

BIG QUESTION UNDER INVESTIGATION

We're in... Unit 12: God's People Live for Him

Unit 12 Big Question and Answer and Song:

"How Should God's People Live?

They Should Live Like Jesus!" *PFI ESV Songs 12, Tracks 3,4*

Unit 12 Bible Verse and Song: Ephesians 5:1-2

"Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children. And walk in love, as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us, a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God."

PFI ESV Songs 12, Track 5

BIBLE TRUTH

We're learning... Bible Truth 4: God's People Trust Him

Trusting God means resting joyfully in God's care and plans. God's people trust God because they know that He is completely powerful, wise, and good. They know His plans are perfect and they are always for their good and His glory. They know that God always takes care of them and helps them do whatever He wants them to do, even if it is very hard.

God's people know that they won't trust God perfectly while they live on earth. God has forgiven them of their sins, but they are still sinners. And so here, they will sometimes struggle to trust God, even though they know He has never failed them. They are grateful for God's Holy Spirit, working in their hearts. He can help them to trust God more and more here on earth. They are even more grateful for the day when they will go to live with God in heaven forever. There, they will know and trust Him perfectly.

BIBLE VERSE

How do I know this is true? The Bible tells me so!

Bible Truth 4 Bible Verse: Proverbs 3:5,6

"Trust in the LORD with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make straight your paths."

CASE STORY

Matthew 1:18-25; Luke 1:26-56

Our story is: The Case of the Put-off Promise. As you listen to the story, see if you can figure out:

1. Who was given big promises? What were these promises?
2. What did the man do when the promises were put-off? Did the promises ever come true?

It takes place early in Old Testament times, about two thousand years before Jesus lived on earth. It starts out in Ur, a city far to the southeast of Israel.

"Ur!" you might think, "What a weird name! Who's ever heard of that place?"

Well, maybe Ur might not mean much to us these days; but, 4000 years ago, Ur was like the New York City of the world. It was the capitol of Sumer. The king and a half million people lived and worked within the seventy-five-foot thick walls of this busy city. With fabric and pottery factories; international shipping and trade; schools and universities; and lots of markets, there was plenty work for everyone. Ships would dock in its harbor, full of the newest, most unusual things from around the world. Craftsmen would make the most beautiful jewelry of gold and silver. Ladies wore long dresses of fine linen. The men wore long, pleated kilts of wool. Many people lived in fine houses and ate delicious food. Life was good in Ur--it was the best in the world back then.

But to the people of Ur, the most important thing in the whole city was the giant temple of the Moon God, Nannar. They believed Nannar controlled everything that made life good: rich crops, and lots of animals and children.

As you can imagine, the people of Ur felt they should do whatever they could to keep Nannar happy so he would keep blessing them with good things. So, they built him an enormous, 70-foot ziggurat temple out of clay bricks. It had three different-sized levels, each painted a different bright color. Beautiful gardens grew on its walls with blooms trailing all down its sides.

The bottom level was bigger than a football field. The top level was much smaller, but it was most important of all. For on it sat the shrine to Nannar. Here Nannar's priests, priestesses, and musicians led worship to him: "Father Nannar, moon god, prince of the gods," they would pray, "You are maker of gods and men. You give them homes and all that is good, you make living things grow.

We praise you!" (paraphrased from "Hymn to Nannar," Dawn of Civilization 654) They led colorful parades and festivals in his honor; but also did many sinful things that they thought pleased him. If Nannar really was the one who made them all so rich, then the people of Ur wanted to do whatever it would take to keep him happy.

Terah and his sons, Haran, Nahor, and Abram, certainly wanted to keep Nannar happy. He and his family had lived in Ur for years and had become very rich and important merchants there. If Nannar really was in charge of making everything rich, then Terah and his sons owed him a lot!

