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GENESIS 12:1-5; 13:11-18

A NEW LAND



THIS WEEK'S **focus**

There's a kids' song you may have learned in church called "Father Abraham." It has hand motions and a line that says, "Many sons had Father Abraham/I am one of them/And so are you." What in the world does this mean? Today's Scripture will introduce us to this "Father Abraham," who for now is known as "Abram," and who for now is an old guy without any kids at all. God called Abram to step away from all that was familiar into a new land, promising to make Abram into a great nation with a great name, to bless him and to turn his family into a blessing for the whole world. And so, in faith, Abram obeyed. Well, sort of. Fortunately, God is faithful, even when people are not.



CENTRAL **truth**

God is faithful, even when people are not.



EXPLORE

scripture

GENESIS 12:1-5; 13:11-18

GENESIS 12:1-5

1 The LORD said to Abram: Go from your land, your relatives, and your father's house to the land that I will show you. **2** I will make you into a great nation, I will bless you, I will make your name great, and you will be a blessing. **3** I will bless those who bless you, I will curse anyone who treats you with contempt, and all the peoples on earth will be blessed through you. **4** So Abram went,

as the LORD had told him, and Lot went with him. Abram was seventy-five years old when he left Haran. **5** He took his wife, Sarai, his nephew Lot, all the possessions they had accumulated, and the people they had acquired in Haran, and they set out for the land of Canaan. When they came to the land of Canaan . . .

GENESIS 13:11-13

11 So Lot chose the entire plain of the Jordan for himself. Then Lot journeyed eastward, and they separated from each other. **12** Abram lived in the land of Canaan,

but Lot lived in the cities on the plain and set up his tent near Sodom. **13** (Now the men of Sodom were evil, sinning immensely against the LORD.)

GENESIS 13:14-18

14 After Lot had separated from him, the LORD said to Abram, "Look from the place where you are. Look north and south, east and west, **15** for I will give you and your offspring forever all the land that you see. **16** I will make your offspring like the dust of the earth, so that if anyone could count the

dust of the earth, then your offspring could be counted. **17** Get up and walk around the land, through its length and width, for I will give it to you." **18** So Abram moved his tent and went to live near the oaks of Mamre at Hebron, where he built an altar to the LORD.

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GENESIS 12:1-5; 13:11-18

CONVERSATION

questions

▶ READ GENESIS 12:1-5.

.01 What do you already know about Abraham (if anything)?

.02 How is God's call to Abram similar to what the people of Babylon said in 11:3-4? How is this time different?

.03 Why do you think God told Abram to go to Canaan? Why does God sometimes call us to follow Him to unknown places?



CONTEXT

The narrative of the Tower of Babylon (or the Tower of Babel) in Genesis 11 sets us up to understand the faith at work within Abram in Genesis 12. Think about it: The tower-builders were seeking to make their own names great; God promised Abram that He would make Abram's name great. The tower-builders were doing what God said not to do—they were gathering, not scattering—while Abram was willing to leave all that was familiar in order to do what God said to do. And the tower-builders were working out of distrust in God to keep His promise, while Abram trusted God's promise to him and was willing to shape his whole life around it.

▶ READ GENESIS 13:11-13.

.04 Look back at Genesis 12:1. Do you think Abram was obeying God fully when he brought Lot with him? Why do you think he did this?

.05 What are some places or situations where it's difficult for us to resist the temptation to sin? How can we guard against this temptation?

▶ READ GENESIS 13:14-18.

.06 God repeats His promises a lot in the Bible. Why do you think He does this?

.07 Abram was at least seventy-five years old and had no children yet. How do you think he reacted to God's promises? How would you have reacted?

.08 What can we learn about Abram's faith by his response in verse 18?

Q **GIVE AN ANSWER**

Was Abram a superhuman example of faith? Well, no. Abram is certainly a hero of the faith (see Heb. 11, which lists him and many others as examples of faith that we all can look up to and emulate). But Abram also reminds us of humanity's need for a Savior. God had instructed Abram to leave his relatives, so bringing his nephew Lot with him may have been an act of disobedience. Abram's obedience was also delayed when, during the journey, the land experienced a famine—a widespread food shortage. Abram decided to take a detour to Egypt instead of to the land where God had commanded him to go. Selfishly, Abram made decisions there to protect himself rather than his wife Sarai. But God intervened on their behalf, sending Abram and Sarai back on the road to the place where He had called them (see Gen. 12:10-20). Abram reminds us that on our own, even our best can't cut it. Fortunately, we never need to do it on our own. God sent us Jesus.



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GENESIS 12:1-5; 13:11-18

NOW what?



CENTRAL truth

God is faithful, even when people are not.

