

READ The following passages. Pay particular attention to how GOD is instructing Abram to live, what GOD promises to do, and why HE is going to do that.

Mark what stands out to you.

(AMP) 17:1 WHEN ABRAM was ninety-nine years old, the Lord appeared to him & said, "I am the Almighty God; walk and live habitually before Me and be perfect (blameless, wholehearted, complete). (NASB) 2 And I will establish My covenant between Me and you, And I will multiply you exceedingly."

3 And Abram fell on his face, & God talked with him, saying, 4 "As for Me, behold, My covenant is with you, And you shall be the father of a multitude of nations. 5 "No longer shall your name be called Abram, But your name shall be Abraham; For I will make you the father of a multitude of nations. 6 And I will make you exceedingly fruitful, and I will make nations of you, and kings shall come forth from you. 7 And I will establish My covenant between Me & you & your descendants after you throughout their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be God to you and to your descendants after you." [Genesis 17:1-7]

REFLECT Write your observations & thoughts of all God is saying in the above passage.

READ the following passage from Galatians in the two translations below.

Galatians 3:29 (NLT) 29 And now that you belong to Christ, you are the true children of Abraham. You are his heirs, and now all the promises God gave to him belong to you.

Galatians 3:29 (NASB) 29 And if you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's offspring, heirs according to promise.

REFLECT What do Genesis 17:1-7 and Galatians 3:29 mean to you personally?

RESPOND (Application for this week)

Best Verses (write it out): _____

How I can practically apply what God spoke to me about: _____

Sermon-Based Devotional Guide

Lawrence Free Methodist Church

(Based on a Sermon by Pastor Bryce Ball on December 27th, 2015)

A brief set-up for this week's sermon:

¹⁵ The LORD God placed the man in the Garden of Eden to tend and care for it.

¹⁶ But the LORD God gave him this warning: "You may freely eat any fruit in the garden ¹⁷ except fruit from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. If you eat of its fruit, you will surely die." [Genesis 2:15-17, NLT]

When Adam and Eve ate of the fruit, did they die that day as God had said? The answer is: "No", not physically—Spiritually, "Yes." Their act of choosing to ignore what God said, and doing what they wanted to do – eat from the fruit of the tree of knowledge of good and evil was them making a statement that basically said, "I will decide what is good and what is evil for me, God. I don't need You to do that." Their close relationship with their Creator was broken at that moment – they sensed it – & so they tried to hide from the God of all creation.

Every one of us has done exactly what the first two individuals in creation did. We have made decisions on our own & acted upon them without considering what God has said. OR—We know what God has said & we decide to do our own thing anyway. The scriptures give us example after example of people who have done just that. "There is not a single person in all the earth who is always good & never sins." [Ecclesiastes 7:20, NLT]

King David was one of those people. He wrote the following:

¹² HE has removed our rebellious acts as far away from us as the east is from the west.

¹³ The LORD is like a father to His children, tender & compassionate to those who fear Him.

¹⁴ **For HE** (the LORD) **understands how weak we are; He knows we are only dust.**

¹⁵ Our days on earth are like grass; like wildflowers, we bloom and die.

¹⁶ The wind blows, and we are gone — as though we had never been here.

¹⁷ But the love of the LORD remains forever with those who fear Him.

His salvation extends to the children's children

¹⁸ of those who are faithful to His covenant, of those who obey His commandments! [Ps 103:12-18, NLT]

¹ **Psalm 103:12** – East and west can never meet. This is a symbolic portrait of God's forgiveness. When HE forgives our sin, He separates it from us and doesn't even remember it. We need never wallow in the past, for God forgives and forgets. We tend to dredge up the ugly past, but God has wiped our record clean. If we are to follow God, we need to model His forgiveness towards others. Forgiveness is not an option for the child of God

¹ **Psalm 103:13** – God is like a father—tender and compassionate. Not every child has a tender and compassionate father, however. Sadly, the cycles of abuse and dysfunction rob children of loving fathers. God offers Himself to be the perfect Father. We receive His love in our heart by means of the Holy Spirit (Romans 5:5). God can tenderly comfort us in our losses and hurts.

