

Gen 17:1-14 Discussion Questions

Sermon-Based Discussion Questions

1. Abraham sets an example of how we ought to respond to God with reverence.

- How do we often respond to God's name, requirements, and promises? Do you struggle with being appropriately reverent of God?
- What does reverent worship look like?
- How do we balance relationship intimacy (God as Father) with reverence (God as King)? What does a healthy balance look like here?

2. God has given us new identities in Christ, just like he gave Abram a new name.

- What aspects of the new identity that God has given you do you find most striking?

Text-Based Discussion Questions

1. Abraham is one of the most pivotal figures in Scripture. Much of the biblical account revolved around Abraham's struggle to trust that God would fulfill his promises to him—especially that he would have a son to be his heir.

a. Take a look at Gen 12:1-2 and 15:1-7. What did God promise Abram?

b. Take a look at Gen 16:1-6, 15-16: What did Abram and Sarai do in order to try to "help" God fulfill his promise?

c. Now, compare the promises in Gen 17:1-21 to the promises in Gen 12:1-2 and 15:1-7? How is it similar and how is it different?

d. Why do you think this reaffirmation and expansion of the covenant comes when Ishmael is about to reach what in that culture was a transition into adulthood (13 years old)? Where was Abraham putting his hope (v. 18)?

2. What promises has the Lord given you? Take some time to think through some examples how we are tempted to “help” God out like Abraham did?
3. What role do we have in bringing about God’s promises?
4. When do we know if we are getting ahead of God?
5. This is one of the key texts where we see God making (or reaffirming) his covenant with his people. What is a covenant and why is it amazing that God makes them?
6. In this case, God also institutes a covenant sign: circumcision. Covenant signs are both a symbol and a reminder of the covenant relationship we enjoy. They are visible symbols of God’s faithfulness to us and that we belong to him.
 - a. Jesus brought a new covenant and that is the way we relate to God now. What are the covenant signs that he provided for us?
 - b. How does this alter, shape, or enrich your understanding of these sacraments that Jesus gave us?
 - c. Why do you think that Jesus gave us these sacraments? What is their value?
 - d. Why do you think some within Evangelical Protestantism want to ignore or tend to downplay the value of the sacraments?

