

GENESIS STUDY REFLECTIONS

STORY OF ST. TIM'S YOUTH



Preface

This summer, a handful of St. Timothy's Hi-C & College students participated in a deep analysis and investigation of the book of Genesis. Each session the students challenged themselves to explore the world beneath the text by writing and discussing any questions that they had.

The purpose of this study was to understand the events of the bible within it's context while relating them to our own life experiences. In doing so, it enabled many of us to achieve a deeper understanding of our own faith.

The Hi-C and college students wrote personal reflections on what they learned and were open to the idea of sharing them in hopes that it could inspire those who are struggling with their own faith.

We pray that these reflections may enrich the lives of others and help them on their own faith journey!

Sincerely,

St. Timothy Presbyterian Church

God's Faithfulness

I think the thing that I got out of this bible study the most was the assurance of how God is always there for those he loves. Abraham's journey of faith was not always smooth sailing and that is the reality of Christian faith. I think before this study I didn't think too deeply about what the Christian journey is really about, so there were times when I seriously wondered why I had encountered certain relationships, problems, or good times in my life. Even though I think I am very solid in my desire for faith and what I exactly believe in, I still had questions pertaining to this because it is difficult to get over sometimes.

But through this study, I am reminded that no matter what kind of moment I am having, God is guiding me, and I can only picture his hand holding me throughout everything even when I fail Him. So basically, I was reminded not to stress about anything!! What do I have to possibly stress for if God is right there. Sometimes it seems like the things in this world are greater than God, but just like how Abraham had no reason to worry about getting killed because of his wife, I can put my trust in God rather. That is the power of God's truth because it is easy to lose trust in that and be deceived to think otherwise. Also, I learned that this story is not Abraham's story - it is God's story. God seems to be the most active and moving in Abraham's faith while Abraham is mostly just obeying God (with a few fallouts). This just shows that it's not what we do but it's what God does and there is a bigger power than our self that is working.



Faith and Doubt

After reading Abraham's story, I think I better understand what it means to be faithful. Furthermore, after we studied the bible more in depth, my view on God has also changed.

Before we studied Genesis, I always questioned how figures like Abraham were able to have so much faith in God. It seemed surreal to me how easily they were able to trust in God that everything would turn out okay.

But after reading the whole story in chronological order I could see that faith is not something that you just have. It is a continuous journey in which God will test you multiple times. Through this bible study I was also able to see that Abraham is a human, just like us and doubted God many times throughout his journey. Even after seeing what God can do, Abraham seems to forget about all those things and doubts when his own life is at risk, which is something I think would happen to me as well.

I think that doubt is an essential part of faith, the two go hand-in-hand, you can never really be certain what God will do, and that is why you will always have doubts. But fighting through the doubt and trusting that God will take care of everything is what faith is.

After studying Genesis, my view on God has also changed. I used to think that God was static or had one view/stance on everything and that is all. But after reading Abraham's story and from what I know happens later on in the bible, I believe that God is constantly evolving along with humans. Especially after God floods the earth with Noah, it seems like he feels remorse after doing that and seems to have changed after that event.

Throughout this bible study, it has definitely answered a couple of my questions about faith, but it has also sparked some new ones, such as: How will God test me in my life?

What can I do to prepare myself for when he tests me?

Is God static or continuing to evolve to this day?



Waiting with Faith

I learned that waiting is an important part of having faith. Abram had a call from God and it took more than 10 years for him to see that promise was real, in a situation that it seems impossible for it to be real. And he waited with doubts to God's promise. But, through those doubts, he was able to strengthen his faith in God and make the promise more clear to him. He went through many difficulties during the waiting and I learned even during those difficulties, faith to God is the source to help us overcome the difficulties. So, having faith means to wait for God to come into your life. But during the waiting, there will be many struggles, but true faith is not to lose the hope that God will come into our life.

