



Who Is Your Momma?

If you grew up eating animal crackers and drinking fruit juice at Sunday School, there's a good chance you'll recognize this classic song:

"Father Abraham had many sons, and many sons had Father Abraham. I am one of them, and so are you, so let's all praise the Lord. Right arm, left arm, right foot, left foot, nod your head, turn around, sit down!"

By that last verse, you've pretty much done a 15-minute HIIT workout, but what's this song even about?

Galatians 3:6-7 says, *"You remember Abraham. Scripture tells us, 'Abraham believed God and trusted in His promises, so God counted it to his favor as **righteousness**.' Know this: **people who trust in God are the true sons and daughters of Abraham.**"*

So, *Father Abraham* is not just a silly song that gets preschoolers to expound vast amounts of energy; it's scriptural. We are sons and daughters of Abraham, **but notice, it's not our DNA that proves we are true sons and daughters of Abraham, it's our belief.** It's us trusting that we are made right with God by grace through faith, fully buying into the fact that we can't work our way to righteousness. Abraham was the first to walk this out, so naturally, he's referred to as the father of our faith.

The grace message was a hard pill for the law-loving legalists of Jesus's day to swallow. They wanted to be made right by keeping the law, and they desired to relate as sons of Abraham based on their genetics--their bloodline. So, they went around proudly singing, *Father Abraham had many sons, and I am one of them*, but it seems as if they forgot that **Abraham had two sons**. Ishmael and Isaac.

And that leads me to this ever so important question: **Who is your momma?**

God promised that Abraham and Sarah, who were childless and beyond their child-bearing years, would give birth to a son. But instead of patiently waiting to see the promise fulfilled, they took matters into their own hands. **They decided to do things their way instead of God's way**. They stepped out of God's will, and Sarah had Abraham sleep with her servant Hagar. Sarah's faith was in Hagar's ability to conceive and bear children, instead of in the promise God gave her. Of course, Hagar became pregnant and Ishmael, Abraham's firstborn son, took his first breath nine months later.

From the moment Hagar saw the two pink lines on her First Response test, trouble ensued. I can't imagine the drama in that household. Hagar thought she was better than Sarah. Sarah was abusive toward Hagar. And Abraham was caught in the middle of it all.

Thirteen years later God tells Abraham that Sarah is going to have a baby, and THIS baby, not Ishmael, will be the son of promise. The son born of Sarah would be the one through which God established His covenant, and a year later Sarah gave birth to Isaac.

Father Abraham now had two sons who were 14 years apart. **And just as there was conflict between Hagar and Sarah, there was conflict between Ishmael and Isaac**. In Genesis 21 Abraham threw a big party to celebrate Isaac being weaned, and during the festivities, Ishmael began to mock his baby brother. Sarah catches wind of this and here's what happens next:

Genesis 21:10-12 *So she [Sarah] turned to Abraham and demanded, "Get rid of that slave woman and her son. He is not going to share the inheritance with my son, Isaac. I won't have it!" This upset Abraham very much because Ishmael was his son. But God told Abraham, "Do not be upset over the boy and your servant. Do whatever Sarah tells you, for Isaac is the son through whom your descendants will be counted.*

As a mother, my heart hurt for Ishmael when I read this. It seemed so ruthless of Sarah and Abraham, and it didn't seem to line up with the character of God. How could they just send this single mother and her teenage son out into the wilderness? I mean I get it, mama bear comes out when someone messes with your baby, but this punishment seemed too harsh.

My heart wasn't satisfied with the mama bear excuse, so I started to dig, and God began to unpack truths that I know I'll never forget. Galatians 4 is where I found all the answers my heart was hungry for. In verses 21-31 Paul contrasts Abraham's two sons.

- Ishmael was born of a **slave** in a **human attempt** to bring about the fulfillment of God's promise.
- Isaac was born of a **free woman** and was **God's own fulfillment of His promise**.
- Ishmael was conceived **according to the flesh**.
- Isaac was conceived **by grace through faith**.
- Ishmael represents **legalism** and our **human attempts to attain righteousness**.
- Isaac represents the **gospel**, the good news that Jesus made a way for you and me to experience the miracle of salvation.

When I began to see that **Ishmael embodied our flesh, our unbelief, and us putting our will before God's will**, sending him packing didn't seem so harsh anymore. My heart no longer went out to him.

