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## LOVING JESUS, LOVING PEOPLE, PLOWING A COUNTER-CULTURE

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**TEXT:** Genesis 15

**MAIN IDEA:** God is completely committed to blessing his people beyond what we can hope or imagine.

### LEADERS:

- Discover Emergence is now up and running! If you want to learn more about our church and get connected, and *especially* if you are looking to become a member, this is for you. New classes will begin on the first Sunday of every month, starting with November 7. The first step to participate is to sign up via our digital bulletin.
- Thank you to everyone who signed up for our Community Engagement Project on October 23. Let's all be praying for a great day as we serve the Lord, together with our ministry partners throughout New Jersey.
- There are still some Boxes of Love available. To participate in this awesome ministry, grab one, fill it with the Thanksgiving stuff on the shopping list it comes with (remember—no frozen turkeys!), and return it to our church by October 31. This is a simple way to show Christ's love this Thanksgiving..
- Baptisms are going on! Sign up through our digital bulletin.

### GETTING STARTED:

- Watch this week's Community Extras Video.
- **Icebreaker:** Aside from the Bible, what is your favorite book and why?
- **Opener:** What did you take away from the sermon this week?

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## SO SHALL YOUR OFFSPRING BE

**Read: Genesis 15:1–6**

 Why is Abram expressing confusion, and perhaps even doubt, about the promise that God has made to him?

*Leaders' Tip: God's initial promise is in Genesis 12:1–3, and this is expanded to include his offspring in 12:7.*

 Do you find it difficult to believe any of God's promises to you, and if so, which ones?

 What is the difference between doubt that destroys faith and doubt that builds it?

 How does God respond to Abram's doubt in this passage, and what can that teach us about how we should handle our own doubts?



  Think about verse 6: “And he believed the LORD, and he counted it to him as righteousness.” What does this teach us about Abram’s walk with God, and what does it teach us about our own?

## HOW AM I TO KNOW?

### Read: Genesis 15:7–16

This passage details a covenant ceremony, which was used in the ancient world to formalize lasting commitments between two people. In these, animals were killed in order to represent the consequences of violating the covenant.

*Leader’s Tip: Jeremiah 34:18, also referenced in the study guide, is another place in the Bible that mentions passing between animal parts as part of a covenant ceremony. Also note that the Hebrew expression for making a covenant was literally, “to cut a covenant.”*

 If God does not lie (1 Samuel 15:29; Hebrews 6:18; Titus 1:2), then what purpose is served by binding himself to a covenant with Abraham?

 How does God give us assurance of his promises?

 In the sermon, Ryan noted how the last time God caused someone to fall into a “deep sleep” was when he created the woman from the side of the man in Genesis 2:21. What do you think is the connection between these passages?

  In verses 13 and 14, God foretells that Abraham’s ancestors will be oppressed in Egypt. What is gained by including that as part of the covenantal promise to Abraham?

 How does verse 16 help us get a better understanding of God’s judgment on the Canaanites, which we learned about in the book of Joshua last fall?

## THE FLAMING TORCH

### Read Genesis 15:17–21

  In light of what we learned about the covenant ceremony in the previous section, what is surprising about what happens here?

 God speaks here as if the covenant is a done deal (“to your offspring I give this land”). And yet, he just said that that it would be 400 years before they would possess it (verses 13–14). What is the significance of God’s speaking this way, and can you think of another place in the Bible where he does this?



♡ To Abraham, the promise of such a huge piece of land must have been unfathomable. And the extraordinary way that God commits himself to it makes this even bolder. Why is it important for us to have specific knowledge of the greatness of God's goodness towards us? See, for example, Ephesians 1:18; 3:17–19.

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### **PRAYER TIME**

Praise God for the many ways in which he gives us assurance of his promises.

Pray that the Lord would give you the faith to trust his word, as Abram had.

Pray for someone you know who needs to be reassured of God's love for them and the hope that we have in Christ.