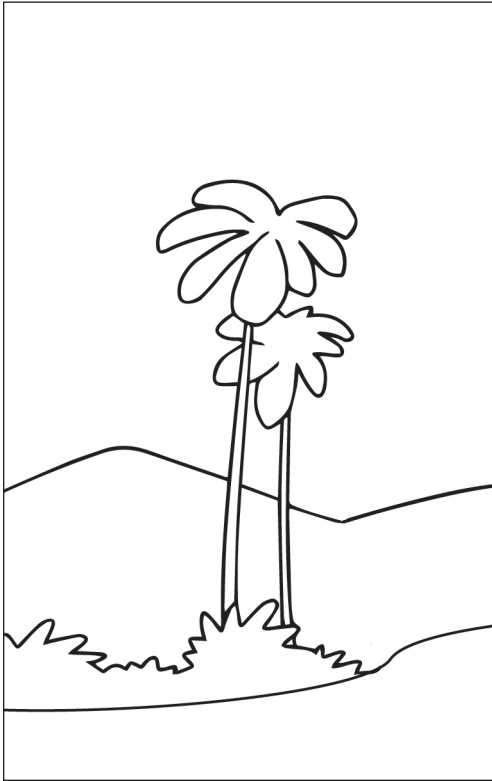


God's Promise



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Genesis 15:1-6

Later the Lord spoke to Abram in a vision, “Abram, don’t be afraid! I will protect you and reward you greatly.”

But Abram answered, “Lord All-Powerful, you have given me everything I could ask for, except children. And when I die, Eliezer of Damascus will get all I own. You have not given me any children, and this servant of mine will inherit everything.”

The Lord replied, “No, he won’t! You will have a son of your own, and everything you have will be his.” Then the Lord took Abram outside and said, “Look at the sky and see if you can count the stars. That’s how many descendants you will have.” Abram believed the Lord, and the Lord was pleased with him.

Genesis 17:1–8

Abram was ninety-nine years old when the Lord appeared to him again and said, “I am God All-Powerful. If you obey me and always do right, I will keep my solemn promise to you and give you more descendants than can be counted.” Abram bowed with his face to the ground, and God said:

I promise that you will be the father of many nations. That’s why I now change your name from Abram to Abraham. I will give you a lot of descendants, and in the future they will become great nations. Some of them will even be kings.

I will always keep the promise I have made to you and your descendants, because I am your God and their God. 8 I will give you and them the land in which you are now a foreigner. I will give the whole land of Canaan to your family forever, and I will be their God.

Commentary

I wonder what your definition of a best friend would be. Maybe it is someone who always keeps a promise. In other words, he or she is completely trustworthy and will never let you down. This is the sort of friend that God offers to be to Abram in the story, and in this friendship God makes an amazing commitment to Abram.

He promises lifelong protection and a great future for his family, with the gift of a child. Abram and Sarai are old and childless at this point and are frightened about what will happen when they die. But God has a plan for them—a plan that, in fact, reaches right through the Bible and on into our own time.

Abram's family will one day be like stars in the sky, completely beyond counting, and this family will make history right across the globe. It must have seemed like an impossible dream to Abram, but his name change would always remind him of the God who made that promise; and God's promises never fail.

Questions

- ▶ How do you feel when someone breaks a promise to you?
- ▶ Why do you think Abram felt he could believe what God promised him?
- ▶ What promises have you made recently? Have you managed to keep them?
- ▶ What sort of promises does God make and keep for each one of us every day?



Visual aid

Find some luminous stars that will glow in the dark. Decide where you are going to stick them in your home as a reminder each night that God has kept and will always keep his promises to us.



Activity idea

Together, cover a large piece of black card with as many stick-on stars as you can, to create a beautiful, bright night sky scene. Whenever Abraham saw the stars in the sky, he remembered God's great promises to him. What promises from God can they remind you of? For example: God will always love us; God will never leave us; God will always hear our prayers, and so on.



Prayer idea

It is as if God breathed a new syllable into Abram's name to help him remember that God had made this special friendship with him forever. He was now to be called Abraham. God's breath is his Spirit. As you pray for your family and friends, write out the word S P I R I T several times, with spaces between the letters, and then add the names of the people you want to pray for, as a way of asking God to breathe his Spirit into them, to help them and keep them safe, just as he has promised.

For example: **S p P e I t R e I r T**

Key verse

'I will always keep the promise I have made to you' (Genesis 17:7).

New Testament story link

Galatians 3:6–9 and 14: Paul reminds us that the promises made to Abraham are now promises for us too, all because of Jesus

Colour me!

