

CHAPTER 2
God Builds a Nation

Journal your answers to these questions as you read through the chapter this week. You may wish to read one day and journal the next, or spread the questions over the whole week.

1. God asked Abraham to sacrifice his only son, Isaac, for two reasons: first, to test his faith and, second, to point to the future sacrifice of the heavenly Father's only Son. Is there an area of your life that God is calling you to "sacrifice" or entrust to Him? Identify the next step you need to take.
2. God's chosen people are both faithful and flawed. List the "faithful" attributes of either Abraham or Sarah that you want to follow. List the "flawed" attributes and mistakes of either Abraham or Sarah that you want to avoid.
3. When God does not deliver on his promise to provide offspring for Abram, he starts to take matters into his own hands (p. 15-16). Despite his good intentions, this caused several complications for him domestically. When have you tried to take things into your own hands or force God into action? What was the result?
4. The maidservant Hagar fled from Sarah's harsh treatment. Alone, hurting, and in despair, God saw her. But she also saw Him and declared, "I have now seen the One who sees me" (p. 16). When have you seen God most vividly acting in your life?
5. Esau and Jacob are prime examples of sibling rivals. We learn from the story that they were estranged for more than twenty years (p. 22). What life lessons can be gleaned from observing each character throughout their reconciliation? Can these life lessons be applied to an estranged relationship of your own?
6. In the midst of a deep, personal crisis in Jacob's life, we read about a curious struggle in the wilderness (p. 23-24). In the end, Jacob's name was changed to Israel because he struggled with God and man and overcame. (In the ancient world, a name represented the character of a person.) Identify a crisis in your own life that entailed "wrestling" with God. If God was to change your name to represent the outcome, what do you suppose it would be?
7. Nearly everyone has experienced the playground process of "choosing teams." Compare the way God chooses His "team" with the way you choose your "team." Who in your life do you need to see from God's perspective?