I experienced how this can change my life during bible study week. I was in a situation that it seemed everything that I achieved here will be gone. I would have to go back to Korea. There was nothing that I can do to make this situation better. But, I thought God called me here and he won't let me go back to Korea. That was my faith that God will come to me and, somehow, he will keep the peace in my life. I decided to let it happen. I waited since the outcome is not in my hand but in God's hand. It was a lot of stress and struggles to me. And, somehow, everything got better. I did not have to worry about leaving. When I tried nothing to make the problems better, everything was done. My worries were gone. I did not think of anything, but this is God's power and plan. I just had to wait until he reveals himself.

After this, I learned to wait is the answer. Worrying and trying to do something does not make things better anyway. That just changed my perspective to see the world. It is more relaxing. I see them as God's power to control, not my hand. And it made me less nervous and anxious when I see the troubles that I am facing.

Also, the other thing that was impressive to me was how a chosen person can be a blessing to many people. Abram saved Lot and people in his country. And even when God tried to destroy the land that Lot was living. He denied the possession that he could have after defeating the kings

Story of St. Tim's Youth 2018

because he knew that was not God's promise to him but to be a blessing. And he did not hesitate to save Lot who left him and took better looking land. That was just so amazing to read him doing those. I only thought "Wow". I really wanted to be a blessing to the community that I am in and I had been thinking that it starts from me. But this story reminded me that it starts from God. That changed how I think, in a way to put God first.

This bible study has given me a lot of fruitful thoughts and made me reflect on my life. It changed me in a way to relax me.



The Value in Time

Throughout this whole Genesis study, there seemed to be an underlying theme seen in each passage; the theme of questioning. It was something that I expected would show up once and then Abraham would have faith so strong it would never come up again, but I was surprised to see that it came up in every single passage. Whether it be in the form of Abraham taking precautions just in case God fails him, or him straight up asking God when his blessings will come, there was never a 100% faith and trust in God.

In addition, it stuck out to me how long it took for Abraham to receive his blessings. Him and Sarah waited and waited for years and had to go through so many trials and tribulations before they could be blessed, and when they finally were, God asked Abraham to offer his son as a sacrifice. So much suffering and waiting had to happen before they could feel that God would eventually fulfill his promise.

Abraham is an extremely human character, and I think there was a focus on that on purpose. He became an extremely relatable and genuine figure which made it much easier for us to be able to resonate with him and his life. When I think about how much Abraham had to wait and how much that made him question, it's an extremely comforting thought.

Throughout the study there were a lot of moments that made me uncomfortable, that made me rethink a lot of what I thought was true, but I think what kept me wanting to continue the study was how I could relate to Abraham. It was comforting to know that even the father of faith went through so much to the point where he started to question God to His face. Sometimes when I question my faith, or when I question God, there is a sense of guilt that slowly starts to creep up without me even realizing it. It's like I've been conditioned to follow God without even pondering on what the bible actually says, and when I actually start to reflect on it, I feel like a bad Christian. I'm so grateful that we got the opportunity to do this study, because it showed me how important questioning truly is in your faith journey, and like someone said in one of our discussions, faith without questioning is not faith.

Story of St. Tim's Youth 2018

It's also comforting to know that Abraham also had to wait a very long time to finally be blessed. I realized that I tend to lose patience extremely quickly, especially when I'm struggling, and I find that it's so easy for me to get mad at God, and almost blame Him for everything that happens and for how long I have to wait. It was through this study that I learned how important waiting is. I think it's important to have that time to truly grapple with your faith and your circumstances and Abraham showed me how valuable that time is.



Struggle with Faith

I think these passages really revealed a lot about God's character that I never questioned before. Looking back, a lot of the things that stuck out to me was when God didn't make things easy for Abraham or his offspring. At first, I couldn't understand why He would do these things, why it was part of His plan to have people struggle or suffer when He is all powerful and all knowing. I realize that struggle is a part of life, but I always thought it was more of a punishment. However, looking at what happened to Abraham, I realized that God doesn't put us through struggles to punish us, or for His own needs, he puts us through struggles because we need them to grow. When God waits to give Abraham a son for so long, we see how it really affects Abraham's faith. Even though the time of waiting and wondering was really hard for Abraham, and his faith wavered so many times, he became the father of faith. He was even willing to sacrifice Isaac, who was the most precious thing to him, and also the representation of God's promise.