But one day, Terah's son, Abram stopped worshipping Nannar. There was another god, unlike Nannar or any other god that anyone in Ur had ever heard of. And this God—the LORD—had made a glorious appearance to Abram!

The LORD said to Abram: "Leave Ur, your relatives and your father's house. I will take you to a new land. I will make you into a great nation and will bless you. I will make your name great. All peoples on earth will be blessed through you," He promised.

Abram was amazed! This God who appeared to him was nothing like Nannar! He was so alive, so good, so so powerful, so holy and glorious. This God was the one, true God. Nannar was nothing!

And, oh, what blessings this true God made him! "I will make you a great nation...I will bless you...I will make your name great...all peoples on earth will be blessed through you!" the LORD had promised him.

But, oh, what sacrifices Abram would have to make to follow this true God and receive those blessings! It wouldn't be enough for Abram to just stop worshipping Nannar. The LORD was telling Abram to leave everything and follow Him to some new land. That was scary!

Leave the big city with its safe seventy five foot thick walls...and the best of everything for Abram to enjoy? Leave his fine house and have to camp in tents? Go on some dangerous roads where robbers might wait to steal their things and kill them? Leave his family, the only people on earth he could count on to help him? Why, no citizen of Ur was even allowed to move away from Ur without special permission of the king! Abram would even have to figure out how to leave Ur!

This God was asking Abram to love Him more than anything else! Abram would have to trust Him completely, if he were to obey Him. Could he really trust this God to

take care of him completely? God gave Abram faith to believe that He could.

"Yes, God, I will trust in You," Abram said to the Lord. "Yes, I will stop worshipping Nannar and worship You. I will give up everything and follow You. And I will trust You to take care of me and help me to do whatever You want me to do," he prayed.

The LORD proved Himself worthy of Abram's trust. He gave Abram's father, Terah, the desire to more from Ur, too. And while most people in Ur would have been refused permission to leave, Terah was important enough to get the special permission from the king they needed to leave Ur. They loaded up donkeys with their belongings, gathered their flocks of sheep and goats together, said goodbye to the rest of the family and set off.

As they walked out down the road into empty wilderness, did Abram ever look back to take a last glimpse of Nannar's great ziggurat and doubt what he was doing? That night when they slept out in tents and ate food cooked over an open fire did Abram ever long for the beautiful home and fine food of Ur they left behind? After all, Abram had nothing but God's word to trust in. He didn't know to what place the LORD was taking him or when he'd get there. He didn't know how the LORD would bring about all He promised him, but God gave Abram faith. "I will trust in You. I will leave my country and my people. I will trust You to take care of me, and help me do whatever You want me to do," he kept believing.

Terah and Abram traveled on and on until they came to the city of Haran, a favorite trading post for merchants traveling between Egypt and Ur. Terah was excited to be in Haran. The area around Haran was good for grazing flocks and there were plenty of other merchants to do business with. Best of all, the people of Haran were worshipers of Nannar, the Moon God. There was a temple to Nannar where Terah could make offerings to him again.

Terah was tired of traveling. "I am stopping here, Abram," Terah said. "Haran is my new home. I'm not going on to Canaan with you."

What should Abram do? He still felt the LORD calling onward to the place He had promised him. Haran was not to be his home; yet, what about his father? He was already 145 years old. Wouldn't a good son stay to care for him?

But Abram remembered the LORD's words to him: "Leave your country, your relatives and your father's house

and go to the land I will show you..." Following this God meant giving up everything, even his father! Could he really do that?

God gave Abram faith. "I will trust in You. I will leave even my father. I will give up everything and follow You. I will trust You to take care of me and help me to do whatever You want me to do," he kept believing. So Abram said goodbye to his father and left Haran.

Through wilderness, mountains and valleys, Abram traveled hundred of miles. At last Abram came to the top of the last mountain, and looked down upon green valleys and rolling hills. Could this be Canaan?

