A SIGN | GOD’S GOOD PURPOSE

WEEK 12: GENESIS 17

ANCHOR PASSAGES.

Consider using this passage as the underpinning for your group’s conversation. Encourage your group to read and pray through this Scripture passage prior to your group meeting and in the days following.

**Genesis 17:9-10**

**7**And I will establish my covenant between me and you and your offspring after you throughout their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be God to you and to your offspring after you. **8**And I will give to you and to your offspring after you the land of your sojourning’s, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession, and I will be their God.”

**9**And God said to Abraham, “As for you, you shall keep my covenant, you and your offspring after you throughout their generations.

**Romans 2:28-29**

8 For no one is a Jew who is merely one outwardly, nor is circumcision outward and physical. 29 But a Jew is one inwardly, and circumcision is a matter of the heart, by the Spirit, not by the letter. His praise is not from man but from God.

**Helpful Passages:**

* Hebrews 11:12
* Romans 4:11,15:8
* Galatians 3:7, and 23-29

THEMES.

The following themes trace the high-level movement of this week’s Scripture passage. They may help you begin to frame the direction of your group’s conversation.

1. God desires His people to be distinguished from the world around them in order to represent our belonging to Him and our obedience to Him (Jeremiah 9:25, Deuteronomy 30:6).
2. Under the old covenant, outward circumcision was the distinctive mark given to God’s people. Now, In Christ Jesus, who is the fulfillment of the promise given to Abraham, our distinctive mark is a circumcision of the heart. This is given to us through salvation. A regeneration of our hear or a heart of flesh. (Ezekiel 36:26, Deuteronomy 3:6, Galatians 3:7,29 and 5:6, Colossians 2:11-12).
3. *God Almighty,* is faithful to keep His promises and powerful enough to do so against all odds (Genesis 17: 15-18, Romans 15:8).

QUESTIONS.

Feel free use any, all, or none of these questions as you facilitate your group. Their purpose is to be an aid to you as you consider how to teach the implications of the week’s Scriptures.

1. What would circumcision represent according to the passage?

Hint: This would represent being within the covenant made by God and given to Abraham. Which would primarily reflect that those who have this sign would declare that they are God’s chosen people (Genesis 17:8).

1. Jesus fulfilled the law, and we no long live as prisoners to the law and rituals such as circumcision (Galatians 3:23-29). Instead, scripture says we are God’s children if we are circumcised in our hearts (Romans 2:29,). What does it meant to have a circumcised heart? How might one’s life look when this is true? (Deuteronomy 30:6)

Hint: A circumcised heart is one made pure by God’s Holy Spirit (Ezekiel 36:26). To have a circumcised heart means that one’s heart has been regenerated, brought from death to life, saved by the Blood of Christ. When the Spirit lives in us it overflows out of us by fruit of the Spirit. This fruit is what acts as an outward marker for the people around us, showing an inward reality of a circumcised heart and a love for the Lord (Galatians 5:22-23, Deuteronomy 30:6),

1. In what ways have you seen evidence of a circumcised heart in your life? Another way to ask this question may be where have you seen fruit of the Spirit in in this season?
2. Why do you think God calls Himself as God Almighty within the context of this passage?

Hint: The promises God gives to Abraham seem impossible considering the circumstances. The promise to give Abraham a son despite the age of hm and his wife. The promise to make a great nation out of a small family with no prior significance. The promise to give a land to the sojourner. And the promise that through all of this, his line would bring about great kings. Despite all these obstacles God would fulfill all which he promised. Demonstrating his great power and might.

1. Have you seen God work in your life despite all odds? How so?
2. Abraham received the promise of God despite all that was stacked against Him. He also waited a long time since first given the promise, for the promise of a Son through Sarah to come true. How does God’s power and commitment to keep His promise challenge or encourage you today?

PRAY.

Consider these prompts as you pray with your group:

* Thank God for the work of the Spirit in one another’s hearts
* Ask where you may need God’s power in your life today, pray that the Lord would work powerfully as he did in Abraham’s life
* Pray for those in one another’s circles who do not have circumcised, regenerated hearts and pray that the Lord would save them