Life Group Guide: The Altar Call

Based on a Sermon by Pastor Dave

Overview

In this message, Pastor Dave walked through the story of Abram, tracing his lineage, his call, and his habit of building altars wherever God met him. The central challenge to each of us is this: are we willing to say yes to God before we know the destination, and are we building altars in both the mountaintop moments and the ordinary, mundane ones?

Key Takeaways

- **Where you come from does not define where God is taking you.** Abram came from a lineage of idol worshipers, yet God chose him and called him forward. Your past, your family history, and your generational struggles do not have the final word.
- **God gives the assignment before the address.** Abram was told to go before he knew where he was going. Faith often requires movement before clarity.
- **All God needs is your yes.** You do not need to be fully qualified, fully prepared, or fully comfortable. Obedience opens the door.
- **An altar is a place of sacrifice and a place of memory.** In Hebrew, the word for altar carries the meaning of a place of slaughter, where something dies. Altars mark where God showed up so that we and the next generation do not forget.
- **Ordinary moments can become holy ground.** Not every altar is built in a dramatic encounter. Some of the most significant altars are built in the normal, repetitive rhythms of daily life.
- **We are not where we used to be, and we are not where we are going to be yet.** Gratitude and forward faith are not opposites. We can hold both at the same time.

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Discussion Questions

Opening Question

Go around the group and share one thing you are genuinely grateful for this season, something small or something large.

Section 1: Where You Come From

1. Abram's father Terah was headed toward Canaan but stopped and settled in Haran. Pastor Dave said, "Terah moved his family toward the promise, but Abram stepped into the promise." What is the difference between moving toward something and actually stepping into it? Where do you see that tension in your own life?
2. Joshua 24:2 tells us that Abram's ancestors, including his father, worshiped other gods. Yet God still called Abram. How does this challenge or encourage you when you think about your own background or family history?
3. Pastor Dave said that a godly family tree does not guarantee a relationship with God. On the other hand, an ungodly family tree does not disqualify you either. How have you seen this truth play out in your life or in someone you know?

Section 2: The Call and the Yes

4. In Genesis 12:1-3, God told Abram to leave his country, his relatives, and his father's family and go to a land God would show him. He gave the assignment before the address. Has God ever asked you to move forward without giving you the full picture first? What was that like?
5. Pastor Dave shared that one of his first significant yeses was agreeing to help with a church event without fully knowing what he was signing up for, and that simple yes eventually led to life groups, leadership training, and ministry. Can you think of a time when a small yes opened a much larger door in your life?
6. What is something you sense God may be calling you to say yes to in this next season, even if it feels uncomfortable or unclear?

Section 3: Building the Altar

7. When Abram arrived in Canaan, the first thing he built was not a house but an altar. He did not own the land. He did not yet have a son. He simply worshiped. What does it look like practically to worship and trust God before you see the promise fulfilled?
8. Pastor Dave described an altar as a marker, a place where the next generation knows where God came through. Do you have any personal altar moments, specific times and places where God clearly showed up in your life? Share one with the group if you are comfortable.
9. Pastor Dave made the point that altars are not only built in dramatic moments. He said, "Ordinary places become holy ground." How do you intentionally create altar moments in the routine of everyday life, in your home, your commute, your work, your relationships?

Section 4: Faithful in the Hard Moments

10. Pastor Dave was vulnerable about the last six years of his life, including his daughter's hospitalization and his wife's ongoing health challenges. He said, "The last six years of my life have been the most trying that they have ever been. But my relationship with Jesus Christ is stronger than it ever has been before." How has a difficult season in your own life deepened your faith, even if you would not have chosen it?
11. It is easy to build an altar when things are going well. It is harder to worship when things are painful or when nothing seems to be changing. What helps you stay faithful and keep building altars when you are in a season where God feels quiet?
12. Pastor Dave asked: "In 2027, what needs to die in this next season for you?" Take a moment to sit with that question. What old habit, old mindset, old fear, or old way of doing things do you sense God is calling you to leave at the altar?

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Practical Applications

Choose one or more of the following to put into practice before your group meets again.

1. **Create a personal altar moment this week.** Set aside 15 to 20 minutes in a specific place, whether that is your kitchen table, a chair in your bedroom, or a spot outdoors, and intentionally thank God for where He has brought you. Write down what He has done. Let that place become a marker.
2. **Write down your yes.** Identify one thing you sense God is calling you toward that you have been hesitant about. Write it down. Pray over it daily this week. Share it with a trusted person in your group for accountability.
3. **Look back before you look forward.** Before the end of this year, take time to reflect on the last 12 months. Write down three to five moments where God clearly showed up, even in ordinary ways. Share at least one of them with your family or a close friend.
4. **Identify what needs to die.** Prayerfully consider one thing, whether it is pride, a habit, a fear, or an unhealthy pattern, that you want to surrender at the altar as you move into the new year. Be specific. Bring it before God in prayer and consider sharing it with a trusted accountability partner.
5. **Pray for someone in a hard season.** Think of someone in your life who is walking through a genuinely difficult time right now. Reach out to them this week, not with advice, but simply to let them know you are praying for them. Then actually pray for them by name every day this week.

Closing Prayer Focus

Close your time together by praying specifically over these three areas:

- **Gratitude** for where God has brought each person in the group
- **Faith** for the promises and assignments that have not yet been fulfilled
- **Surrender** for the things that need to be left at the altar in this next season

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"Stay faithful in the promise before you see it. You have to stay faithful in the journey."
— Pastor Dave