You see, spirit and flesh, unbelief and faith, human effort and the miraculous, law and grace, they just don't mesh. **They can't abide together peacefully and in the same ruthless way that Ishmael was sent away, we must send away our flesh, our unbelief, and our endeavor to complete our Christian duty checklists to get on God's good side.**

Friends, we are daughters of promise and **we've got to stop feeling for our flesh!**

Galatians 4:31 *So then, believers, we [who are born again—reborn from above—spiritually transformed, renewed, and set apart for His purpose] are not children of a slave woman [the natural], but of the free woman [the supernatural].*

We are free! **We have been given supernatural power over sin. We have authority over our mind, will, and emotions.** We are the sons and daughters to which God has left a rich

inheritance, and it's time we start living in it! **It's time to be ruthless with our old man, our sinful nature, in the same way Sarah was ruthless with Ishmael.**

When your spouse or a close friend hurts you and your flesh wants to soak in that hurt and adopt it as your own, remember you are a daughter of promise. Abandon your flesh and choose to do things God's way. Choose joy and forgiveness.

When you are dealing with exhaustion and your flesh wants to be fed junk food and mindless television, remind yourself that you are a daughter of promise. Instead of sympathizing with your flesh, choose to engage your Spirit by connecting to God through prayer and worship.

When you are tempted to lust after the dude with the abs that don't quit who popped up on your Instagram feed, and your flesh tells you your little fantasy is harmless, don't agree with that lie! That's old man thinking and you are a new creation!

We have been set free not so that we can cave to our flesh whenever we feel like it, but so that we can use our authority to send our fleshly desires heartlessly into the wilderness, far away from the path on which God has set our feet.

Daughters of Promise, it's time for us to fully understand our heritage so that when we are tempted to feel compassion for our flesh, unbelief, and the pull to connect to God through works instead of through grace- we recognize that we have, in our spiritual makeup, the grit to abandon our flesh.

We are not called to make sure our flesh and our spirit live peaceably with one another. We are not called to a life of comfort, temporary gratification or short-lived escapes from the world around us. **We are called to live a life of ruthlessly denying our flesh, so our spirit reigns the roost.**

I want to experience more of the supernatural and less of reruns on Netflix. I want to experience more of the presence of God and less of the same-sounding top 40 songs. I want to experience more of the lasting comfort of God and less of the fleeting comfort of chocolate, caffeine, and long baths. I want to experience more joy and gratitude and less mood swings and complaining. Who's with me?

Whenever we abandon our flesh, our spiritual senses become more elevated. We can taste and see and hear and feel God all around, not because we're working some formula, but because it's part of our inheritance as sons and daughters of promise.

Daily remind yourself that Father Abraham had many sons, and many sons had Father Abraham, and you are one of them. **You're the one who represents the gospel and the freedom that Christ set you free to walk in.**

Don't catch feels for your flesh, be like your spiritual momma, and stand up for your spirit!

CONVERSATION STARTERS

1. Fill Out The Table Together:

ISHMAEL	ISAAC
Born Of:	Born Of:
Conceived by:	Conceived by:
Represents:	Represents:

2. Sarah clearly had some control issues. She did not want to wait on God's timing, so she took matters into her own hands creating a world of drama. Are there any areas of your life that you have a hard time giving God full control over?

3. What is your go to escape? When you are tired, stressed, or overwhelmed where is the first place you turn?

4. What areas of your flesh do you tend to sympathize with the most?

5. Fasting is a great way to show your flesh that it's not in charge. When we deny our flesh and feed our Spirits it always takes us deeper in our walk with God. Take one minute to ask the Holy Spirit what he would like you to fast until the next time your HIS group meets AND what he would like you to do to build up your Spirit.



HIS HEART WORK

Study: Look up scriptures that talk about your flesh. This will help you identify when your flesh is acting up. Then look up scriptures about your born-again spirit.

Act: Update your group with how your fast is going. What is God showing you? Can you tell a difference in your day-to-day as you focus on engaging your Spirit and abandoning your flesh?



PRAYER NEEDS

Write down the prayer requests of your group members, and pray fervently for them! Let your group members know when you are praying for them, if you have any scriptures or encouraging words for them, etc.