

INTRODUCTION

Do you ever wish that God would speak clearly to you? He appeared to Abraham when He told him to leave his home and extended family (Genesis 12:1, Acts 7:2), but I'm sure it was not as clear as Abraham would have wanted! However, Abraham obeyed, leaving for "the land I will show you". Despite the danger and unknown ahead, are you willing to step out? In The Fellowship of the Ring by J.R.R. Tolkien, Gandalf has this to say to a young hobbit: "It's a dangerous business, Frodo, going out your door. You step onto the road, and if you don't keep your feet, there's no knowing where you might be swept off to." Does your walk of faith sweep you off to outrageous hope?

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. If you could do one thing right now that you **knew** would be successful, what would it be?
2. Read Hebrews 11:1 and discuss your definition of 'faith'. Does it match the definition in this verse?
3. Read Hebrews 11:8-12. Why did Abraham obey the call of God?
4. Read Hebrews 11:13-16. Verses 13 and 16 state that "they were foreigners and strangers on earth" and "they were longing for a better country...." Read the following passages and summarize what is said about Christ-followers and this world. Discuss if/how this affects how you live your life.

John 15:18-19 _____

John 17:15-17 _____

Philippians 3:20 _____

1 Peter 2:11 _____

5. Many of those noted as people of faith "did not receive the things promised; they only saw them and welcomed them from a distance", and yet they were still living by faith when they died. Do you have this kind of outrageous hope? If not, what keeps you from stepping out in faith when you don't have a clear picture of where God is leading you?
6. Read Hebrews 11:17-19. Can you imagine God asking you to sacrifice your child? How did Abraham reconcile God's command with the promises He had given him of many descendants? How does that speak to Abraham's faith?

Study Questions for Community Groups

7. When have you experienced a test of your faith? How did that affect your relationship with God?
8. Much is said throughout this passage about promises – more specifically, promises from God. In order to be outrageously hopefully, our faith must rest in God. Read the following Scripture and record the promises God has given us.

Proverbs 3:5-7

John 14:27

John 16:13

1 John 2:25

1 John 1:9

Philippians 4:19

James 1:5

James 4:7-10

SCRIPTURE

¹Now faith is confidence in what we hope for and assurance about what we do not see.... ⁸By 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. ⁹By 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. ¹⁰For he was looking forward to the city with foundations, whose architect and builder is God. ¹¹And by faith even Sarah, who was past childbearing age, was enabled to bear children because she considered him faithful who had made the promise. ¹²And 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. ¹³All these people were still living by faith when they died. They did not receive the things promised; they only saw them and welcomed them from a distance, admitting that they were foreigners and strangers on earth. ¹⁴People who say such things show that they are looking for a country of their own. ¹⁵If they had been thinking of the country they had left, they would have had opportunity to return. ¹⁶Instead, they were longing for a better country—a heavenly one. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for he has prepared a city for them. ¹⁷By faith Abraham, when God tested him, offered Isaac as a sacrifice. He who had embraced the promises was about to sacrifice his one and only son, ¹⁸even though God had said to him, “It is through Isaac that your offspring will be reckoned.” ¹⁹Abraham reasoned that God could even raise the dead, and so in a manner of speaking he did receive Isaac back from death.

Hebrews 11:1, 8-19

APPLICATION

The promises listed in question 8 are just a small portion of the promises given by God in the Bible. Take some time this week to look up at least ten more of God’s promises, and meditate on them daily.