



## RUNNING WITH THE GIANTS

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Discussion Notes  
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### OPENING

This week we are beginning a new series called “Running with the Giants.” The idea for this series comes from the Book of Hebrews where the author gives a long list of people who were giants in the faith. The race of life is a constant challenge, but we don’t have to run it alone. Now we are looking at the lives of Biblical giants who ran with endurance and faith, and used their stories to build our own. This summer, we will be “Running with the Giants” and discovering inspiration for our own journeys.

### SCRIPTURE<sup>1</sup>

**Hebrews 12:1** Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles. And let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us.

**Genesis 12:1** The Lord had said to Abram, “Go from your country, your people and your father’s household to the land I will show you.

**Genesis 12:4** So Abram went, as the Lord had told him; and Lot went with him. Abram was seventy-five years old when he set out from Haran.

**Hebrews 11:8** 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.

**Genesis 12:11-13** As he was about to enter Egypt, he said to his wife Sarai, “I know what a beautiful woman you are. When the Egyptians see you, they will say, ‘This is his wife.’ Then they will kill me but will let you live. Say you are my sister, so that I will be treated well for your sake and my life will be spared because of you.”

**Hebrews 11:11-12** And by faith even Sarah, who was past childbearing age, was enabled to bear children because she 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.

**Genesis 22:1-2** Some time later God tested Abraham. He said to him, “Abraham!” “Here I am,” he replied. Then God said, “Take your son, your only son, whom you love – Isaac – and go to the region of Moriah. Sacrifice him there as a burnt offering on a mountain I will show you.”

**Genesis 22:9-12** When they reached the place God had told him about, Abraham built an altar there and arranged the wood on it. He bound his son Isaac and laid him on the altar, on top of the wood. Then he reached out his hand and took the knife to slay his son. But the angel of the Lord called out to him from heaven, “Abraham! Abraham!” “Here I am,” he replied. “Do not lay a hand on the boy,” he said. “Do not do anything to him. Now I know that you fear God, because you have not withheld from me your son, your only son.”

### OBSERVATION

This week we are honoring our fathers and clearly Abraham was a father to whom God gave great opportunity and responsibility. He had flaws and made some interesting mistakes, but his life has lessons for all of us as he was considered by God as righteous because of his faith.

**Question:** Abraham was asked to leave his homeland behind. What is God asking you to leave?

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<sup>1</sup> All scripture is NIV unless otherwise indicated



## APPLICATION

So, we are all running a race and each one is unique. We can surely use the opportunity to run our race with a giant of the faith alongside. This week it is Abraham, the only one who was a father. We look in awe at his life and his faith and quizzically at his failures. At the same time we look at our tough job as parents. We ask ourselves: Am I doing a good job? Am I making the same mistakes my parents made? What do I do with this lack of time and the great pressure from work, where do I learn what to do? But God says we don't have to be perfect parents to be used by God. We just need to live in such a way that we become a conduit for God's blessing on our families.

**Question:** Where are you in your life as a conduit for God's blessings? What would you change?

**Questions:** In what areas is God redeeming your failures? How is He doing that?

There are three decisions we can make that will lead to God's blessings:

1) Do whatever God tells us to do. God made Abraham three promises: "I will make you a great nation; I will make your name great; all people will be blessed through you." This tells us that faith is obeying God even when we don't know where He is taking us. Also, he uses the least likely people to accomplish His purpose – people like us! Because Abraham was obedient, God poured blessings into his life – and He will do that for us.

2) When we fail, fail forward. We make moral and ethical mistakes and have crossed borders of behavior, but we can overcome them when we fail forward, repent and ask forgiveness.

3) Allow God to refine our faith. Sometimes God does this through testing experiences. They can come concerning our finances, or relationships, or sexual purity, or training up our kids. We tend to want to rush past these moments and get to the happy ending, but the truth is that we are here right now and we don't see a happy ending. God wants us to really trust Him during these experiences and when we do He will not hold back on us - He will pour blessings on us instead.

**Question:** In what areas of your life is God testing you? How do you know? How are you reacting?

God wants us to learn how to lead, how to love, how to give back to Him financially, how to teach our kids spiritual truths, how to love and respect our spouses, and how to follow Him faithfully. He is still refining this faith to make us more like Jesus.

**Question:** In what areas is God refining your faith to make you more like Jesus?

**Question:** In what areas of parenting are you having trouble? What do you still need to learn and where can you find the mentoring you need?

Four thousand years after Abraham, God is still pouring out His blessings on us and we are becoming a conduit for them, not because we are qualified or because of our backgrounds, but because of faith and trust in Him. Abraham was asked to sacrifice his son and he was prepared to be obedient when God relieved him of that terrible heartache. Yet, in the same geographical place, God Himself actually did sacrifice His one and only Son for us.

**Question:** Can you imagine being in Abraham's situation of choosing between Isaac and God? In what areas of your life do you find it difficult to trust Him as Abraham did?

**Question:** Where is God calling you to follow Him even though it doesn't make sense to you now?

## PRAYER

Heavenly Father, thank you for sharing with us the stories of so many remarkable people of faith and obedience through Your scriptures. These giants of righteousness are models of lives lived well. They give us hope and encouragement as we strive to live as they did – morally, ethically and spiritually. Help us to be strong and courageous as we pursue the monumental task of leading our families. In Jesus' name. Amen.