

*newark united pentecostal church***Lesson Title:** Failed Expectations - Abraham

**Key Concept:** The Bible is filled with people for whom God did not do what they expected. Abraham, the great man of faith, had numerous failed expectations in pursuit of God's promises, consequently learning to trust in God's plans.

**Scriptures:**

<sup>1</sup> Now the Lord said to Abram, "Go out from your country, your relatives, and your father's household to the land that I will show you. <sup>2</sup> Then I will make you into a great nation, and I will bless you, and I will make your name great, so that you will exemplify divine blessing. <sup>3</sup> I will bless those who bless you, but the one who treats you lightly I must curse, so that all the families of the earth may receive blessing through you." (Genesis 12:1–3 *New English Translation*)

<sup>1</sup> The Lord visited Sarah just as he had said he would and did for Sarah what he had promised. <sup>2</sup> So Sarah became pregnant and bore Abraham a son in his old age at the appointed time that God had told him. <sup>3</sup> Abraham named his son—whom Sarah bore to him—Isaac. (Genesis 21:1–3 *New English Translation*)

**Context Scriptures:** Genesis 11–21

**Lesson Thoughts:**

God called Abraham to leave his technologically advanced and fruitful residence of Ur to go to an unknown land and unknown culture. God had promised that Abraham would become the father of many nations. Abraham should have moved straightaway to the land to which God had called him. However, his father tagged along and Abraham waited at Haran until his father died before moving forward with God's plan.

Abraham took his nephew, Lot, on the journey with the possible idea that if God's plan failed, then his nephew would be his heir. But Lot did not stay long

*newark united pentecostal church*

once they reached the Promised Land. After Lot departed, Abraham and Sarah needed another plan in case God did not fulfill His promise.

Sarah remained childless and made a plan to have a child by way of her maidservant, Hagar. Abraham and Hagar had a child and named him Ishmael; however, God rejected Ishmael as the promised child. Heartbroken, Abraham was left old and alone with Sarah. Both were in their nineties, and from their perspective, God's promise to build a great nation through them seemed impossible. Their plans failed and they had to deal with the repercussions of their hasty decisions.

Failed expectations were common to Abraham, the great man of faith. Failed expectations are based on what we think God's plans are, when we don't realize we have made our plans God's plans. In the end, Abraham finally received the promise God gave him. Abraham and Sarah had Isaac—the promised heir—by following God's plan.

**Discussion Questions:**

- 1) Have there been times where your plans were disguised as God's plans?
- 2) Why do you think it's hard to wait on the Lord?
- 3) Do failed expectations cause us to doubt God's plans? If yes, how so?
- 4) What failed expectations with God have you personally experienced?

**Next Lesson:** The Woman of Shunem

**Notes and Reflections**

1. Read Genesis chapters 11 through 21. Write what you notice about Abraham's life as he tried to honor God's promises.
2. What are some practical things you can do to make sure your plans align with God's plans?