

## GOD'S PROMISES

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One of the many reasons I love the Old Testament is that the people we meet there are real and faithful and also VERY human. We see folks who get it wrong repeatedly but who keep coming back to God. And we see a God who keeps welcoming them back and never gives up on them.

In Genesis 12, God calls Abram to leave his home in Haran and set out on a journey, destination unknown. God's promises are magnificent: Abram's offspring will be a great nation; they'll be blessed, and they'll be a blessing to others. Abram was 75 at this point and his wife was barren, so all this looked unlikely, but Abram believed God and left his home to obey God.

Soon after that, God repeats his promises to Abram, and Abram builds a great altar to honor and worship God. This is an impressive display of Abram's genuine faith. But as Genesis goes on, we see Abram's doubts begin to creep in.

Abram and entourage go to Egypt. As they're about to enter the country, Abram tells his wife to lie and tell everyone she's his sister: he's afraid that if they find out she's his wife, they'll kill him and kidnap her. Because of this, Sarai is taken into Pharaoh's house and becomes one of Pharaoh's many wives. So the ugly truth is that Abram sacrificed his wife's virtue to protect his own life.

Later Abram, impatient for God's promises to become a reality, sleeps with one of Sarai's slave girls, who gives birth to Ishmael – NOT the son of God's promise. The problems caused by this act of disobedience are still being dealt with today.

Was Abram a sinner? Did he have times of doubt and disobedience? Definitely! But did God keep his promises to Abram anyway? He certainly did! God is true even when we are false, and he'll see to it that his promises come to pass.

God has made promises to you, too. God has promised you a life of inner peace and joy through Jesus Christ. God has promised you salvation through Christ's saving death and resurrection. Will you mess up? Will you have times of sin and disobedience? Yes, you will. But remember Abram, and be encouraged. God's promises don't necessarily depend on our perfection; they come from who he is, the one who loves us and forgives us and who has plans that are for our good. Trust God! He is faithful.