

**YOUTH UNIT III: Standing In the Faith**

**YOUTH GENERAL LESSON TITLE: Reckoned as Righteousness**

**YOUTH TOPIC: God Blessed Abraham**

**LESSON 11**

**DATE: May 12, 2024**

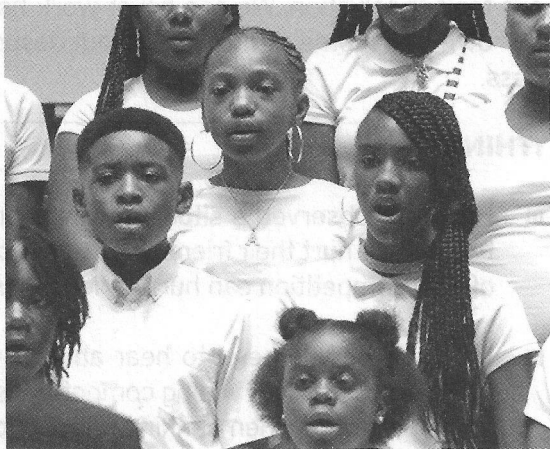
**BACKGROUND SCRIPTURE: Romans 4**

**PRINT PASSAGE: Romans 4:13-25**

**KEEPIN' IT CURRENT! (5 Minutes)**

***"Promises, Promises"*** From gospel music to pop, hip-hop, rock, and R&B, song writers and hymnists are inspired, frustrated, and share their understanding of promises. A promise is an action, activity, or inactivity that someone has committed to do or not to do. The commitment can be implied by actions or stated in words. However, not all promises are equal because not all promise makers are committed to keeping their promises.

As children, many of us are taught hymns like "Standing on the Promises" (of God) and spiritual songs like "I Am A Promise" (to be everything God wants me to be). Contemporary gospel music recording artists like Maverick City and Israel Houghton share their insight on God as a promise keeper. These songs describe promises made to Christians by God and the potential that God places in us as Christians that fulfil the positive future described in God's word. These promises are positive and compel us to do great things and encourage us to take positive risks as we grow in our faith. Such promises are different from threats or promises of harm that can be part of the penalty aspect of the law which can result in negative consequences for breaking the law.



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Bible Gateway.com estimates that there are 5,467 promises contained in the 66 books of the Bible. Of those, one writer suggests that there are 25 top promises—starting with the Old Testament Book of Isaiah and going through

the Book of Revelation. They are as follows: God gives strength to the weary and rest. God's love never fails. God redeems us from our sins. God has adopted us as Christian. God will give us wisdom. God fights for us and protects us from evil. When we confess our sins and forgive others, God will forgive us. God gives us wisdom and makes us new. God exalts the humble. God will never leave nor forsake us. God will make us free and give us eternal life. Christians praying according to the will of God receive what they request in prayer. When we call on God in prayer, He will give us the desires of our heart. Believers in Jesus Christ will have their name written in the Lamb's Book of Life. God will supply our need. All things will work for good for those who love God.

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### **KEEPIN' IT REAL! (5 Minutes)**

- ▣ Which of the promises listed above is your favorite and why?
- ▣ This week, search the Bible to find verses where you can find your top five promises (For assistance finding these promises, go to <https://connectus-fund.org/promises-of-god>)

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### **KEEPIN' IT BIBLICAL! (20 Minutes)**

**KEY VERSE: “[Abraham] grew strong in his faith as he gave glory to God, being fully convinced that God was able to do what he had promised.” Romans 4:20-21.**

**“<sup>13</sup> For the promise that he would inherit the world did not come to Abraham or to his descendants through the law but through the righteousness of faith. <sup>14</sup> If it is the adherents of the law who are to be the heirs, faith is null and the promise is void. <sup>15</sup> For the law brings wrath; but where there is no law, neither is there violation.**

