A CALL | GOD’S GOOD PURPOSE

WEEK 7: GENESIS 12

ANCHOR PASSAGE.

Consider using this passage as the underpinning for your group’s conversation. Encourage your group to read and pray through this Scripture passage prior to your group meeting and in the days following.

**Genesis 12:1-9**

**1** Now the Lord said to Abram, “Go from your country and your kindred and your father's house to the land that I will show you. **2**And I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing. **3**I will bless those who bless you, and him who dishonors you I will curse, and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.”

**4**So Abram went, as the Lord had told him, and Lot went with him. Abram was seventy-five years old when he departed from Haran. **5**And Abram took Sarai his wife, and Lot his brother's son, and all their possessions that they had gathered, and the people that they had acquired in Haran, and they set out to go to the land of Canaan. When they came to the land of Canaan, **6**Abram passed through the land to the place at Shechem, to the oak of Moreh. At that time the Canaanites were in the land. **7**Then the Lord appeared to Abram and said, “To your offspring I will give this land.” So he built there an altar to the Lord, who had appeared to him. **8**From there he moved to the hill country on the east of Bethel and pitched his tent, with Bethel on the west and Ai on the east. And there he built an altar to the Lord and called upon the name of the Lord. **9**And Abram journeyed on, still going toward the Negeb.

**Helpful Passages:**

* Romans 1:17
* Hebrews 11:8-10

THEMES.

The following themes trace the high-level movement of this week’s Scripture passage. They may help you begin to frame the direction of your group’s conversation.

1. It is God who calls and provides for the call. (Gen. 12:1)
2. God gives unconditional favor to those He calls. (Gen. 12:2-3)
3. A life of faith is a life of obedience. (Gen. 12:4; Heb. 11:8-10)
4. A faithful life is marked by worship. (Gen. 12:7-8)

QUESTIONS.

Feel free use any, all, or none of these questions as you facilitate your group. Their purpose is to be an aid to you as you consider how to teach the implications of the week’s Scriptures.

1. Read Gen. 12:1. What does the Lord tell Abram to do? Where does the Lord tell him to go?
2. What are some of the obvious things that faith demands as illustrated in verse 1?

John Calvin paraphrased this call in this way: “I command thee to go forth with closed eyes,… until, having renounced thy country, thou shalt have given thyself wholly to me.”[[1]](#footnote-1)

1. Read Gen. 12:2-3. What are the promises God makes to Abram and why did He make them?
2. Look back at Gen. 11:29-30. Why would these promises be particularly difficult to believe?
3. Notice v. 2 where the Lord tells Abram that He will “make your name great.” Now compare that to Gen. 11:4. What stands out to you and why?
4. In v. 6, two specific places are mentioned. The first is *Shechem*, an ancient city in the heart of Canaan. The second specific detail regarding place is *the oak of Moreh*. The oak is thought to have been a place of ancient pagan worship. Bruce Waltke states that, “Pagans worshiped fertility deities under such trees. With its lofty top in the heavens, it could be considered an axis between heaven and earth and a place for revelation.”[[2]](#footnote-2)

With this in mind, read v. 7. What is the subversive and redemptive significance of the Lord meeting Abram here with a promise and Abram responding by building an altar?
5. Abram is called to believe a promise that contradicts his current reality. When in your life have you been called to trust God even as your reality seems to contradict His promises? (Gen. 12:6)

The last line of v. 6 says, “At that time the Canaanites were in the land.” It should not be overlooked that the promise is given in the midst of the opposition.[[3]](#footnote-3)

1. Verse 7 says, “Then the Lord appeared to Abram…” Up until this point, Abram had heard the voice of the Lord, but now Abram is experiencing the Lord in more profound ways. Notice that it wasn’t until Abram was in Canaan that the Lord appeared to him. What observations can be considered by that fact?
2. Further in v. 7, it says that Abram built an altar. He also built altars in Bethel (12;8), Hebron (13:18), and Mount Moriah (22:9). Abram’s life left behind a trail of altars, commemorations of praise, thanksgiving, worship, and honor of God.[[4]](#footnote-4) If you were to commemorate your own faith journey, what metaphorical “altars” can you note?
3. What does it look like for you to follow the Lord’s calling on your life or what promises are you clinging to even if you may not see the final outcome?

In verse 9 it says that Abram journeyed on. He saw the whole land. Abram believed God’s promise and surveyed with hope. God would fulfill his promise, but Abram would not live to see it come to fruition.

PRAY.

Consider spending time voicing *prayers of praise* as a group. Allow your discussion of Gen. 12 to frame the praises.

* Specifically name God’s blessings in your lives.
* Tell stories of the “altars” in your faith journeys.
* Share stories of God’s faithfulness toward you.
* If you’re willing, share some things that you are still trusting God for.
1. Bruce K. Waltke, *Genesis: A Commentary*. (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2001), ???. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Bruce K. Waltke, *Genesis: A Commentary*. (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2001), 207. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. R. Kent Hughes, *Genesis: Beginning and Blessing*, Preaching the Word Commentary Series. (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2012), 186. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Ibid., 187. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)