

# STUDY NOTES

## A LETTER TO THE ROMANS *at* NEW CITY CHURCH

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The following content is based on the message “Faith and Swimming Pools” on 3/26/17 at New City Church in Phoenix, AZ. The following is not meant to be a full synopsis but rather a brief look at the main ideas. To use this Study Guide effectively you must listen to the message found at <http://newcityphx.com/sermons/>.

Leaders using these Study Notes for group study and reflection should read the Biblical text thoroughly before beginning, using this resource as assistance and not relying solely on this material for insight. We encourage all leaders to pray and ask the Spirit for revelation as they lead their respective community groups.

### PRAYER

*Pray and ask God to lead the discussion as everyone gets to share.*

### SCRIPTURE: ROMANS 4:13-25

### WHAT IS FAITH?

If we’re going to talk about faith and how belief in God intersects with the way we live our lives, then we’re going to need to know just what faith really means and what faith really is.

- *What is your experience with people telling you to have more faith?*
- Pastor Chris used a pool metaphor to talk about faith. The people who enjoy the pool most are usually children. Adults worry more about the day-to-day operations of the pool, often without enjoying it as much children enjoy it.
- *How do you think this metaphor relates to faith?*
- *What do you struggle with more? “enjoying the pool”? Or “day-to-day upkeep of the pool”?*

### ABRAHAM’S STORY

Abraham’s story includes God giving a promise to him that he would be the father of many nations. Abraham struggled with being 100 years old and still not having a son. Then when he had a son, God told Abraham to sacrifice his son. Paul tells us that Abraham had faith in God the whole time, even though we see in the story that Abraham doubted how God would fulfill his promise.

- *In what ways do you relate to Abraham’s story?*
- *In what ways do you admire Abraham’s faith?*

### SARAH’S STORY

Sarah’s story includes being over 90 years old and still not conceiving a child. She too had faith that God was going to fulfill his promise, but doubted how he would do it. She and Abraham experienced the heartache of infertility while waiting for God. After much waiting, they also experienced the joy of seeing God raise her womb to new life.

- *In what ways do you relate to Sarah’s story?*
- *In what ways do you hope to see joy in your life?*

### ISAAC’S STORY

Isaac’s story includes being the fulfillment to God’s promise to Abraham and Sarah. However, it wasn’t long until God asked Abraham to sacrifice Isaac. He went to the brink of death with his father when God substituted a ram to take his place.

- *In what ways do you relate to Isaac’s story?*
- *How do you feel about knowing that Jesus substituted his life for you like the way a ram was provided by God?*

### JESUS THE NEW ABRAHAM

God’s promise to Abraham is fully revealed in Jesus. Through Jesus all the nations can be adopted into the family of God. In telling this story, Paul is communicating three things about God.

- 1) God keeps his promises.
- 2) God rescues the poor and the one that has no helper.
- 3) God makes the story come out right in the end.

Paul helps us find ourselves in the story of Abraham and Sarah to make us faithful, the way that God and Jesus Christ are faithful, and to make us trusting of God’s promise, the way that Abraham and Sarah learned to be.

- *How can the story of Abraham strengthen your faith?*
- *Pray with each other for a celebration of faith and for a faith that is worked out daily.*