I think that there were two kinds of struggle in the passages: the ones that God gave and the ones that people created. When Sarah took matters into her own hands and told Abraham to have a kid with Hagar, a problem was created, and this caused Sarah, Abraham, Hagar and Ishmael to suffer. However, God still used the mistakes Sarah and Abraham made for a greater purpose. Even when Abraham keeps telling kings that Sarah is his sister, God helps Abraham and keeps him safe, even punishing the kings instead of Abraham. I find these passages the most relatable to my own life, and the most comforting. Even though we doubt and take matters into our own hands, God will still look after us.

In our lives, I think that God uses struggle to ultimately help us to bless others. My view of how God works in our lives was definitely affected by this bible study. I think before this, I often wanted to blame God for the suffering in my own life. I didn't understand why he would put me through difficult things, and I'm still not sure why he did that, but now I think that an important step in my own faith journey is to trust that He has a reason for it. I may not be able to see the real purpose now, or the

Story of St. Tim's Youth 2018

real effect may not come in my lifetime, just as how Abraham's descendants would inherit the promise land after 400 years, beyond his lifetime. In high school I really hated my life which was pretty much just classes, homework, practice and stress. I felt like I didn't have anything to look forward to at the end of the day. Around this time, someone in my family got really sick and I felt like my life was just one tiring thing after another. I felt like I had no choice but to do these things because of expectations. I felt like I didn't have any choices in my life, and I really blamed God for that. I was confused and angry as to how or why my life was that way.

I think the reason I was so angry and confused was that the God I knew was a very basic, Sunday school God. I only knew that he was good and kind and when something bad happened, I lost faith really quickly. Especially when I couldn't go to church every week, it was really hard to keep my faith. I'm really thankful for my church community because they pulled me out of my hopelessness. I really felt their love and support and it helped me see God's love through all the suffering. I hope that as I go to university, I can keep a hold on to who God really is. I think that having faith and believing in God who tests us, but still ultimately helps us is a much stronger and solid way to live life.



Faith Rollercoaster

Reflecting on our overall study and on the passages we've studied for the past six sessions, I feel that the Abraham story was one that came to be very impactful and meaningful to me personally. Before starting these bible study sessions, I wasn't that familiar with Abraham all that much. Of course I knew who Abraham was, but I didn't know his story nor what he did or had to go through to become such an important figure in the bible. Through these bible study sessions, I had the chance to reflect on my spiritual journey with God and my faith and had the chance to reflect back on my personal life and personal problems or challenges I've had or have been having.

Before reading the Abraham story, I felt that my faith in God and my overall spiritual journey was one that continued to go up and down. When good things happened I would really feel God is with me and is looking over me, but when bad things happen it makes me think, is there really a God out there who is looking over me? Since my faith in God continued to go up and down constantly, it made me feel as if I was being a bad Christian and made me feel that I was the only one at church who didn't know what was going on with my spiritual journey with God. When I come to church on Sundays, I come with a mindset that it's a day to worship God and spend time with the community I'm apart of, but at one point, I didn't know why I was coming to church. Not only did I question why I was coming to church, I was also questioning God in general. At first I thought it was something only I was going through for some reason, but even after just reading the first two chapters of Genesis, it made me realize I'm not the only one who's had a hard time finding a purpose in life nor was I the only one who went through times where I questioned my faith and trust in God. Abraham, the main figure/character in this bible chapter went through these slumps during his life as well. Though he's so well known and did amazing deeds, he had his downs where he questioned his purpose in life and questioned God as well. Just realizing that and coming to know that these slumps I've gone through during my life are normal, came to be a big strength to myself. Reading this story and coming to learn how Abraham, a less than average human being,

Story of St. Tim's Youth 2018

came to find his true purpose in life while going through slumps with God and his faith during his life. Just being able to resonate and in a way relate to the story allowed be to understand the story more than other bible stories I've read or learned about.

Overall, my experience in taking part in these bible study sessions became a time of true reflection and connection with myself and with God as well.



