



LESSON 1

Following God

OPEN IT

1. Describe a time when you had to completely trust someone because you had no idea what was going on.

DAILY DEVOTIONS

Day 1

TODAY'S THEME: EXPLORE IT

Read Genesis 12

2. Why did God call Abram?
3. What did God call Abram to do?
4. What did God promise Abram?
5. How did Abram respond to God's call?
6. What did Abram do to protect himself from the Egyptians? What happened as a result?

Day 2

TODAY'S THEME: GOD'S CALL

Read Genesis 12:1

God's call often requires difficulty. God's call to Abram was not easy for Abram to follow. He was 75 years old, established in his community, and tied in closely with his extended family. God could have said, "I'll be your God and you can stay in Ur. You have contacts here, and we'll use those to further My purpose."

No, God told him to leave his familiar surroundings and his extended family and head off to some unknown destination. God did not even reveal at first where Abram would be going. He didn't show him color brochures of the swimming pools and golf courses in Canaan. There's a hint that he would face hostility: some would curse him (12:3). Travel wasn't easy in those days. There weren't motels and fast food restaurants along the interstate highway. No U-Haul trucks. Abram couldn't call home and let everyone know how life was in the new place. He had to say good-bye once and for all to his country and relatives and set out to follow God.¹

7. **God called Abram to a life he could not yet see for a purpose he didn't understand. What would it take for you to trust God's plan for your life, even if it meant leaving familiar and comfortable places?**

8. **Teddy Roosevelt once said, "Nothing in the world is worth having or worth doing unless it means effort, pain, difficulty.... I have never in my life envied a human being who led an easy life. I have envied a great many people who led difficult lives and led them well." What comforts and familiarities might God call people from today? What makes it so difficult at times to leave them behind and follow God?**

I HAVE A QUESTION! ✍ Write it down so you can ask your leader or your parents!

PRAYER GUIDE ➤ Here are some things you could pray for today:

Lord, help me to cherish You as my greatest treasure. Break down anything that is preventing me from following You wholeheartedly. Amen.

¹ Sermon excerpt by Steven Cole entitled "Great Privilege Great Responsibility" found @ <https://bible.org/seriespage/lesson-25-great-privilege-great-responsibility-genesis-121-3>

Day 3

TODAY'S THEME: WHY DID GOD CHOOSE ABRAM?

Read Genesis 12:1-3

It is important to note that God didn't appear to a group of people and then offer a general invitation to follow. We should also observe that Abram didn't seek out God for a relationship; God approached him. It's doubtful Abram had even heard of the one true Creator God before that point. By an act of pure grace, God dipped His hand into that idolatrous hole to select Abram out of all people. Why this particular man? Did Abram turn from the idols of his ancestors and seek God? Did he make himself worthy of divine mercy? Far from it!

The Lord chose Abram for reasons known only in heaven. We can say for certain that Abram did nothing to earn or deserve God's favor. Nevertheless, the Lord appeared to this ignorant, sinful, superstitious idol worshiper and said, "Leave your native country, your relatives, and your father's family, and go to the land that I will show you. I will make you into a great nation. I will bless you and make you famous, and you will be a blessing to others. I will bless those who bless you and curse those who treat you with contempt. All the families on earth will be blessed through you" (Genesis 12: 1-3).²

9. Why do most people assume that Abram had done something that caused God to choose him? What does this tell us of our view of God's plan for our lives?

10. Despite Abram not having done anything to earn God's favor, God called him to something extremely significant. What significant things has God called us to today?

I HAVE A QUESTION! ✍ Write it down so you can ask your leader or your parents!

PRAYER GUIDE ➤ Here are some things you could pray for today:

Lord, thank You for graciously choosing me as Your child even though I didn't bring anything to this relationship on my own. Give me boldness and strength to live a radical life marked by faith and obedience to what You've called me to. Amen!

² Swindoll, Charles R.. Abraham: One Nomad's Amazing Journey of Faith (Kindle Locations 190-199). Tyndale House Publishers, Inc..

Day 4

TODAY'S THEME: WHAT IS GOD'S PURPOSE IN THIS STORY?

Read Genesis 12:3

Sometimes we have a tendency to forget that the people we meet in the Bible are real people. We read about them on paper and learn about them from a young age and can almost begin to think of them as another one of Aesop's Fables: fictional stories that have a moral at the end of them. We look at people like Abraham, David, Daniel, or Joseph and treat them like they are examples of how we are supposed to live as Christians. Is that the real purpose God gave us all these stories, for us to be like those people? Need I remind you that Abraham in Genesis 12 was a liar, David was an adulterer and murderer, and so on. Yes, there are components of these people we should aspire to emulate, but that isn't the primary purpose for being introduced to them.

