-in periodically. If this sounds interesting to your group, contact the WCC office and we will give you a few names of potential adoptees.

*James 1:27 - ...look after orphans and widows...*

*Hebrews 13:2-3 - Do not forget to entertain strangers, for by so doing some people have entertained angels without knowing it. Remember those in prison as if you were their fellow prisoners, and those who are mistreated as if you yourselves were suffering.*