

Long Story Short

Episode #2: The Promise

Genesis 3-22

The Problem

When the cool evening breezes were blowing, the man and his wife heard the LORD God walking about in the garden. So they **hid** from the LORD God among the trees. Then the LORD God called to the man, “**Where are you?**” He replied, “I heard you walking in the garden, so I **hid**. I was **afraid** because I was **naked**.” (Genesis 3:9–10, NLT)

God is bigger than big - it is **sin** that makes God **small** in our lives.
God is closer than close - it is **sin** that makes God seem **distant** in our lives.

The Promise

The **Covenant** of the Promise

The LORD had said to Abram, “Leave your **native country**, your **relatives**, and your **father’s family**, and go to the **land** that I will show you. I will make you into a great **nation**. I will bless you and make you famous, and you will be a **blessing** to others. I will bless those who bless you and curse those who treat you with contempt. All the families on earth will be blessed through you.” (Genesis 12:1–3, NLT)

Let God determine the **boundaries** and **direction** of your life;
And you will **know** God like you have never **known** him before
And you will be **used** by God like you have never **been** used before.

The **People** of the Promise

So Abram **departed** as the LORD had instructed... (Genesis 12:4, NLT)

God's invitation is based on his purposes, not our perfection.

The **Testing** of the promise.

1) The **Location** Test: **Where?**

The LORD had said to Abram, “Leave your **native country**, your **relatives**, and your **father’s family**, and **go to the land** that I will show you.” (Genesis 12:1, NLT)

If you trust God even when you don’t know where He is taking you, He will take you places you never knew.

2) The **Timing** Test: **When?**

Some time later, the LORD spoke to Abram in a vision and said to him, “Do not be afraid, Abram, for I will protect you, and your reward will be great.” But Abram replied, “O Sovereign LORD, **what good are all your blessings when I don’t even have a son?**” (Genesis 15:1–2, NLT)

If you can trust God even when you have to wait for the big reveal, God will reveal even bigger things as you wait.

3) The **Process** Test: **How?**

Then the LORD said to Abraham, “Why did Sarah laugh? Why did she say, ‘Can an old woman like me have a baby?’ **Is anything too hard for the LORD?** I will return about this time next year, and Sarah will have a son.” (Genesis 18:13–14, NLT)

If you trust God even when you can't see how His plan will be accomplished, He will plan things you could never accomplish.

4) The Purpose Test: Why?

Some time later, God tested Abraham's faith. "Abraham!" God called. "Yes," he replied. "Here I am." "Take your son, your only son—yes, Isaac, whom you love so much—and go to the land of Moriah. Go and sacrifice him as a burnt offering on one of the mountains, which I will show you." (Genesis 22:1–2, NLT)

The angel said, "Don't kill your son or hurt him in any way. Now I can see that you trust God and that you have not kept your son, your only son, from me." (Genesis 22:12, NCV)

***God's promise is based on His purposes and not our perfection;
so, our response requires a step of courage, not of certainty.***

Discussion Guide



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Big Idea:

The Bible is 66 books by dozens of authors written over thousands of years. Amazingly though, one seamless story emerges from that epic: *The story of a passionate God in relentless pursuit of those He loves in an epic that leads to Jesus.*

God created everything for the purpose of intimate relationship and strategic partnership; and asked the people he had created, "Are you in?" It didn't take 3 pages for people to mess everything up. Sin entered the story, and that's **the problem**. Rather than trust God to determine *the boundaries of life*, we ignore God and choose define right and wrong for ourselves. Rather than trust God to determine *the direction of life*, we ignored God and choose our own path.

So God invited one couple, Abraham and Sarah, and makes a covenant with them, **the promise** of a partnership. If they would let God determine the boundaries and direction of their lives, they would know God in an intimate relationship, and they would be used by God in a strategic partnership. God chose them not because of their perfection, but for His purpose. Once Abraham and Sarah agreed to the covenant partnership, God then put them through a series of exercises—tests designed to strengthen their trust in God and His ability to keep His part of the partnership. There was *the location test* to determine if they would trust God even when they were not sure *where* God was taking them. Next came *the timing test* to determine if they would trust God even when they had to *wait* for him to do what He said he would do. Then came *the process test* to determine if they would trust God even when they could see no human or natural way for God to do what He said He would do. Finally came *the purpose test* to see if they would trust God even when they couldn't imagine *why* He would ask them to do what He asked them to do.

Discussion Questions:

1. How does sin make God small in our lives? How does it make God distant? Share an example with the group.
2. "God's invitation is based on His purpose and not on your perfection." What has ever made you doubt that you were someone God could or would choose? How do these doubts keep us from God's best?
3. Take each of the four tests God put Abraham through and give examples of a time you faced that same test. What did you learn about God through that test? What did you learn about yourself?
4. What is God calling you to do that you have not been obedient to because you are waiting on certainty when He is asking us to act on courage and trust?

Prayer Focus:

Hebrews 11:8-9 says, *It was by faith that Abraham obeyed when God called him to leave home and go to another land that God would give him as his inheritance. He went without knowing where he was going. And even when he reached the land God promised him, he lived there by faith—for he was like a foreigner, living in tents. And so did Isaac and Jacob, who inherited the same promise.* (Hebrews 11:8-9, NLT)

Next Steps:

What crossroads are you at right now in your life, and what is one step you can take towards obedience?

This Week's Reading Guide:

Genesis 3-22; Hebrews 11