



ABRAHAM

SESSION I

- **Main Passage:** Genesis 12:1-9
 - **Supporting Passage:** Hebrews 11:8
 - **Purpose:** To understand that the ultimate response of a Christ-follower is to believe and obey God's promises.
 - **Session Snapshot:** Genesis 12 is one of the foundational stories of both the Bible and God's interactions with humankind. The calling of Abraham represents the beginning steps of God's plan to make a people (the Israelites) and, through those people, to send a Savior who would bring salvation for all who would believe, Jews and Gentiles alike. But we aren't sitting here thousands of years later talking about Abraham if he didn't obey God when He called. In this session, you'll examine what it means to believe in God's promises even when we may not be able to see HOW God will bring them to fruition.
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GETTING STARTED

Kick-off your time together by introducing a new theme or reviewing what you did in the last session.

FIRST, explain to your group that they will be beginning a video series on Abraham that is part of a larger study on looking at the real men of the Bible. Remind men that the Bible is true and the stories in the Bible are true. The people depicted in its pages aren't fictional characters. They are real people who lived real lives. Remind your group that God wants us to study these people's lives so that we can learn from their example what it means to be in a relationship with Him.

If this is your first session as a group, consider introducing yourself, if necessary, and having the men in your group introduce themselves. Then, ask for volunteers to share what they want to get out of their time in this study. If you want to pass around a contact sheet or do any other first-session "housekeeping tasks," this is the time to do it.

FINALLY, if there are no questions or other input, transition into the *Digging In* section of your leader's guide.

DIGGING IN

Jump into the session by watching this week's video.

FIRST, as this is the first session, explain to the group the basic structure of your time together. Explain that you will watch a video that is usually about 15 minutes long, followed by a short discussion of the video. Then, you'll spend a few minutes in Bible study, followed by a closing activity. Consider encouraging men to take notes as they watch the video.

THEN, play the video. You can access the video by logging into your Iron Hill Press account.

When the video is over, lead men in a short discussion based on what Rick covered. Feel free to come up with your own questions, or consider asking some similar to those below:

- **As we start this first study on the real men of the Bible, some of the people we will be studying will no doubt be familiar to you. As this is our first lesson on Abraham, what do you remember about Abraham's life in addition to what Rick covered in the video?**
- **Rick pointed out that God called Abraham to leave his worldly comfort zone, and Abraham went. Rick noted that this is a simple concept to understand but a difficult concept to live out. Can you think of a time in your life where God called you to leave your place of worldly comfort to follow Him? Briefly share this story with the group.**
- **"Lord, help me to have more influence so that through me you can be more glorified." Is that a prayer you have prayed before? In your mind, why is it difficult for our main purpose in life to be bringing glory to God?**
- **So, God told Abraham to go, and Abraham went. God didn't tell Abraham where to go, and yet Abraham uprooted his entire life to go. We can't say for sure, but it's almost a certainty that Abraham knew FAR less about WHO God is than you do. Why can men sometimes be hesitant to take a risk when it comes to obeying God?**
- **What in your life is God asking you to do that you are not doing? (What a question!) Are you brave enough to answer that question?**
- **We can't be reckless as men, especially if we have families to look after. How do you make sure that what you sense God leading you to do is truly His will for your life?**

FINALLY, transition into the *Opening the Word* portion of your time together by saying something like the following:

- **When it comes to following God in faith, we can learn a lot from Abraham. Let's take a more in-depth look at the passage Rick introduced.**

OPENING THE WORD

Spend time going deeper into a specific concept Rick introduced in the video.

FIRST, explain that you're going to take a more in-depth look at Genesis 12:1-9 As Rick stated in the video, it's the story of Abraham's call. In this passage,

One of our goals as we encounter God in His Word is to grow in our knowledge of the Bible. A major part of understanding the Bible is understanding the context in which we encounter a passage. Provide the context for the passage using the following bullet points:

- **Author:** While there's no specific author named within the text, Moses is the accepted author for Genesis, with some editing and additions done after his death (such as the account of his death!).
- **Time frame:** It's difficult to establish with any certainty a date for the completion of the Pentateuch (a name for the first five books of the Bible—including Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy—of

which Genesis is a part). Most of the material originated from Moses himself. Depending on the date of the Exodus (which is also not known for sure), that would make a date for the writing of Genesis sometime in the 1400s or the 1200s BC

- **Purpose:** Genesis details our world's earliest history, including creation and Adam and Eve's fall. It also focuses on the emergence of Israel, not only as God's people but as the group God would work through to bring redemption to the world.