Faith the Size of a Mustard Seed

God's promise to Abraham and the roller coaster of a ride that entire interaction really stuck out to me. The process with all of the trials and tribulations that Abraham endured to finally have a son. Abraham had to wait for a very long time. It must have been uncomfortable for Abraham to have to be patient for that entire time. The Bible even shows Abraham getting visibly upset with God. He was sick of waiting. In the end, God granted Abraham his promise to him and gave him a son named Isaac.

This grand story is a reminder for me that God will always follow through with his promises. It's quite comforting to know this. I see it as God has a plan for each and every one of us, all we really need to do is to have faith in God and believe in him. God will take care of each of us. When I was in middle school, I think that time was when my faith was the shakiest.

I had more fun in school than I did in church and therefore I was in a way walking away from church. My mom and dad never felt this because I would go to church every day without giving it a second thought but only because it was out of habit. I realize now that even if it was out of habit, I'm glad that I kept on coming to church. Even in times of great questioning and even getting frustrated to God, asking him to show a sign if you're truly there or not.

As much as I would like to tell you there was a magical sign with a rainbow and dove coming down to tell me that God was real, nothing of that sort happened. There was no sign. In a way, I'm glad that God didn't satisfy me at that time. If God revealed himself to me at that time, wouldn't that mean God needed to show himself every single time someone would question him? Why would God need to do that? He's God, with a capital "G."

I also realized how scary God truly is. The term "fear of God" is there for a reason. God really takes care of Abraham and he won't let anyone get in his way. He took care of Abraham in Egypt and with King Abimelech. He protected Abraham even when Abraham wasn't being righteous at all.

Story of St. Tim's Youth 2018

God looked even threatened the pharaoh and the king just because he would sin against His chosen prophet.

Doesn't God love all of his children? Aren't all the people on Earth, his children? Why would he then smite King Abimelech when he did nothing wrong? Didn't Abraham say that Sarah was his sister and not his wife? Is Abraham allowed to weasel himself out of a bad situation just because he has God walking with him?

Thinking about this in the big picture setting is definitely a lot harder only because I did pour out my reflections into the daily ones that we did. I don't want to sound like a broken record repeating myself so thinking of new things to talk about is tough.

Truth be told, God is scary in the Old Testament. He destroys cities, he smites kings and pharaohs and he even tells Abraham to kill his only son. What kind of loving and caring Father does all of this? It makes me question what God was really doing.

God cares for us deeply and even when we fail, He is always there with his grand plan for us. He loves us and cares for us even when he forgets about God. God has an unconditional love for each and every one of us. What God says he will do, will happen. I have faith in that statement. God will never break any of his promises and even when we break our promise to him, He will continue fulfilling his.





Reflecting on the Word

It was refreshing, eye-opening, and ground-breaking for me personally to be able to be a part of those Bible studies the way that we did.

Throughout my childhood and upbringing, I've never questioned the Bible before, and always assumed that the word of God was just and righteous and holy no matter what. In a way I kind of viewed it the same as a school textbook, where I was taught to never question the system and that it was the guidelines that I had to follow and instill in me.

It's funny how I thought that way, because when I look back, although I never questioned set authorities that held power in society, I always questioned other authority figures that were 'supposed' to have power. Mainly my parents, but also teachers, coaches, and other valued individuals who were at their core trying to have a positive influence on me as a member of the next generation, yet I would stubbornly turn a blind ear and refuse to listen. I think the reason for that was because of the way that my household dynamic was, and that my parents always tried to uphold this power dynamic where they were always right no matter what and I should always listen and never question them. I felt as if they were treating me like a uniform soldier without giving me any freedom to either be wrong or be able to express myself. And at the same time, I constantly saw them (as human beings) make mistakes and contradict themselves. They would never admit it, and instead of looking in the mirror they would always criticize me because as the child I'm supposed to listen to the adults. I think that this instilled in me a drive to always look for ways that my mom and dad could be wrong, and also develop an attitude towards them. This set-up in my family unknowingly traveled with me in the classroom or in sports where I would always talk back or ignore figures of authority. When I could see the person I was supposed to be respecting (ie. teacher/coach/parent) instead of an idea of a governing figure (ie. school system/government/etc.) I would almost automatically have doubts and think that this person didn't know what they were talking about. Even if they did, I had a short leash and all it took was for one mistake for me to not believe in them anymore.