.09 Why do we sometimes obey God slowly or only partially? How can we encourage one another in our obedience?

.10 What are some ways we can be encouraged by Abram's examples—and failures—of faith?

.11 What are some ways that we “set up our tents” near temptation, like Lot did?

.12 Which of God's promises do you need reminders of?

DAILY devotions

MEMORIZE HEBREWS 11:8

7 ARROWS FOR BIBLE READING



What does this passage say?



What does this passage tell us about God?



What did this passage mean to its original audience?



How does this passage change the way I relate to people?



What does this passage tell us about humans?



How does this passage prompt me to pray?



What does this passage demand of me?

day 1

GENESIS 12:1-4

DWELL

It's no small thing to leave everything that's familiar in order to follow God's call! This requires great faith exhibited over lots of little actions: packing up, planning departure, telling friends, and so on. Abram probably had lots of opportunities to get cold feet, but over and over again, he trusted God. He didn't know where he was going, but he knew who he was following!

➔ Read Hebrews 11:8-10. How might God be calling you to step out in faith?

↪ How does Abram's faith inspire you to ask God to increase your faith?

MEMORIZE

Using colored pencils or pens, creatively write out Hebrews 11:8 on a piece of paper. Then, "take a picture" of it with your mind and try to say the verse to yourself a few times without looking.

PRAY

Ask God to grow your faith in Him by helping you better understand His faithfulness.

day 2

GENESIS 12:5-9

DWELL

As Abram passed through Shechem, God reiterated His promise, telling Abram that He would give this very land to Abram's children. In time, Abram's grandson Jacob built an altar to worship God at this very site. God changed Jacob's name to "Israel," and God formed a whole nation from him. Generations later, Jesus stood at this very spot and told a woman that He had living water (see Gen. 33:20; 35:9; John 4:10).

↑ How does the location Shechem demonstrate God's faithfulness?

→ How does the history of this location motivate you to worship?

MEMORIZE

Write out Hebrews 11:8 on a piece of paper or note card, and place it next to your bed. Make it a goal to say it five times before you go to bed and five times when you wake up.

PRAY

Thank God for His faithfulness! Praise Him that in His divine knowledge, the history of this location was in His mind before it all ever happened.

day 3

GENESIS 12:10-20

DWELL

To protect himself from the men of Egypt, Abram asked his wife Sarai to pretend to be his sister, leaving her vulnerable to these men. Even though Abram would not protect Sarai, God protected her. This part of Abram's life is a terrible reminder of sin's power—and a comforting reminder that God hates sin and often steps in to limit its power. God is a God of justice, who endured the punishment for sin Himself on the cross so that all who look to Him can be spared. And one day, He will punish those who fail to repent.

↻ What does this passage expose about Abram's faith in God?

↓ How does this passage reveal humanity's need for God?

MEMORIZE

Invent motions that match the words to Hebrews 11:8, and practice them while saying the words out loud a few times. It probably feels a little weird, but when something is weird, it helps us remember!

PRAY

Ask God to increase your faith and reveal places in your life where you are not trusting Him.

day 4

GENESIS 13:1-13

DWELL

Throughout Genesis, we've seen warning after warning against the danger of sin, and this passage contains yet another warning. Sodom was full of people who were infamous for the way they disobeyed God. Their actions were dangerous, pulling people away from goodness and thriving and leading them toward death. We readers are supposed to notice that Lot chose something that seemed beautiful to him but was in proximity to danger.

← Verse 10 offers a spoiler alert, showing that the original audience knew of Sodom's fate. What do you think was going through their minds as they heard Lot's choice?

↔ How can Lot's choice to "set up his tent" near danger help you encourage friends to make wise choices?

MEMORIZE

Write down the first letter of each word of Hebrews 11:8 on a note card. At least five times today, see if you can say the verse just by looking at the letters.

PRAY

Ask God to help you develop a keen eye for the dangers of sin. Ask Him to increase your faith that His way is the life-giving way.

day 5

GENESIS 13:14-18

DWELL

Abram was still childless and often struggled to follow God in faith. Perhaps this is why God graciously repeated His promise to Abram, this time emphasizing the family that He would provide. To help Abram believe, God invited Abram to look at the land of promise and to walk around it. Whenever Abram doubted, He could remember what God said, remember what God showed him, and remember where God led him.

↻ List all the gifts that God offered Abram in this passage.

↓ Why do you think God gave Abram more help to believe His promise?

MEMORIZE

Tell a friend or family member that your memory verse this week is Hebrews 11:8, and explain what it means. Then, invite that person to randomly quiz you at some point today to see if you can remember the verse.

PRAY

Praise God for His generosity toward the faithless! When we struggle to believe, He helps us. Ask Him to help you believe.