**<sup>16</sup> For this reason it depends on faith, in order that the promise may rest on grace and be guaranteed to all his descendants, not only to the adherents of the law but also to those who share the faith of Abraham (for he is the father of all of us, <sup>17</sup> as it is written, ‘I have made you the father of many nations’)—in the presence of the God in whom he believed, who gives life to the dead and calls into existence the things that do not exist. <sup>18</sup> Hoping against hope, he believed that he would become ‘the father of many nations’, according to what was said, ‘So numerous shall your descendants be.’ <sup>19</sup> He did not weaken in faith when he considered his own body, which was already\* as good as dead (for he was about a hundred years old), or when he consid-**

ered the barrenness of Sarah's womb. <sup>20</sup> No distrust made him waver concerning the promise of God, but he grew strong in his faith as he gave glory to God, <sup>21</sup> being fully convinced that God was able to do what he had promised. <sup>22</sup> Therefore his faith\* 'was reckoned to him as righteousness.' <sup>23</sup> Now the words, 'it was reckoned to him', were written not for his sake alone, <sup>24</sup> but for ours also. It will be reckoned to us who believe in him who raised Jesus our Lord from the dead, <sup>25</sup> who was handed over to death for our trespasses and was raised for our justification."

It has been said that one of the key features that distinguishes the Bible from other religious books is its promises. Without promises there would be no Bible and no Christian faith. There are promises stated in the Old Testament that are fulfilled in the New Testament. For a promise to be reliable, the promise-maker must have integrity and be truthful. God kept His promise to Abraham that Abraham would be the father of many nations and his descendants would be as numerous as the stars in the sky. The promise was made at a time when Abraham had no children by his wife Sarah: she was 70 years old, and he was 90 years old. Verse 18 describes Abraham's faith as "hoping against hope" because hu-



manly the promise was impossible, but Abraham believed God and hoped that the promise would come true. Even Abraham's wife, Sarah, laughed when the angel told him that they would have a son; although, they were old enough to be great-grandparents.

By giving God's promise to Abraham as an example to the believers in the church as Rome, Paul connects a hero of the faith, Abraham, from the Old Testament, to settle the debate that Jewish believers had with the Gentile (non-Jewish) believers in Rome. Abraham was not a perfect man. He made mistakes like everyone else, including us. Paul, the author of Romans, uses Abraham as an example of righteousness based on Abraham's faith in God, not his ability to keep the law. Moses had not been born yet; so, the stone tablet of the Ten Commandments did not exist. Abraham lived his life as a Gentile, but he was

revered by the Jewish believers as the father of faith along with his son, Isaac and grandson, Jacob. This was proof that salvation is not based on keeping the law or on being Jewish, but it is based on faith in Jesus and the grace of God that allowed Jesus to take our punishment for sin by his death on the cross. Salvation is not based on keeping the law, but the law provides warnings so that Christians have a blueprint that shows how to love God and each other.

Romans 4:20 explains that Abraham grew strong in his faith as he gave glory to God. Abraham had a choice to allow his circumstances to cause him to doubt or blame God; but Abraham continued to believe that God was going to keep his promises—and God did. If faith is like a fire fueling us to do great things, then doubt and blame are like fire hoses that minimize or extinguish faith. To thrive, grow, and burn bright, faith needs the fuel of glorifying and praising God. By giving glory to God, we are reminded of the many great things about God, including His wisdom to guide us, His power to fight for us, and His love for us that never ends.

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### **KEEPIN' IT TOGETHER (5 Minutes)**

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Just as God promised, He will make our path straight, and He will provide for us as we seek the Kingdom. God has prepared a place for us, and He is coming again soon. These promises are just a few ways that God demonstrates His love for us. People in the world may or may not keep their promises, even when they try to do so; but God is the ultimate promise keeper.

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### **iTHINK! (5 Minutes)**

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- ▣ In some churches the congregation sings the hymn “Faith of our Mothers” on Mother’s Day. Think of some examples of how your mother, grandmother, or someone “like-a-mother” had faith and “hoped against hope” for something good to happen, and it did. If you feel comfortable doing so, share with the class how that experience impacted your faith.
- ▣ Advice from the book of James, Chapter 1, standing on our faith: “<sup>2</sup>My brothers and sisters, whenever you face trials of any kind, consider it nothing but joy, <sup>3</sup>because you know that the testing of your faith produces endurance; <sup>4</sup>and let endurance have its full effect, so that you may be mature and complete, lacking in nothing.” What are some things in your life that test your faith? What can we learn from Abraham’s faith that can help us today?