Story of St. Tim's Youth 2018

It's remorseful for me to look back every time I self-reflect because of the way I used to be (and sometimes still am), but thankfully (through God) every experience I've had has been able to be an amazing teacher for me. I would, being entitled, expect my parents to be able to teach me those things and be there for me and help me grow instead of living their lives and focusing on their careers. Yes, they definitely made plenty of mistakes, and I used to give them so much power by wanting to do the exact opposite of everything they would try to tell me. In hindsight, I realized that that was hindering me instead of giving me a personal freedom of choice. I've definitely made even more mistakes than them too, and once I learned to humanize them and view things in context and in different perspectives, I learned to be able to communicate with them better and develop healthier relationships.

This small personal example for me relates to how this Bible study is continuing to help me grow and expand in the way God wants me to become for His plan. To see that these Biblical figures were human as well, and that these stories were not as black and white as they once appeared to me, involving so much different human complexities, I was able to learn so much. Their lives were complex just like ours, and they went through trials and tribulations as well. For me to believe that these people were just extremely righteous people of God who could do no wrong, it is inspiring to see that they were like you and I and had to strive through their doubts and all kinds of other negative thoughts and emotions and evolve throughout their lives.

Now, I think that I can become closer with God, and that certain qualities that I assumed were just not ingrained in me before are now things that I can look at being characteristics that I so ardently want to strive for. Through God I hope that I'm able to continue to grow like I have been this summer (in no small part thanks to this St. Tim's program) and pray for more selflessness, diligence, the ability to treat the people around me better, and a consistent desire to get to know God better as well.



My New Outlook on God

I really appreciated studying the book of Genesis in a setting where I was comfortable and confident to share what's on my mind. Hermeneutical bible study was a really good experience for me and I enjoyed how we worked together to unpack and dissect the underlying meanings and messages that the bible has to offer.

I am slowly starting to understand how God works and what he wants from us. The first impressions I got after reading the passages were very confusing, I would often question why God would do this and do that (punish the people of Sodom), or why would someone else behave this way etc. But after reading over the passages, asking questions and discussing with the group I realized that there is a deeper more important meaning that transcends the legitimacy of the story itself. Questioning the literal events of the bible will prevent you from getting a deeper understanding of the messages. That's one of the biggest things I realised on this bible study journey.

When I was younger I thought God was perfect, never made mistakes and did no wrong. Thanks to the past two weeks of studying the bible I realised that he isn't all perfect, and he does indeed do things that make us question him. I was able to get know God more on a personal level and found out that he's not all rainbows and sunshine. But at the end of all the trials and tribulations we go through he's there with us. No matter how messed up things get on earth he's still by our side.

In terms of the actual message and content of the genesis study I really liked the climax of the story where Abraham is asked to sacrifice his greatest gift, Isaac. The whole Abraham story there was a covenant placed by God that he will deliver his promise of making Abraham a great nation, so he can be a blessing to others etc. Throughout the story I kept on thinking that Abraham was placing his faith in God's covenant and on his promise so that in the end he would eventually see the fruits of his sacrifice and hard work. But when he was asked to kill his one and only

son I then realized that God doesn't want us to place our faith on the notion that he'll deliver us good fortune but to place our faith on God himself. What I took from that is that we should not live to praise and put our faith in God so that we can receive good things in return, whether that be a happy life or successful career etc., but to place our faith on God himself so that if all those things that we hoped for don't come to fruition we can still be at peace knowing that God is with us.

Moving forward I'll try to live everyday a bit differently than before, as oppose to just praying to God when I need him, in hopes that he'll deliver me from evil, I'll pray in general just to thank and praise him. Furthermore, I'll stop questioning the events in the bible but try to critically analyse the messages underneath the text to have a more enriching experience whenever I read the bible.



