

**PREPARING THE SOIL OF THE SOUL:
NOT PROOF BUT PROMISE
Genesis 15.1-12, 17-18**

But Abram said, "Sovereign Lord, how can I know that I will gain possession of it?"
Genesis 15.8

God initiates a covenant promise to Abraham which helped to prepare and cultivate the soil of Abraham's heart by showing that God is faithful and trustworthy, even unto death.

What steps can we take to deepen our faith and trust in God?

- 1. Remember: God is **GOOD!**

"Do not be afraid, Abram. I am your shield, your very great reward." v1

TO DO: Create a personal "promise journal" of all the times God has helped you in the past.

- 2. **DIALOG** with God often. v2, v6

TO DO: Become familiar with the lament Psalms. With a particular situation, verbalize your choice to trust God's promise over visible evidence.

- 3. Learn **PATIENCE.**

...but those who hope in the Lord will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary, they will walk and not be faint.
Isaiah 40.31

TO DO: Create specific milestones for your faith journey, acknowledging that God's timing may be different from yours, and celebrate small steps of faithfulness along the way.

- 4. Adopt a **CROSS-SHAPED** life.

For the joy set before him he endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. Consider him who endured such opposition from sinners, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart.
Hebrews 12.2

*"Anyone who intends to come with me has to let me lead. You're not in the driver's seat—I am. Don't run from suffering; embrace it. Follow me and I'll show you how. Self-help is no help at all. **Self-sacrifice is the way, my way, to finding yourself, your true self.**"*
Luke 9.23-24 Message

TO DO: Recommit your life to Jesus and embrace life's pain, hurt, messiness, and doubt.

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CORPORATE PRAYER OF CONFESSION

ALL: Faithful God, we confess that our lives are full of broken promises we have made and broken promises made to us. Unlike you, O God, we are unfaithful, and unlike you, we are often untrue. Heal the trust which has been broken and bind our hearts with the knowledge of your steadfast love, in the name of Christ Jesus, Amen.

LEADER: Thanks be to God that in Christ we can taste and see that the Lord is good, his love endures forever, and his mercy never fails. Even when we are faithless, God will always be faithful to forgive and welcome us back into his arms.

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What is God saying to me?

What am I going to do about it?