

### **For Further Study**

(Please use on your own, with a friend, or in your small group.)

Note: except for the last question this week's For Further Study is more of a reflective exercise than a pure Bible study. Pastor Mark feels this is important in light of some of the hopelessness you may be experiencing in your life.

1. Do you feel somewhat hopeless? If so, what are you feeling hopeless about? Spend a few moments really thinking about this. Are you without hope for your job, your family, your relationships, maybe even without hope for the future of the city of Hong Kong?
2. Now think back about times in your life when your hope increased? What made you more hopeful back then?
3. Often Christians can feel hopeless when we do not sincerely and honestly pray to God about what is bothering us. Write a letter to God. Tell Him on paper what is stealing your hope. If you do not want to write it, then say it. Go ahead. Just tell the Lord what upsets you about your life. Do not be shy. He knows and He cares.
4. As you close your prayer ask God: what can I do about this? Write down some practical ideas you have about being a more hopeful person.

Share what you are learning with others and pray for one another. Or write Pastor Mark and he will pray for you ([mark@markaswallow.com](mailto:mark@markaswallow.com)).

5. Read Genesis 11.27-21.8 (it seems long, but reads like a story). As you read, notice what happens between Sarai, Abram, and God concerning a son (Isaac). What insights, thoughts, or ideas do you have after reading this passage? Bring along your notes with you next Sunday.