A Summer of Learning and Reflection

The passages about Abraham that we studied for the past week have really changed my view of God, faith, this world and my life in many ways. I've always heard about these stories from the Bible as a kid, but reading it really carefully, asking critical questions and having a group bible study really made this a new experience for me. Reading beyond the text and really analyzing every sentence changed how I viewed this story and really made me think and ask some critical questions.

Before I read this story, I always had an image of God where he was an all powerful, perfect and divine being. But as I read some of these stories I began to question him asking myself "Why would God allow what to happen, was that his plan?". Then I looked at our world and saw all our issues and problems and thought to myself and again asked "Why is God letting these terrible things happen to innocent people, is this really part of his plan?". But as I read the scripture, I realized that maybe in the moment what God was doing didn't always seem like the best option, but in the long run it always seemed to work out. I think what I've learned from that is we need to trust God and have faith in his plan, as he wants the best for us and has great things planned for all of us.

We also learned about desperation, familiarity, and desire from reading the passages and saw these traits in characters like Abram, Sarai and Lot. Reading about these characters and seeing how these traits influenced certain decisions was really relatable and I found these same traits affecting my life and my choices. Just like how Sarai took matters into her own hands and told Abraham to have a kid with Hagar, we all make irrational decisions when we are desperate. We also depend on familiarity and are afraid of the new and the unknown. But for us to really change and to find true happiness we need to be able to go out of our comfort zone and face the unknown. Lastly, we learned about desires and how these can be used for good, but when they consume you they can turn into greed and make you selfish. We saw all of this from the characters in the story of Abraham and through this, hopefully I can take this message and apply it to my life.

Story of St. Tim's Youth 2018

What I learned about our faith is that it's a long journey between ourselves and Christ, and its bound to have its highs and lows. But one thing I learned is God's forgiveness and his desire for us to have a strong faith foundation with him and to pass it on as Christians. Looking at Abraham, I think he's a perfect representation of us and our relationship with God. At times Abraham's faith was strong as we saw him nearly sacrifice his son for God and how he left his home and took his family to answer God's calling. But then we also see this side of Abraham where he pretends to be his wife's husband twice, not trusting in God and taking matters into his own hands. But even after Abraham continuously disappoints and fails God, God always forgives Abraham and continues to love him. What I think I've learned from this is that God really want us to build a strong faith relationship and will continually forgive us as we are imperfect unlike him.



Putting God First

Studying the life of Abraham has helped me deepen my understanding of God, as well as what it means to have faith in God. That being said, many questions about God have also arisen, and I often question God's actions. Prior to this, I had heard stories about Abraham however I had never studied Genesis as in-depth as we had through our Bible study. Out of everything I we had read, two things that really stuck out to me was the story of Hagar/the life of Ishmael, as well as when God commanded Abraham to sacrifice Isaac on the mountain. The contrast between the life of Isaac and Ishmael really shows to me that even though we all live in different circumstances, God is still watching over all of us. I found it so interesting how the focus was put on the life of Ishmael instead of the life of Isaac. Ishmael was born into drastically different circumstances than Isaac, however God said that he would make both of these boys into nations. That really touched me, and it made me happy.

At many times in my life, I find myself doubting whether God really has a plan for a person like me. I am not talented in any particular area at school, and I have nothing that really sticks out about me. That being said, the promise that God will stick with us even through harsh circumstances like he did with Ishmael is really reassuring, and it gives me hope.

The story of God calling Abraham to sacrifice Isaac really made me think and question what the message of the story really is. I had heard about this story before, however this was my first time reading it with the understanding of Abraham's life. After reading, the main question I had was "what type of message did God want to convey through this?". Would God want us to respond in the same way that Abraham did if we were asked to sacrifice a loved one? Does God seriously expect us to have the same extreme, almost radical faith that Abraham displayed? Isaac was the culmination of Abraham's life, and the cornerstone of God's promise to Abraham, yet he still followed God's command to the very last moment. I do not think that God honestly expects us to have this same faith, and I do not think that is what this story is really about. First of all, in

our modern-day lives, God does not ever call us in the same direct way he called people in the Bible. I do not believe God would ever put us in that circumstance today.

