



YES, NO & MAYBE

06

1. I am really good at remembering people's names.
2. At least once, I've thought about changing my first name.
3. God wants us to publicly announce His blessings even before we receive them.
4. God waits until the last minute to work miracles so that you can't credit anyone else.
5. I have a name that matches my life's calling.

DIG DEEP

READ: Genesis 17:1-8 (NIV)

1 When Abram was ninety-nine years old, the Lord appeared to him and said, "I am God Almighty; walk before me faithfully and be blameless. 2 Then I will make my covenant between me and you and will greatly increase your numbers."

3 Abram fell facedown, and God said to him, 4 "As for me, this is my covenant with you: You will be the father of many nations. 5 No longer will you be called Abram; your name will be Abraham, for I have made you a father of many nations. 6 I will make you very fruitful; I will make nations of you, and kings will come from you. 7 I will establish my covenant as an everlasting covenant between me and you and your descendants after you for the generations to come, to be your God and the God of your descendants after you. 8 The whole land of Canaan, where you now reside as a foreigner, I will give as an everlasting possession to you and your descendants after you; and I will be their God."

∞ EVERYONE GETS A NEW NAME!:

- Until Gen. 17, God is known by the name, **Elohim** (Creator/Sustainer of the natural world). Now He says, "Call me **El Shaddai** (The Creation Disorderer/Bender of the supernatural world)."

» In your experience, when have you seen God bend the laws of nature? Do they tend to be moments when God wants to **get** something from you, or to **give** something to you?

- **Abram to Abraham:** In the Middle East, as in many areas of the world, the change of a person's name signals a crucial change in the person's life. Nahum Sarna explains, "In the psychology of the ancient Near Eastern world, a name was not merely a convenient means of identification but was intimately bound up with the very essence of being and inextricably intertwined with personality." At age 99, Abram had to tell all of his friends, family and employees to refer to him by an as-of-yet unaccomplished successful title.

» How difficult is it for you to present yourself openly as a completely saved citizen of heaven? What gives you pause? Is it the "walk before me faithfully and be blameless" part in verse 1?

READ: Genesis 17:15-22 (NIV)

15 God also said to Abraham, "As for Sarai your wife, you are no longer to call her Sarai; her name will be Sarah. 16 I will bless her and will surely give you a son by her. I will bless her so that she will be the mother of nations; kings of peoples will come from her."

17 Abraham fell facedown; he laughed and said to himself, "Will a son be born to a man a hundred years old? Will Sarah bear a child at the age of ninety?" 18 And Abraham said to God, "If only Ishmael might live under your blessing!"

How
GOD
LEADS

DIG DEEP...CONTINUED

19 Then God said, "Yes, but your wife Sarah will bear you a son, and you will call him Isaac. I will establish my covenant with him as an everlasting covenant for his descendants after him. 20 And as for Ishmael, I have heard you: I will surely bless him; I will make him fruitful and will greatly increase his numbers. He will be the father of twelve rulers, and I will make him into a great nation. 21 But my covenant I will establish with Isaac, whom Sarah will bear to you by this time next year." 22 When he had finished speaking with Abraham, God went up from him.

∞ **Sarai to Sarah:** Sarai meant "princess," but Sarah was the pronunciation of the word "princess" in the local dialect of Canaan. This is the first time that God reveals that the promised child would be born from her.

« God could have opened Sarah's womb 24 years earlier, at His first encounter with Abram. Why do you think God waited until she was 90? What do you think God is trying to say here?

∞ Abraham obviously had calculated in his mind how Ishmael would accomplish God's promise of creating a great nation. What does it say about God that He would bless our mistakes, instead of destroying them?

∞ The act of renaming someone is a very intimate and meaningful exercise. What other occurrences can we find in Scripture, and what does it consistently say about God?

HINT: 1.) Gen. 32:28 - Jacob to Israel

2.) John 1:42/Matt. 16:18 - Simon to Cephas (pebble) to Peter (big rock)

3.) Rev. 2:17 - You have a new name too!

NOTES

TALK WITH GOD THIS WEEK ABOUT...

1. What name might God have for me and my life purpose?
2. How am I allowing the passing of time to affect my faith?
3. What do I see more clearly about the character of God this week?



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