

OCF Small Groups: *passionately pursuing God, healthy relationships with each other, and people who don't know Jesus, as part of a Gospel Community.*

Genesis 17 – 18: 15

(Sunday, November 15)

1.
 - a. What are nicknames that you have been given in the past? How did you feel about being called those names?
 - b. What nicknames have you given others? Why?

2. In Genesis 17, God gives Abram and Sarai new names. "Abram" means "exalted father"; "Abraham" means "father of a multitude." "Sarah" means "princess." (We are not certain what "Sarai" means. Some say, "to mock" or "to be contentious." It could also be another form of the word "princess.") In the ancient world, a name conveyed the essence of a person, and giving a name conveyed rule or ownership.
 - a. What then do you make of Abram's and Sarai's name change?
 - b. How might God's view of Abraham differ from Abraham's view of himself?
 - c. In what way does God know your name? Do you and God have the same view of yourself? Explain.

3. Genesis 17: 1–2 is the first time the Hebrew name *El Shaddai* (shuh-DYE) occurs in Scripture. *Shaddai* is translated as "Almighty" forty-eight times in the Old Testament. *El* is the name of God that speaks of power; but scholars have not agreed on the meaning of *Shaddai*. We might say that *El Shaddai* is the name of "the all-powerful and all-sufficient God who can do anything and meet any need." The phrase "I will" appears at least 5 times. God is all-powerful and will accomplish his plans.
 - a. In what ways does God's power sustain you?
 - b. In what ways have you witnessed God's power in your own life and the life of others?

4.
 - a. What did physical circumcision symbolize for the Old Testament Jew?
 - b. What spiritual reality did circumcision represent?
 - c. If cutting off one's foreskin is no longer required of God's people, what is yet required (see Deuteronomy 30:6; Romans 2:25-29; Galatians 5:6)?

5. At 99 years old, Abraham was told to do something painful (ch.17 v. 10; 24). He chose to obey and cut off his flesh to receive what God promised. In the same way, we must be willing to cut away the fleshly things in our lives, such as bad attitudes, anger, gossip, greed, etc. What is God calling you to cut away?

6.
 - a. Who or what always helps you laugh? How?
 - b. What is your favorite brand of humor?
 - c. When have you laughed at the wrong time?

7.
 - a. Why did the Lord rebuke Sarah's laughter (see 18: 12-14) but not Abraham's (see 17: 17-22)?
 - b. What must have been different about the spirit behind each person's laugh?
 - c. Have you ever laughed about standards in God's Word or something God seemed to be telling you? Why do you think you responded that way?
 - d. What does it look like for you to actively trust God even when it seems impossible?

SCRIPTURE MEDITATION Genesis 18: 14a

Is anything too hard for the Lord?

PRAY

Heavenly Father thank you for being bigger and stronger than any person and situation. Help me to trust that you are all-powerful and that nothing is too hard for you to accomplish – in Jesus name I pray, AMEN.