Abram got his answer as he traveled across those hills and valleys and came to the town of Shechem Yes, this beautiful land was Canaan, all right! And it was filled with more than beauty. It was filled with Canaanites! If this was the land the Lord was giving Abraham, someone needed to tell that to the Canaanites! They certainly didn't seem ready to just hand it over to Abram. This was their land! Not Abram's. They worshiped their gods, not the Lord! That was clear enough when Abram walked outside of town to the giant oak tree called Moreh. Here the Canaanites had placed carvings of their idols and made offerings to them there.

He had obeyed the LORD. He had traveled to Canaan. But now what?

Suddenly the LORD appeared to Abram said, "I will give this land to your family!"

He was promising to get rid of the Canaanites and their idols and give the land to his family! That sounded almost too hard to believe; yet, the LORD gave Abram faith to trust Him.

Right there next to Moreh, in front of the Canaanites and their idols, Abram built an altar to the Lord, offered a thank offering and worshiped Him:

"You are God and I will trust in You," Abram prayed. "I don't know how You will give this land filled with Canaanites and idols to my offspring, but I will trust that You will take care of me and will fulfill Your promises to me."

Our Bible Truth is: God's People Trust Him

Our Bible Verse is: Proverbs 3:5-6

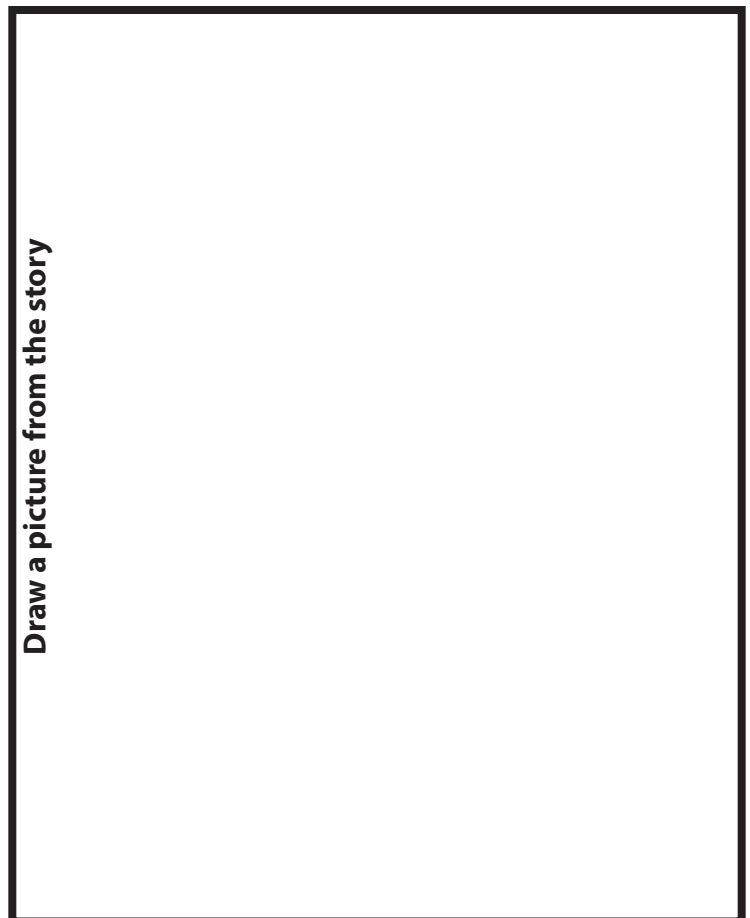
"Trust in the LORD with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make straight your paths."

Abram gave up everything and trusted God. But do you know that Abram died before he saw any of the promises come true? Not even a foot of the ground of Canaan had become his when he died. Even so, Abram died trusting that He would make them come true in His perfect wisdom and timing.

Abram was right to trust the LORD because He was true to every one of those promises. He made Abram's children into the nation of Israel. He made Abram's name so great that he is still one of the most famous people in the world. And best of all, the LORD has blessed all nations of all times and places through Abram, by sending Jesus, who was the great, great, great, etc. grandson of Abram.

