

Abraham: Life of Faith

Week 1 – Genesis 12

Leaders' Notes

The purpose of a small group is to delve deeper into the Bible, draw closer to God and one another. Don't feel you need to ask every question or even answer them in the exact order they are written. These study questions should be your servant, not your master. ☺ (Apologies to the engineers and accountants who may find this approach difficult).

For New Groups

This is especially true if this is your first time meeting, or if you have a number of new members. Make sure you make time to get to know one another, perhaps spend a little more time on the ice breaker question or another like it.

It is good to ask individuals for an answer to a question, rather than just throw every question out to the group. Some people feel far more comfortable than others speaking when uninvited. By asking questions of individuals, it helps keep everyone involved.

Ice Breaker Question:

Think of a time in your life when you had to leave something familiar (a city/state, a home, a school, a job, a place or routine). What was most memorable/most difficult about that time in your life?

Going Deeper from Sunday

What did you find the most challenging, or helpful, or troubling or confusing from last week's sermon?

Sermon Synopsis

God called Abram and made him the promise we know as the Abrahamic Covenant (12:1-3). When a famine strikes the land, Abram must travel to Egypt (Gen 12:10). Out of fear that Pharaoh will kill him and take his beautiful wife Sarai, he decides to pretend that she is his sister. Pharaoh does take her as a wife, and treats Abram well, giving him many gifts and servants. But God intervenes and inflicts diseases on Pharaoh (12:17). When Pharaoh found out what had happened, he sends Abram and Sarai away with all the riches he had acquired there (12:16, 20). Abraham by going to Egypt put in jeopardy God's promise to make him a people and give him a land, but God intervened so the promise was maintained.

Application: Sometimes circumstances raise fears in our mind that cause us to lose sight of God's promises. We often act on our fears, rather than living by faith. The good news is that even when we act in fear rather than in faith, God keeps his promises.

Question for Reflection

Imagine the fears Abram had when he went into Egypt that led him to the decision to lie about Sarai to Pharaoh. Some people are paralyzed by decisions, fearful of making the wrong one. Others charge ahead without ever committing their steps (and plans) to God. How do you usually respond to decision-making under pressure?

Mining the Scriptures

The Apostle Peter is another example in Scripture of someone who received and responded to promises and a calling from God.

Read Matthew 4:18-19 and Luke 22:54-62.

1. Compare and contrast Peter's calling to Abram's calling (12:1-3)
2. What led Peter to deny Jesus? What was he afraid of? How does that compare to Abram?
3. Read John 21:15-17. How did God's restoration of Peter's calling compare with his restoration of Abraham's calling in bringing him back out of Egypt?
4. How could a true understanding of God's faithfulness have helped Abram and Peter to have responded differently?

Application questions

What things do you fear that affect your ability to embrace God's promises? (Examples: fear of what co-workers think of you might keep you from sharing the gospel with them; fear of not being able to make ends meet might tempt you to fudge on your income tax; fear of losing a relationship might lead you to compromising your values, etc.)

Close in prayer

Spend some time praying for each other to be faithful and trusting of God in the midst of their challenging circumstances?