



# GENESIS GROUP GUIDE

## SCRIPTURE DEVOTION | GENESIS 15

Last week in our study of Genesis, we followed the story of Abram and Lot as they grew into mighty communities and separated, as well as traced the story of Lot's capture by rival kingdoms and his rescue from captivity by Abram. This week we will look more closely at the covenant God makes with Abram. In it, we will see displays of God's patience and provision as well as Abram's response of faith.

### TEXT-BASED ONE ANOTHERING QUESTIONS

*This time for group members to practice confession, repentance, accountability, biblical encouragement, etc. with the help of the Holy Spirit through his word. Encourage group members to read the portion of scripture being discussed before group.*

- As Genesis 15 begins, we find Abram exhausted and fearful of retaliation after his battle with the foreign kings. But God, knowing the heart of Abram, comes to him in a vision to assure him of His character and faithfulness, saying, "Fear not, Abram, I am your shield; your reward shall be very great." After this assurance, Abram speaks of his greater fear, revealing his doubt. Though God promised an heir, Abram has not had one, and he has begun to wonder what God's faithfulness will look like. Even perhaps, questioning God's faithfulness to do this at all. God assures Abram that not only will he have a son from his own flesh; his offspring will be as numerous as the stars.
  - Read Genesis 15:3-5. God has not revealed how or when this promise will be fulfilled, but in verse 5, we see Abram's response of faith. With this in mind, how would you define Abram's faith? (Hint: What did Abram do? *Believe*. What did he believe? *God's word*.)
  - As we stated above, no circumstances have changed. However, Abram has faith in God's word. From where did Abram's faith (belief & trust) in God's word come? Read Ephesians 2:8.
  - Spend time in group sharing a brief story of God, giving you faith to trust Him even when circumstances did not change or perhaps got more difficult.
  - Can you think of a situation today or doubt you struggle with that requires a deeper faith? Share. (LEADERS: take note of these and spend time praying for these things knowing that Christ is the author and perfecter of our faith! (Hebrews 12:2))
- In the next segment of our text this week, Genesis 15:7-21, the Lord God further assures Abram of His faithfulness to His promise by making a covenant with Abram. The logistics of this covenant may seem strange to us today, but this would have been a well-known practice for Abram and the listening Israelites of that time. In the initiation of this covenant, God reminds Abram of both the promise of offspring and a land in which to dwell with Him again. However, he also assures Abram that his people will suffer, be held captive, and be rescued before entering into that promised land with Him. Again, this is a foretelling of the experience the Israelites would have just experienced.
  - Put yourself in the shoes of the Israelites. How would you respond to hearing about this covenant with Abram? Would it increase or decrease your hope and courage in looking toward the promised land?
  - Is there any part of God's foreknowledge of the Israelite's suffering/oppression/captivity that is difficult for you to understand or reconcile? How so? How can we find hope in this foreknowledge?
  - For those who are Christians, we know that suffering, oppression, and sin are all a part of living this side of heaven. In what things do our culture point to for hope? What can we learn from Abram about where to place our hope?
    - Why can this be difficult for us to do? How can we encourage one another?
  - Like last week, this scripture is full of shadows that point us towards their ultimate fulfillment in Christ. What are some of those shadows here?

- In this covenant, we also witness something different from the traditional covenants of that day. This covenant is unilateral, meaning that even if one party does not fulfill its obligations to this covenant, the other party will take full responsibility. We see this pictured beautifully as Abram slumbers, and God enters into this covenant with him, symbolized by a smoking fire pot & flaming torch. We often experience the profound reality of this picture in our own salvation stories, but over time can forget and run back to legalism and self-righteousness as we continue in our walks with him.
  - Is there an area of your life/walk with Him today that you are tempted to believe you must earn God's approval and love rather than live from or in it?
  - Where are you tempted to trust in or rely on your own "righteousness" rather than Christ's on your behalf?
  - What do you think would change in your walk with him if you meditated on this reality? If you do this already, how has this been an encouragement to you? Encourage your brothers & sisters!

## MISSION

### Evangelism

We want to be intentional in our everyday lives to have gospel conversations with people that don't know Jesus. These people God has placed in our path are not projects, but friends. Friends we long to see have the hope and joy of Christ!

