

LEADER GUIDE

STUDY 2 WALKING IN CONFIDENCE

INTRODUCTION

We live in a world of uncertainty. We often second-guess ourselves. The plans we lay out for ourselves are often upended by outside events, and the uncertainty can creep in. What do I do now?

The patriarch Abraham lived a life that seemed to continually be upended, and in each case, he had to choose whether or not he would trust God and walk

by faith. Many times Abraham trusted God, but he also had moments when he didn't trust. The example of Abraham encourages us to learn to trust and walk by faith. It's not a blind faith, though; we can walk in confidence because of the One we're trusting in.

Writer Bio

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BEFORE YOU TEACH

Research Abram's History

To understand the depth of faith Abram displayed, you will need to know his background and what is actually required to answer God's call. This information is found in the leader commentary (p. 132-133). You can also refer to a Bible dictionary or commentary.

A Great Start

This first session sets the tone for the entire unit. Provide a brief summary about this six-session unit to create interest. Prayerfully and carefully study the content. Approach the session with a learner attitude; seeking new insights, anticipating questions and concerns your learners may have about the session.

LOOK BACK

Remind learners that last week's session was about being sure of our salvation when we trust in Jesus as our Lord and Savior. Our life in Christ is built on faith in the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. It is the only way to salvation and having a relationship with God. Ask learners to share how they applied "Live It" (p. 47) this week.

TEACHING PLAN

INTRODUCTION

Summarize the unit overview to set the context of this session. Use an app that assists you with creating interactive presentations. For example, mentimeter.com allows you to add questions, create polls, and give quizzes all in real time to create fun and engaging presentations. These tools can be used if you are teaching in-person or virtually.

Using an interactive presentation app, poll your students by asking them to log onto the app and enter on their smart phones "1" if they fully trust

God; enter "2" if they trust God but have some uncertainty; and enter "3" if they are struggling to trust God. Note: Share with your learners that the polls only show the choices made, not the person making the choice. Share the totals from the poll.

SAY: "No matter how you answered the poll, our confidence must be grounded in our trust in God."

TRANSITION: Read **The Point: "Confidence comes from trusting God"** and **The Question: "Why should our trust in God be with confidence?"** to transition into this session.

PACK ITEM: Focus attention on **Pack Item 6: "Walking in Confidence"** poster to provide an overview of the six sessions in this study.

DIG INTO THE TEXT

God Gives Us a Purpose

// Genesis 12:1-3

READ: Invite a learner to read Genesis 12:1- 3. Then read the paragraph that begins "The confidence we ..." (p. 54) to further introduce the session.

ASK: "If you were in Abram's position, which of these instructions would be most difficult? Why?"

SAY: "Six times God says, 'I will' to Abram signifying that these promises would come from Him and they would be fulfilled."

GUIDE: Use the first two paragraphs under this heading (p. 54) to discuss the effects of God's promise to Abram on all of mankind. Also use the commentary (p. 132) to describe Abram's background leading up to his call from God. Lead learners to discuss the purpose God had for Abram.

READ: Invite a learner to read the paragraph that begins, "We don't know ..." (p. 55) to discuss Abram's initial confidence in God.

ASK: "Have you ever sensed God leading you to do something that seemed impossible? How did you respond?"

THE POINT: CONFIDENCE COMES FROM TRUSTING GOD.

EXPLAIN: Use the paragraph that begins “The more we ...” (p. 55) to discuss how we can also have confidence in God.

DID YOU KNOW?: Invite a learner to read “Did You Know?” (p. 57) to discuss how George Washington Bush confidently pressed to uncharted territory and became the first African-American landowner in Washington. Ask the question that follows this feature.

God Expects Our Obedience

// Genesis 12:4-6

ASK: “When using a GPS for directions, do you trust that you are receiving the right instructions?” Discuss some of the different experiences people have had using a GPS.

READ: Invite a learner to read Genesis 12:4-6.

PACK ITEM: Use the commentary (p. 133) and **Pack Item 7: “The Journey of Abraham”** poster to set the background for Abram’s journey.