^{1,2} **Psalm 103:13, 14** – We are fragile, but God's care is eternal. It is easy to focus on God as judge and lawgiver, ignoring His compassion and concern for us. When God examines our lives, He remembers our human condition. Our weakness should never be used as a justification for sin. His mercy takes everything into account. God will deal with you compassionately. Trust HIM.

Adapted from the Life Application Bible, New Living Translation, Large Print Edition, Tyndale, pp. ¹1,246, ²1,247

The Father, Son, and Holy Spirit need nothing.

Creation was not made for God, but for us.

Genesis 1:27 (NLT) So God created human beings in His own image. In the image of God He created them; male and female He created them.

God walked with His creation.

READ Genesis 3:23 (NLT) So the LORD God banished them from the Garden of Eden, & HE sent Adam out to cultivate the ground from which he had been made.

REFLECT Refer to the first part of the set-up on the first page of this devotional guide before writing your thoughts (below) from Genesis 3:23. What was the result of Adam and Eve’s not following God’s instructions?

READ Genesis 12:1-3 (NLT) **Mark what stands out to you.**

¹ The LORD had said to Abram, “Leave your native country, your relatives, and your father’s family, and go to the land that I will show you. ² I will make you into a great nation. I will bless you & make you famous, & you will be a blessing to others. ³ I will bless those who bless you and curse those who treat you with contempt. All the families on earth will be blessed through you.”

REFLECT Why do you think God told Abram that he had to pack up and go as a condition of God blessing him? _____

Exodus 3:7-8, 10 (NLT) **Mark what stands out to you.**

⁷ Then the LORD told him, “I have certainly seen the oppression of My people in Egypt. I have heard their cries of distress because of their harsh slave drivers. Yes, I am aware of their suffering. ⁸ So I have come down to rescue them from the power of the Egyptians & lead them out of Egypt into their own fertile and spacious land. It is a land flowing with milk and honey...¹⁰ Now go, for I am sending you to Pharaoh. You must lead My people Israel out of Egypt.”

REFLECT Notice how the LORD first says HE is going to lead HIS people out of Egypt – but then HE tells Moses that he (Moses) must lead HIS (God’s) people out of Egypt. Write your observations and thoughts of all that the LORD is saying to Moses in the above passage. – Of HIS awareness of their suffering, WHY HE is acting on their behalf – WHAT HE is going to do for them, etc.

Exodus 19:9 (NLT) Then the LORD said to Moses, “I will come to you in a thick cloud, Moses, so the people themselves can hear Me when I speak with you. Then they will always trust you.”

REFLECT Do you think there are any practical applications from this that could help people trust [the LORD’s appointed] leaders today? [Think in terms of (1) the leader’s part/responsibility & (2) the people’s responsibility.] Write any thoughts you may have from what the LORD said to Moses in the above passage.

READ John 14:6-9 (NLT) **Mark everything that stands out to you.**

⁶ Jesus told him, “I am the WAY, the TRUTH, and the LIFE. No one can come to the Father except through Me. ⁷ If you had really known Me, you would know who My Father is. From now on, you do know Him and have seen Him!”

⁸ Philip said, “Lord, show us the Father, and we will be satisfied.”

⁹ Jesus replied, “Have I been with you all this time, Philip, and yet you still don’t know who I am? Anyone who has seen Me has seen the Father! So why are you asking Me to show Him to you?”

REFLECT This is a well-known passage. But don’t let that cause you to rush through it. Envision the conversation... what Jesus says... Philip’s response... AND then how you imagine Jesus came across in His response to Philip. Write your thoughts. _____

There is no record of how Philip responded to what Jesus said to him in John 14:9. How do you think you would have responded? Write your thoughts.

Jesus Christ was both a revelation and a veil. (←Conclusion of Sermon)

Continue to the back → (page4). God makes promises to His people & for His glory. The first passage is a follow-up of God’s promise to Abram in the Genesis 12 passage you looked at earlier. After you **READ** the passages, you will be asked to **REFLECT** & **RESPOND** from your observations and thoughts. Underline any life principles you see in the passages. [Continue on back (page 4) →]