- Have each group member choose one person they are going to pray for and initiate conversations with about Jesus. Each week, follow up:
  - Were they able to share the gospel with them, encourage them, or pray with them this week?
  - How can the group pray for the group member & the person they are walking with?
  - What is one next step they can take with this person? Can they ask them to church? To come to community group? Read the Bible together? Etc.
- The weather is beginning to change, work together as a group to plan a block party where your group can meet and bless the neighborhood that you meet in each week.

### Missions

We want to be mindful and prayerful for the work the Lord is doing in the world. There are tons of ways you can encourage your group members to engage in God's work around the world. Below are some ideas for this week:

- Read a recent update from your group's missionary/missionary family and pray for them.
  - Consider putting together a care package for them! Supply a list of items people can bring. Have kids draw cards/notes. Etc!
- Have a potluck with food from a specific country, pray for that country, the churches there, etc. Check out [prayercast.com](http://prayercast.com) for country prayer info!

## PRAYER

- Check in on life (ex. relationship with Christ (prayer & word), their marriages/singleness, children, etc.) to discover prayer needs.
- Spend time in confession & prayer for those who have shared areas of disbelief, wrong beliefs, sin, etc. during discussion time.
- If you have more time or separate time for men & women choose 1-2 questions on the following page for accountability time or create your own.

## ACCOUNTABILITY QUESTIONS

Knowing the members of your group, and having heard about their week, choose 1-2 questions for your time of confession, encouragement, & prayer. We have gathered these questions from various resources, so feel free to jump around this document or come up with your own questions to best serve your group.

- Have you been a testimony this week to the greatness of Jesus Christ with both your words and actions?
- Have you been exposed to sexually alluring material or allowed your mind to entertain inappropriate thoughts about someone who is not your spouse this week?
- Have you lacked any integrity in your financial dealings this week, or coveted something that does not belong to you?
- Have you been honoring, understanding and generous in your important relationships this past week?
- Have you damaged another person by your words, either behind their back or face-to-face?
- Have you given in to an addictive behavior this week? Explain.
- Have you continued to remain angry toward another?
- Have you secretly wished for another's misfortune so that you might excel?
- Did you finish your reading this week and hear from the Lord? What are you going to do about it?
- Did you spend significant time with God through His Word, prayer, quiet time, devotions, and other spiritual disciplines? How consistent? Is He your driving force?
- What blocks your growth in Christ? What blocks growth, in your other relationships, from becoming more mature and effectual?
- Have you faithfully served the Lord, His people, and the lost?
- Did you go and participate in church activities and worship this week? How so? Why not?
- Have you made your family a priority? What noteworthy activity or deed did you do for your spouse and/or family?
- How have you struggled with sin? What are the sins that have weighed down your walk with God this week?
- What did you do to enhance your relationship with your spouse/friends? What can you do to make that relationship better?
- In what ways has God blessed you this week? How have you shared your blessings?
- What disappointments did you face? Did they consume your thoughts? What did you do about it? What can you learn?
- Have you committed any sexual sin? Did you look at someone lustfully? Have you been alone in a compromising situation? Have you been flirtatious? Have you struggled with pornography or "romance novels?" Have you exposed yourself to any sexually oriented material? Did you put yourself in a situation with anyone that could appear to be compromising, even though it may not have been?
- Have you shared your faith? In what ways? How can you improve? Have you had an opportunity to share with a non-Christian?
- How well are you handling your finances right now? Have your financial dealings been questionable?
- Have you been trustworthy? Have you lied? Stolen? Cheated? Been dishonest or manipulative? Have you elevated yourself over another for your own personal agenda? What about your language and attitude?
- Have you been prideful? Have you been guilty of gossip or anger? Slandered? Shown indifference? Been greedy? Not controlled your tongue?
- Have you demonstrated a servant's heart? How so? What have you done for someone else this week?
- Did you struggle with a disappointment this week? How did you handle it?
- Have you respected and treated your classmates, co-workers and peers graciously by showing them compassion and the love of God in your words and deeds? What can you do to enhance your relationships here?
- How is your level of character, according to the comparison of Gal. 5:22-23 versus Gal. 5:19-21?
- How did you practice joy this week? Have you had a thankful attitude toward God? Have you struggled with anger toward God? How so? What can you do about it?
- Have you taken care of the temple of the Holy Spirit with rest, sleep, exercise, healthy eating, etc? What about addictions, gluttony, or substance abuse?
- Have you been honest while answering these questions? If not, how so? If not, why?
- How can we support you as a group?