

## Taking a Closer Look

*What does the Bible say?*

Over the past few studies we have seen how Jesus left his followers with the mission of representing him in the world. He charged them to do for others what he had done for them – to love as he had and to make disciples. However, before he returned to the Father Jesus asked a piercing question: “When the Son of Man returns, will he find faith on earth?” In this final study we will look at what it means to have faith and to live by the promises of God.

### **Exploring Faith**

*Check out Hebrews 11.6.*

- According to the writer of Hebrews, what is faith and why is it important?

Check out Galatians 2.20. What does it mean to live by faith?

*Read Genesis 22.1-14 and answer the following questions.*

- Why did God call Abraham to sacrifice Isaac? What was Abraham’s response?
- Why was Abraham willing to do what God required? (look also at Hebrews 11.17-19)
- How did God provide Abraham with a way to make the sacrifice?
- How do you believe you would have responded in this situation?
- What does it tell us about our God that he would test Abraham like this?
- Have you ever felt your faith was being tested by God?

Read James 1.2-4. Why is our faith tested, and what should our attitude be when it happens?

## ***The Promises of God***

*Read Genesis 12.1-4.*

- What did God call Abraham to do? What did he promise him?
- What was Abraham's response?

*Check out Mark 1.16-19.*

- What did Jesus call Simon and Andrew to do? What did he promise him?
- What was their response?

## **Thinking it Through**

*What does the Bible mean?*

### ***Growing in Faith***

*Read Matthew 8.23-27.*

- Are you going through stormy waters? Describe a time when your boat was in danger of sinking. What was your reaction? How should we react when we find ourselves in a boat filled with water? What was God teaching you through the experience?
- Unlike in this story where the disciples were following Jesus' direction, sometimes we put ourselves on a course charted for rough waters. How would you know if your boat was sinking due to your navigation or his?

*Check out Matthew 14.22-36.*

- Would you say Peter's faith was built by the earlier experience in the boat with Jesus?
- What was Peter afraid of? How does this compare with the fear they had before?
- How does faith serve as the answer to fear?

## **Making it Count**

*How do I live what I've learned?*

God says of Abraham: "He was fully convinced that what God had promised, he was able also to perform." List two or three of God's promises from Scripture that apply to your life.

James 2.14 says, "My friends, what good is it for one of you to say that you have faith if your actions do not prove it?" Based on the promises you listed above are there any changes you need to make in you live in order to claim them? If so, what changes do you need to make?