We see in the story of Abram, right here in Genesis 12, that God was calling him for a purpose: that in him, all the families of the earth shall be blessed. God was establishing who His people were going to be, from whom He would bring the Savior of all mankind— Jesus Christ! The story of Abram isn't there for us to just be like him, but to understand God's story of redemption and see how God uses real, flawed people like Abram to bring about His will. We see in Genesis 12 that God called Abram to be part of something bigger than himself. It was a calling that would change the course of human history!

11. Why is it so easy to think of Bible stories as fictional tales instead of real events made up of real people in real history? What can we miss out on when we think of them this way?

12. How does realizing their place in the history of God's plan of redemption change the way you read Bible stories like the story of Abram?

I HAVE A QUESTION! ✍ Write it down so you can ask your leader or your parents!

PRAYER GUIDE ➤ Here are some things you could pray for today:

Thank you for using real people to carry out Your will. It's encouraging to know that you've used really messed up people in the past, and that gives me confidence that You can even use me to do great things for Your kingdom! Amen.

Day 5

TODAY'S THEME: ABRAM'S RESPONSE TO GOD'S CALL

Read Genesis 12:4-6

God called Abram to do some pretty gutsy things. It would have been easy for Abram to come up with a list of 1,000 excuses to not follow God on this epic journey. But that wasn't Abram's response. While I'm sure it wasn't easy for Abram to leave everything he loved and was used to, he seemingly did so without complaining. He did exactly what God had asked him to do. He grabbed all his stuff and his family and got on the road. If he hadn't taken the "risk" and followed God's call, Abram would have missed out on many blessings from God. It's one of those experiences I'm sure had its challenges along the way, but that he didn't for a minute regret taking.

We too are given great opportunities to follow God's will in our lives. Sometimes that might mean taking a huge risk or stepping way outside our comfort zones, but there is a great deal of blessing in following God. Maybe God's calling you to go on a mission trip this year or serve in a regular ministry of your church. Maybe God's call on your life might mean you're going to lose some friends because they aren't going the same direction as God's calling you to go. Are you willing to make the hard decisions to follow God's will in your own life, even if it means that you're just part of a bigger picture? You may never see or experience the bigger picture of God's plan for your life, but there is a great blessing in knowing that you were obedient to God's call to play your part in the bigger picture of His great plan.

13. What sort of things might you struggle with if God called you to them? What sort of thing would make following God's will difficult for you?

14. What would you do if you felt God calling you to something completely uncomfortable?

I HAVE A QUESTION! ✍ Write it down so you can ask your leader or your parents!

PRAYER GUIDE ➤ Here is something you could pray for today:

Lord, I know that You might call me to some difficult things in my life. I know that there are going to be times that I don't want to follow You any further. I ask that you would give me the strength to follow You even when it's hard and I don't see the good in it. Amen.

Day 6

TODAY'S THEME: FAMINE STRIKES. NOW WHAT?

Read Genesis 12:10-20

I do not know if Abram should have gone to Egypt or not. The way this part of the story reads, it sounds to me like it was a bad decision on Abram's part to go to Egypt. "Nowhere is Abram directly condemned for his decision to go down to Egypt, but later developments make it clear that his actions did not stem from faith. Abram did not consult God, but acted independently. No altars were built in Egypt to our knowledge, nor are we told that Abram ever called on the name of the Lord there. His request of Sarai [later in the passage] also reflects his spiritual condition. It would thus be safe to say that Abram's faith failed in the face of that famine."

So we can't be certain, but it seems that God wanted Abram to stay in Canaan—even with a famine. Where God guides, He provides. It was not God's intention for Abram to leave Canaan and go to Egypt. Now a time of testing had come upon Abram. Not a time of plenty, but a time of wanting. A time of famine. Abram faced a choice. Either he could stay in the land that God had called him to, and trust in God to provide, or he could leave the land and trust in man, specifically the Egyptians, to provide.

Abram did what most of us do in times of trouble. Abram trusted in man. Abram stopped believing in God's promises, and left for Egypt. Through this whole chapter, we read of God speaking to Abram to tell him where to go. We read of God appearing to Abram. We read of Abram building altars and calling on the name of the Lord. We read none of those things here. In a time of trial, Abram ignored the promises of God, and turned to Egypt for help.³

15. When trouble hits, why is sometimes easier to leave faith behind and trust in ourselves to get us through?

16. Read James 1:2-4 and Romans 5:3-5. What do these verses have to say about our attitude towards suffering and trials? What good can come from trials in our lives? How have you seen God use trials in your life to stretch your faith?

I HAVE A QUESTION! ✍ Write it down so you can ask your leader or your parents!

PRAYER GUIDE ➤ Here is something you could pray for today:

Lord, give me the faith to follow You through any trial that comes my way. Amen

Sermon Excerpt entitled "Faith and Failure" by Jeremy Myers found @ https://redeeminggod.com/sermons/genesis/genesis_12/

Note: This study guide was written by Pastors Tim Badal, Mario Arindaeng, and Jeremy Anderson, Village Bible Church. www.villagebible.church