GUIDE: Explain the depth of Abram’s obedience based on the commentary (p. 133). Describe the economic and cultural implications of Abram’s decision to obey God.

ASK: Abram heard God’s call and obeyed. “What can hinder believers from hearing God’s direction clearly?”

READ: Invite a learner to read the paragraph that begins “God told Abram ...” (p. 55) to explain that Abram’s decision to make a bold move in response to God’s call had a significant impact on his family.

ASK: “Have you ever had to consider the impact on your family in response to God’s calling? What are some things you would consider that may influence your obedience?”

EXPLAIN: Remind learners that Abram’s moving forward in verses 5-6 was a display of his faith. Read the paragraph that begins “Thankfully, God does not ...” (p. 56).

OBJECT LESSON: Use the “Object Lesson” (p. 132) to help learners understand the essentials of trusting God.

God Blesses Our Obedience

// Genesis 12:7-8

READ: Invite a learner to read Genesis 12:7-8.

DISCUSS: Using the commentary (p. 133) to explain what an altar is and Abram’s purpose for building it. Emphasize how God reaffirmed his promise to Abram. This affirmation caused Abram to respond in worship.

DIGGING DEEPER: Reread Genesis 12:6-7 and invite a learner to read “Digging Deeper” (p. 55) to discuss Shechem and identify where the altar was built. (Also refer to the commentary for verse 6 (p. 133.) Discuss the question that follows this feature.

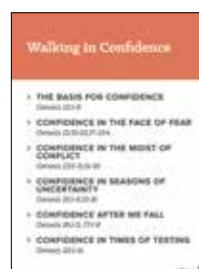
SAY: “Once Abram arrived in Shechem; God reminded him of His promise. Abram didn’t know the details of the promise, but it was enough to assure him that the land would be his.”

ASK: “Think of a time when you cooperated with God through obedience. How were you blessed through this experience?”

GUIDE: Read the paragraph that begins “When the LORD appeared ...” (p. 57) to discuss Abram’s response to God’s blessings. Give each learner an index card and invite them to write a prayer of thanksgiving to God for all of His promises fulfilled and yet to come.

SAY: “Genesis 12:1-8 are filled with hope and anticipation based on the promises and ability of God. These promises look forward to when God will bring about fulfillment in Jesus Christ.”

ASK: “What can help you have the type of confidence Abram had in God?”



PACK ITEM 6



PACK ITEM 7

CLOSE THE SESSION

Remind learners that God called Abram and gave him great and precious promises. Abram responded in faith. Explain that this week's "Live It" (p. 57) focuses on how we should respond in faith to God's faithfulness so that our confidence is strengthened. Challenge learners to spend more time in worship for God's faithfulness.

PRAY: Invite learners to participate in prayer to God by sharing one thing for which they are grateful. Close with a prayer of thanksgiving.

OBJECT LESSON

Position a chair in front of your class so that all learners can see it.

ASK: "When you sit in a chair, do you have thoughts of whether the chair will hold you up?" Point out that unless the chair looks damaged more than likely we don't give any thought to sitting in a chair. We trust that it will hold us. Demonstrate by sitting in the chair.

EXPLAIN: Point out that Abram's response to God's call with obedience was like sitting in a chair. He didn't know any details. He didn't know if he would encounter trouble on the way. He didn't even know where he was to go. God said leave and Abram did exactly that. Challenge learners to respond confidently to God's leading just as Abram did.

SAY: "This week when you are about to sit in a chair, let it remind you of the kind of faith God desires of us."



COMMENTARY

GENESIS 12:1-3

Verse 1. Notice the suddenness of God's call on Abram. God called Abram to full obedience, and God calls believers today to entirely give ourselves to Christ and follow Him wherever He leads. Nevertheless, Abram's faith was incredible. Believers today have great examples of faithful servants of God both within Scripture and outside of Scripture. The writer of Hebrews declared, "we also have such a large cloud of witnesses surrounding us" and calls us to "run with endurance the race that lies before us" (Heb. 12:1). But what great examples of faith existed before Abram? It took great faith for Abram to fully surrender to God's call to leave his pagan culture and his family to travel to the land God would show him.