THEN, read or have a volunteer read Genesis 12:1-9. When the volunteer has finished, direct your group's attention back to the beginning of the passage. Lead them in a brief discussion by asking something similar to the following:

- **Genesis 12:1-3 contains God's promise to Abraham. It's easy for us to overlook the audacity of this promise. What makes this promise truly a "God-sized" one?**
 - *Answer:* Abraham was an older man and childless. To think that he could be the father of a great nation was an absurd thought. Furthermore, God promised to make Abraham's name great. There doesn't seem to be anything in Abraham's backstory that would make this seem plausible. (And yet, we're talking about him thousands of years later!) Finally, God told Abraham that he would be a blessing to "all the families of the earth."
- **Any one of these promises would be something special. But all three seem extravagant. What do you imagine went through Abraham's head when he heard this?**
 - Answers will vary.
- **Vs. 4 is a powerful statement about Abraham's faith. God commanded, and Abraham went. What were some of the other available options that Abraham had?**
 - Answers will vary. But it's important to remember that Abraham wasn't a robot programmed to obey. He could have said no. He could have questioned. He could have half-heartedly obeyed.

Explain to your group that Abraham's response in vs. 4 models the right reaction to God's leading in our lives. What we know to be true about God is that He is active in creation and our lives. He leads. He calls. He plans. He works through us, His people, to bring glory to Himself and accomplish His purposes. Our obedience is key to us being a part of God's plan.

NEXT, focus your group's attention on vs. 6-7. Ask something like:

- **Does anyone find anything particularly significant in vs. 7?**
 - *Answer:* It's almost kind of comical that God promised to give the land to Abraham's offspring when Abraham was childless. Land that was inhabited already, by the way.
- **Why do you think God seems to continue to raise the ante on the scale of His promise to Abraham?**
 - Answers will vary. But God is on record for doing God-sized things so that no one can question His power and might. God can take a childless older man and work through him to establish a people so numerous that they will one day inhabit the very inhabited land that the old, childless man was passing through.
- **Of course, we know the rest of the story. We know that God made Abraham the father of the Jews so that through the Jews, He could send His Jesus so that ALL who would believe (Jews and Gentiles alike) might have a forever relationship with Him. That's the plan God pulled off through a simple promise to Abraham . . . and through Abraham's obedience. What does this do to your confidence in God to accomplish His purposes through you and your obedience?**
 - Answers will vary.

THEN, explain that while this is a tricky exercise, and we have to be careful how far we push this, you want to ask your group to consider a question. The question is this: What if Abraham hadn't obeyed? Ask something like:

- **What if Abraham had decided NOT to obey God's call? Does that mean God's plans would have been thwarted? Would God have failed to call a people to Himself and to send His Son through those people in order to save anyone who would ever believe in Him?**
 - *Answer:* Of course not.
- **Why would Abraham's disobedience NOT have had that effect?**
 - *Answer:* Simple. God is sovereign. His rule and reign extend everywhere. There is nowhere where His authority is not absolute. He is also all-powerful. When you put these two attributes together, no one can thwart God's plans. What He wills, He is perfectly capable of accomplishing.
- **But we know Abraham wasn't a robot. We know he was a human just like us and therefore had a choice. He could have disobeyed God. Based on what we just discussed, what would the results have been?**
 - *Answer:* In theory, God would have simply worked through someone else. God's plan would have been accomplished through someone other than Abraham.
- **Again, we don't want to push this too far; it can lead us down a slippery slope. But the point is simply this: God had a plan for Abraham. Abraham acted in faith and obedience. What did Abraham gain by responding as he did?**
 - *Answer:* Abraham got to be a part of God's amazing plan. Abraham experienced the thrill of being used by God. Abraham was blessed and, in turn, blessed others, all because he trusted and obeyed God.

FINALLY, say, one of the things we have to process as men is how we respond to God. Say something like:

- **God calls each of us. We have a choice, just as Abraham did. When we obey and respond in faith, we put ourselves in the center of God's will. We get to experience God using us to see His Kingdom come and His will be done. And isn't that what we all want? The question we have to answer is how this works out practically in our lives as Christ-followers.**

Ask if there are any questions and if there are none, transition into *Accepting the Challenge*.

ACCEPTING THE CHALLENGE

Focus your group's attention on the takeaways from your time together.

FIRST, explain that you want to challenge the group to focus on the takeaways from this session. Say something like:

- **After investing the time we've just invested, the worst thing we can do is to leave this place unchanged. The right response to what we just read and processed is to do the work to see what changes this brings about in our lives.**

Remind your group that God has a plan for each of them. That's how God works. Challenge your group to consider which of the following questions applies most to them and to work with God to answer it:

- **Has God been calling you to do something that you have been hesitant to follow through on?**
 - What keeps you from responding in faith and obedience to experience what it feels to be used by God?
- **Are you so out of the habit of listening to God that you wouldn't hear Him if He were calling you?**
 - What will you do this week to begin to remove the distance between God and you?

- **Have you experienced a story of God's blessing because you reacted to His calling in faith and obedience?**
 - If so, how are you sharing this story with others to glorify God and challenge those around you to respond to God similarly?

Allow the group to consider where they find themselves in these three questions. If it feels appropriate, allow some discussion about the kind of processing they find themselves doing.

FINALLY, encourage men to continue to marinate on these questions in the week to come. Challenge them to listen to what God is trying to tell them and to respond accordingly. If there are no more questions or input, close your time together in prayer.