What about you and me? God has given us amazing promises that we can trust, too. He promises to make us His people when we turn away from our sins and trust in Jesus as our Savior. And as His people, He promises to take care of us every day of our life here on earth, then one day take us to life with Him forever. That will be best of all!

What will we do with these promises? Will we trust in them and follow the LORD as Abram did? I hope so. Let's praise this God who is always trustworthy. Let's ask Him to help us trust Him with our whole life.



Draw a picture from the story

SOME QUESTIONS FOR YOU

1. A Question about the Bible Truth, True or False:

God's people have trust God without any help from anyone else.

Answer: False! God's Holy Spirit lives in their hearts. He will help them trust God. He can help them trust Him in ways they could never trust on their own.

2. Crack the Case Questions

a. Who was given big promises? What were these promises?

Answer: Abram. That he and his family after him would be given the land of Canaan. That through his family, the whole world would be blessed.

b. What did the man do when the promises were put-off? Did the promises ever come true?

Answer: Abram kept believing that God would answer these promises. Abram did not receive any of the land as his own while he lived. He did not see the great blessing that would come to all the world through his family, either. But, both of these promises did come true. His family grew to become the nation of Israel and they lived in Canaan. And through Abram's family came Jesus, the Savior of all of God's people.

3. Fill in the missing words from the Bible Verse:

Proverbs 3:5-6

"Trust in the LORD with all your ____, and do not lean on your own ____. In all your ways ____ him, and he will ____ straight your paths."

Answers: heart; understanding; acknowledge; make.

BIBLE TRUTH HYMN

Trust and Obey

PFI ESV Songs 12, Track 14

Verse 2

Not a burden we bear, not a sorrow we share,
But our toil He doth richly repay;
Not a grief or a loss, not a frown or a cross,
But is blest if we trust and obey.

Refrain:

Trust and obey,
For there's no other way,
To be happy in Jesus,
But to trust and obey.

Words: Daniel B. Towner Music: John H. Sammis

This song is about how we can trust God all the time, even when very hard things happen that we don't understand. It reminds us that those who trust in Jesus can be happy, even in times when it's hard to understand, because God is that good. He will always bless His people--those who turn from their sins and trust in Jesus as their Savior! They can count on that. They can just go ahead and obey Him. They can trust that it will all turn out for our good and His glory. We can be happy in Jesus, trusting and obeying Him, when we turn from our sins and trust in Jesus, too.

AN ACTS PRAYER FROM OUR STORY

A=Adoration, C=Confession, T=Thanksgiving, S=Supplication

A God, we praise You for being completely trustworthy.

C God, we confess that many times we do not trust You as Abram did. We choose to do things our own way, not Your way. We need a Savior!

T God, we thank You for giving Abram faith to believe in You. Thank You for fulfilling Your promises to Abram by sending Your Son Jesus to save Your people from their sins.

S God, work in our hearts! Help us to turn away from our sins and trust Jesus as our own Savior. Send Your Holy Spirit to work in our hearts that we might trust You and obey You like Abram did.

BIBLE VERSE SONG

Trust

PFI ESV Songs 12, Track 16

Trust in the LORD,
Trust in the LORD,
Trust in the LORD with all your heart,
And do not lean,
And do not lean,
On your own understanding,
In all your ways, acknowledge Him,
In all your ways acknowledge Him,
And He will make straight your paths,
And He will make straight your paths.
Proverbs Three, five and six.

Words: Proverbs 3:5-6 ESV Music: Constance Dever ©2015

This verse reminds us that we can always trust the LORD and His good plans, even when we don't understand what He is doing. He wants us not to depend on ourselves and what we see, but on Him, His Word and His good plans. And when we do, we can know that He will show us what He wants us to do, every day of our lives.