



## The Good, The Bad, and The Ugly | Laughing At God

07.16.23

### **START TALKING | (Find a conversation starter for your group)**

How would you describe your sense of humor?

What makes you laugh?

### **START EXPLORING | (Read the Bible)**

Read Genesis 18:1-15 and Genesis 21:1-7

- In Genesis 18:1, who appeared to Abraham?
  - What were the implications of their visit?
  - Although the text does not tell us, when in this narrative do you think Abraham actually recognized that one of his visitors was God in fleshly form?

Hospitality was a big deal in the ancient Near Eastern culture. The Holman Illustrated Bible Dictionary offers the following insights on hospitality:

- ❖ Reception of strangers into one's home for food, shelter, and protection was a sacred duty.
  - ❖ Nomadic lifestyles forced travelers to rely on the kindness of others.
  - ❖ Only the depraved would refuse a stranger hospitality.
- In what ways did Abraham demonstrate hospitality to the three men who appeared before him?

When the three visitors came, Abraham was about 99 years old and Sarah was about 90 (Genesis 17:17, 24) and it had been about 24 years since God had first promised Abraham offspring. Through Hagar, Abraham did have a son; however, Sarah had not yet bore any children to Abraham.

- What do you think Sarah's perception of God's promise was at this point in the story?

Genesis 18:9-15 records that Sarah “laughed to herself” when she heard the Lord’s words. But Hebrews 11:11 includes Sarah in the description of those who lived by faith in God's promises.

- How do you think we should understand Sarah’s laughter in light of her faith and doubt?

### **START SHARING | (Choose a question to create openness)**

- Have you ever struggled or are you currently struggling to believe in a promise of God?
- Have you ever lost all hope in a situation?

(Continued on back)



**Start Praying. (Be bold and pray with power)**

Spend some time praying for each other and the struggles previously shared.

**Start Doing. (Commit to a step, and live it out this week)**

Challenge yourself to choose to trust God even when the situation seems impossible.

- Write down some ways you can demonstrate that trust.