That being said, I think the test was really to show Abraham's true intentions, whether he was truly following God's command for the sake of loving and trusting God, or simply to gain something through doing so. While reading the initial chapters of Abraham's story, I found myself wondering what Abraham's motives were. God promised offspring to a man whose wife was already established to be barren. Was Abraham following God's commands for personal gain? I think that the story on the mountain was the perfect way to end the story of Abraham. I think the last thing God wanted to leave us with is that we have to follow him because we actually seek to, not because we want something from God. God tested Abraham to see whether he truly cared about following God's commands, or whether his personal gain (his son) had precedence in his life. When I first read the story, I made the mistake of taking it too literally. I was scared and disturbed by the idea that God seriously would ask someone to kill their own son. However, through reflection, I think that God used this extreme example to show that God ultimately wants us to put him first in our lives beyond anything else, including what is most precious to us.



To be a Blessing

During this summer I did not expect to do a Bible study on Genesis, especially on Abraham. This Bible study on Abraham's life has revealed a great number of insights on God, faith and myself. It has made me question many things that I thought I already knew. This Bible study was very insightful and during it, there are many things that stick out but there are some that are more prominent than others. What really stood out is how certain areas of Abraham's life and the events that occurred in his life was extremely relatable.

The thing that stood out the most was when God call for Abram. There was a calling from God and Abram answered. He also told Abram that anyone that bless him would be blessed. In my life, I thought that I would not receive a call from God. I was born into a Christian family and had gone to church my entire life. I felt no calling and after a while during my college years, I stopped going to church. My life felt lifeless and for the better part of the year I avoided going to church. I felt that going to church was pointless. But later that year I was ask by my parents if I would like to come to St. Timothy. I initially refused. There was no reason for me to go, I knew no one there. But on a whim I decided to go with them. At first it was awkward, I was a stranger to this church and I didn't want to be there. But after service ended, people started to introduce themselves. And they started to introduce me to others. And after a couple weeks have gone by, they invited me to the softball team, they invited me to some of the events that was taking place and at some point I somehow joined the MG. Things kept happening and I found that there was no reason to stop going to church. I realize that God gave me a push into going to church and introduced great people into my life. He put people into my life that would not let me leave and they became a blessing to me. And now that I am here, I hope that I could be a blessing to others, the same way my friends here at church have been a blessing to me.

I have read the story of Abraham many times, but this Bible study has opened my eyes and made me really look and the deeper meaning of the text and what meaning it is trying to convey. This Bible study has really

Story of St. Tim's Youth 2018

changed the way I look at the Scripture and changed the way I approach the Bible. I have always thought the Bible was about the people and their story but now I realize that it is not about the people but about God. Everything is about Him and how he works through those people to make his plan come to fruition.



Handling the Outcome

This bible study has been really eye opening for me and I enjoyed it a lot! It was interesting learning about Abraham's life and his covenant with God. I never questioned what happened in the bible before, I kind of accepted that everything happened. Questioning the whole story of Abraham and critically thinking has really made me think more about God and my calling.

