

# TRUST

# 3

## CHAPTER SUMMARY

### WEEKLY WIN

Participants understand that God moved toward humanity and a relationship with him is available to all of us.

### BOTTOM LINES

- The introduction of sin into the human experience left God with a choice. Instead of walking away, he waded into the mess.
- God's solution to the problem of sin began with three promises he made to one man.
- The righteousness available to Abraham through faith is also available to us.

## BEFORE THE MEETING

### PRAY

Keep praying for your group members. Ask God to help them to trust him in spite of their circumstances.

### LEADER DEBRIEF

Address the following:

- Evaluate the second meeting with your co-leaders. Talk about what went well and what needs to be adjusted for the next meeting.
- Clarify which leader will follow up with any group members that need individual attention.
- Make a plan for your social gathering if you haven't done so already.

### CONTACT GROUP MEMBERS

Contact your group members individually by email. Invite each of them to coffee or a meal sometime soon. What happens outside group meetings is sometimes more important than what happens in meetings. Remind those who are sharing stories so they will be prepared.

You can use the email template provided for Week Three at [startingpoint.com/leaders](http://startingpoint.com/leaders).

## DISCUSS SECTION ONE: THE DILEMMA

### SECTION WIN

Participants understand that God's plan to address the separation caused by sin began with Abraham.

### LEADING THE DISCUSSION

**Question 1:** When have your personal experiences ever caused you to doubt or change your beliefs?

This question allows participants to share about a time when a life experience challenged their faith. You may hear great examples of how fragile faith built on personal experience can be.

**Question 2:** What does it say about God that he decided to wade into our messes?

This question gives participants an opportunity to explore the character of God, to think of him less as an abstract force and more as a personal being who decided to engage with his creation. This shows us that God is actively involved in the world and has a plan to address evil and suffering. If the problem of evil (i.e., how can a good God allow evil and suffering) comes up in your discussion, try and focus on God's response to evil, not the problem of evil itself.

## DISCUSS SECTION TWO: GOD'S PROMISES

### SECTION WIN

Participants understand that God chose Abraham and made him three astounding promises..

### LEADING THE DISCUSSION

**Question 1:** Given Abraham's circumstances, do you think it was hard for him to believe God's promises? Why or why not?

This question will reveal if the participants grasp the gravity of the promises God made to Abraham.\* Review some of the details of the account to remind them that Abraham and Sarah were past the age of childbearing when Abraham heard from God. A follow-up question might be, "What are some of the obstacles that come with these promises?"

**Question 2:** What do you think of God choosing someone as imperfect as Abraham?

This question helps participants realize that God isn't interested in working with perfect people and that Abraham might be more like them than they realized.

\* Be prepared to discuss the name change from Abram to Abraham (Genesis 17:5). Participants may wonder why it's different in different passages.

## DISCUSS SECTION THREE: COMING CLEAN

### SECTION WIN

Participants understand that based on Abraham's example, righteousness (right standing with God) is based on faith.

### LEADING THE DISCUSSION

**Question 1:** What are some common ways people try to earn God's acceptance?

This question allows participants to respond with general answers or to offer a more personal response about their own attempts to earn God's approval.

### Question 2: How does this contrast with what we are told about Abraham?

We all want to know what it will take for God to accept us. Most of us wonder how good we have to be. Abraham's story shows us that God's acceptance is not based on our behavior, but on faith. If participants are not able to articulate that answer, spend some additional time reviewing the account (Genesis 15:6 and Romans 4:22-24) with them.

### Question 3: What would it look like to trust God?

It may be hard for participants to imagine themselves in Abraham's shoes. This question allows them to share their personal thoughts about what active trust looks like and to begin to imagine what that looks like with God.

## POTENTIAL FOLLOW-UP QUESTIONS

- What's the difference between "belief" and "trust"?

# WRAP-UP

## REVIEW THE BOTTOM LINES

- The introduction of sin into the human experience left God with a choice. Instead of walking away, he waded into the mess.
- God's solution to the problem of sin began with three promises he made to one man.
- The righteousness available to Abraham through faith is also available to us.

## PREP FOR NEXT WEEK

- Read Chapter Four in the Conversation Guide and complete the questions.
- Listen to Episode Four of the Starting Point podcast which can be found on Apple Podcasts, Spotify, or [startingpoint.com/podcast](http://startingpoint.com/podcast).

## STORIES

If your group members will share their stories at the social gathering, encourage them to begin preparing. If you are going to share stories in your group time each week, make sure one or two people will be ready to share next week.

Encourage group members to use the *Appendix: What's Your Story?* section at the end of the Guide to help organize their thoughts.

## SOCIAL PLANNING

If you chose not to have a social gathering to share stories, or you didn't get through them all at the gathering, ask for volunteers to share in your next group meeting. Remind them of the *Appendix: What's Your Story?* to help them prepare.

## PRAYER

Every time you pray in the group, you model the nature of prayer and your relationship with God. Keep it short and simple. Avoid using "churchy" language. Be authentic.