Verse 2. God promised to bless Abram with what some call the sevenfold blessing. The first four aspects of this blessing are in verse two. First, God intended to make Abram "into a great nation," or people. Second, God purposed to bless him, meaning Abram would be empowered to be successful and prosperous, to have the ability to produce numerous offspring, and to enjoy a long life. God would bless Abram with both material and spiritual blessings.

The third promise was to make the name of Abram great. The promise was not to make Abram's name great among men so that he might become proud; instead, Abram's name became great because he humbled himself before God, and others would see God's blessing on his life. The fourth promise was that Abram himself would be a blessing. God's desire is for those who follow Him to become a blessing to others. That was certainly true for Abram.

Verse 3. The last three parts of the sevenfold promise were, first, God would bless those who bless Abram. Second, God would curse anyone who treated Abram with contempt. And third, God would use Abram to bless all the peoples

on earth. God desires to bless all people, and He is gracious to all; however, it is those who seek God and love Him, like Abram, who are greatly blessed. Those who turn away from God and treat Abram and his descendants with contempt are under God's judgment.

The promise of blessing in Hebrew is in the plural. "I will bless *those* who bless you" (emphasis added). But the promise to curse is in the singular. "I will curse *anyone* who treats you with contempt" (emphasis added). People may viciously curse others, but God's curse is judicial, not arbitrarily vindictive. God never does anything unjust.

God promised that through Abram, "all the peoples on earth will be blessed." It would be through the Lord Jesus Christ that this promise would find its ultimate fulfillment (Gal. 3:8,16).

GENESIS 12:4-6

Verse 4. At the age of seventy-five, Abram left Haran. It is not a person's age that determines usefulness to God; it is his or her availability and willingness to obey God that really matters. Abram left Haran with Lot. Lot's father, who was also named Haran, had died in the city of Ur (Gen. 11:28). Abram likely served as a father figure to Lot.

Abram's obedience was essential. God told him to go, and he obeyed. Abram was confident of God's calling on his life, and he responded without hesitation. True faith is exhibited in obedience to God's will.

Verse 5. Abram "took his wife, Sarai," and it's good that he did. His precious wife Sarai was a key to the fulfillment of God's promises. Abram also took all his "possessions." God did not tell Abram to leave his belongings because it was essential he have them. Without resources, Abram would have had to serve others in order to provide what he and his family needed. His possessions and his servants were a blessing that allowed him to focus on the mission God had for him.

Abram also took "the people they had acquired in Haran." Some of these people were likely slaves

and servants, but there is no indication Abram mistreated his slaves. Those Abram had acquired may have considered it a blessing to serve a kind and gracious man.

Verse 6. Abram stopped at "the site of Shechem." Shechem would become a significant city in Israel's history. It was the first capital of the Northern Kingdom, and even after Samaria became the capital, Shechem retained religious significance. "The oak of Moreh" might have been a tree considered sacred and used by Canaanite diviners. That could be why the verse mentions that "the Canaanites were in the land."

GENESIS 12:7-8

Verse 7. God had made great promises to Abram, and now God explained in part how He would keep some of those promises and why God had led Abram to this land. God would give the land to Abram's descendants. Many of Abraham's physical descendants would inherit the land when Joshua led Israel to conquer Canaan more than four hundred years later.

What was the response of Abram to God's promise that his descendants would receive the land of Canaan? Immediately, "he built an altar there to the LORD who had appeared to him." An altar was an elevated platform where sacrifices were offered to God. Incense was also burned on an altar (Ex. 30:1). These sacrifices were a means of worship and way to draw close to God.

Verse 8. The trip from Haran to Shechem was about 400-500 miles, but it was only about twenty miles from Shechem "to the hill country east of Bethel." Abram moved and lived where he could. At Bethel, Abram "built an altar to the LORD." Wherever God led Abram, he would set up an altar to worship the Lord. To call "on the name of the LORD" means to address Him by name and to cry out to Him. The obstacles in the life of Abram would lead him to a greater understanding of his continual need for God's presence and guidance. Abram's confidence to handle whatever life threw at him came from trusting God.