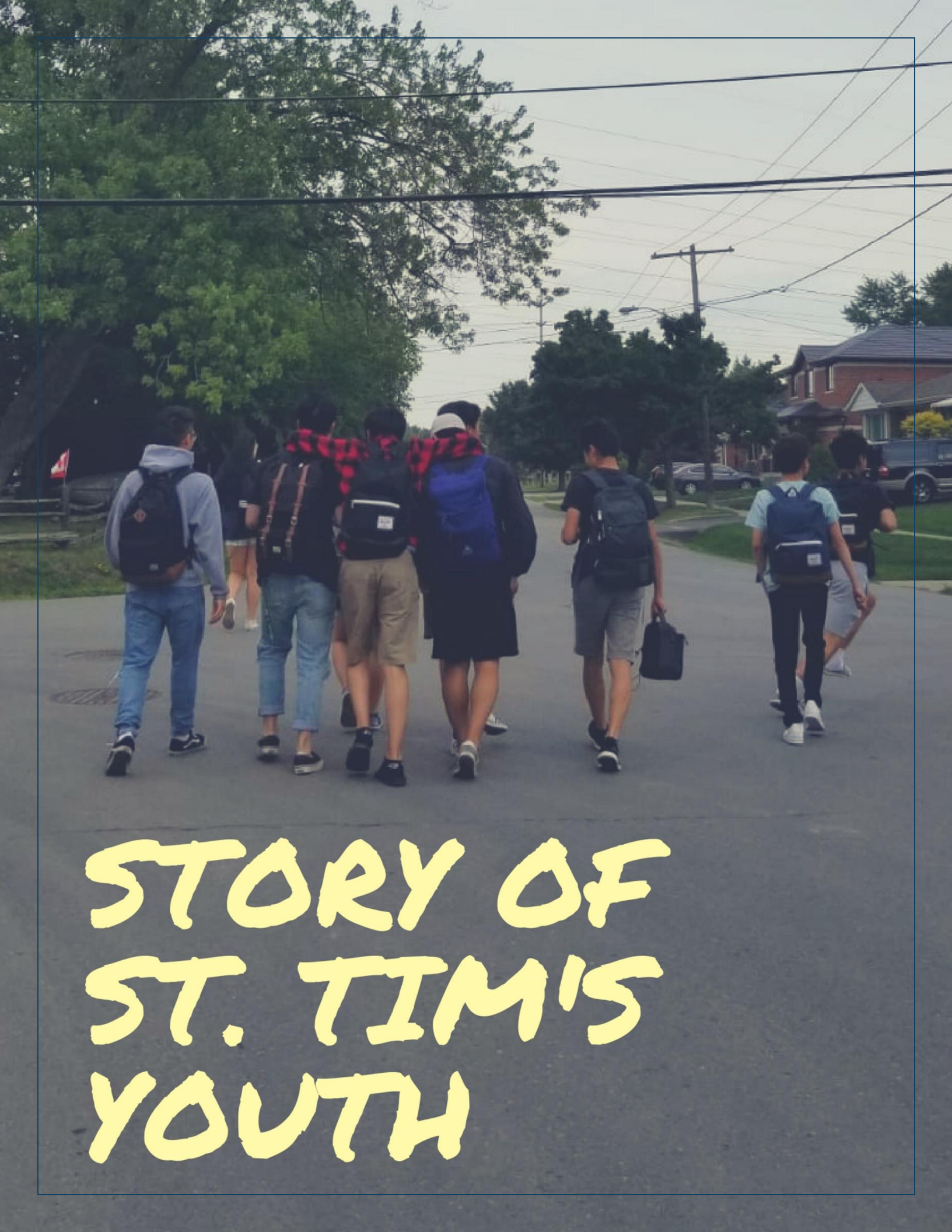
One thing that I vividly remember is when Sarah took matters into her own hands and let Abraham and Hagar have a child together. There was an actual reason as to why she thought this was right. Sarah was barren and even though God has promised a child for her, her and Abraham were getting old in age. She thought that she needed to do this to survive. After when Hagar looked at Sarah with contempt, Sarah got mad and handled Hagar how she saw fit. She took matters into her own hands because she was scared and lost faith in God. We as humans do this often, more than we know. We always want to handle the outcome even if it is not what God intended for us. I know in my life, I always want to handle the outcome. I want what I want. I don't think that is a bad thing, since I don't know my calling yet, I want what is best for me. I hope that when I do know my true calling, I don't stray away from it.

This whole bible study has changed my view on God. I thought that he was an almighty, all loving God. This showed a different side of God that I never really thought about. He tested Abraham in the most extreme case. He asked him to sacrifice his son for him. After all Abraham has been through to have Isaac as a son, God asked him to forget all this for him.

All in all, this whole bible study has been a blessing and I really enjoyed it.

Yo shout out to Pastor Simon one time (Clap)





STORY OF ST. TIM'S YOUTH