

**I Will Go**  
*Go Into the Unknown*  
Genesis 12:1-4

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HDBC

Around 200 years ago, Thomas Jefferson commissioned Meriwether Lewis and William Clark to find the source of the Missouri River, and from there to discover a water route west to the Pacific. Such a waterway, they discovered, doesn't exist. But they did succeed in mapping the Northwest and 15 months after they began pushing themselves upstream, they found the source of the Missouri.

These men were true pioneers. They were adventurers who were willing to set out on a journey of discovery. They were courageous, spirited men who desired to push the boundaries of knowledge and **go into the unknown**. In doing so they were exhibiting what we would call the *pioneer spirit*. Our country has known many such men and women throughout its history.

**But early** Americans were not the first pioneers. Others came before them. In fact, some came long before them. Today we'll look at one of the earliest pioneers in history. We know him as Abraham, and I think of him as a pioneer because he was called **to go into the unknown** and he answered the call.

He lived over 4000 years ago but remains a great example to follow. He was the *Pioneer of Faith*. As much as any other man in history, he left a legacy of how to live a life of faith. This is part 2 in our series **I Will Go**. We are looking at examples in the Bible of men and women who were called to go. They were not all called to go the same places or to do the same things. They were called at different times in their lives.

**The purpose** is to help us see that God still calls us to go. He does not call us all to go to the same places or to do the same things or at the same stages of our lives. But He does call us to go. The expectation of every Christ-follower is this.

***I will go wherever He calls me to go, whenever He calls me to go to do whatever He calls me to do.*** My responsibility is to be ready and to say yes!

Let's see what we can learn from Abraham. He was called to ***go into the unknown***. His experience is not completely unique. God often calls us to go into an unknown future. In fact, He almost never gives us the full, complete picture of our future. He calls us to walk with Him step by step.

## **Read the text: Genesis 12:1-9**

### **1. His Past**

There was a time when Abraham lived in relative obscurity. He was immersed in the culture in which he was born. And it was not the kind of culture into which you would expect God to look for a man of faith. Note a couple of things about it.

#### **1) The Place**

Ur of the Chaldees was located in what we call Iraq today. It was, at Abraham's time, located at the place where the Euphrates River emptied into the Persian Gulf. It was a bustling seaport, where trade was conducted with India and Africa. Population of about 3,000 in that day.

History also says that this city was a center of intellectual activity. A large public library has been unearthed that contained thousands of ancient texts. That region was also well suited for raising flocks and herds. Which may account for the fact that Abraham had flocks of livestock.

#### **2) The Problem**

While Abraham's hometown may have been prosperous, it was also perverted. The people of that area were involved in some of the most wretched forms of idolatry known to mankind. That city was an important center for astrology. In the center of the city was a temple, where people worshipped the moon god, Nanna.

Abraham had an unspiritual past. But may I remind you that God is not concerned with your past. God is not limited to seeking and calling only those who live in clean, neat, seemingly good cultures. God calls us out of our past into a wonderful future. He is not limited by your past failures, your inadequacies, or your problems. He is a God of new beginnings.

## 2. His Calling

God came to Abraham and initiated communication with him. This was the first of many times when Abraham conversed with God. The Bible tells us he was the ***Friend of God***. With this first visit, a friendship developed between God and Abraham.

God still does that. He comes to individuals and reveals himself, calls them into a relationship with himself, wants to develop a friendship with them. For me it happened when I was 12. I trusted Jesus as my Lord and Savior and we've had a personal relationship ever since.

That is not the only time I've heard from God. He called me to be a preacher. It was a clear call from God. No audible voice: just an overwhelming awareness in my spirit that He was calling. In Abraham's case it was an audible call. Note some things about this call.

### 1) It involved Relocation – Go

He was told to relocate. To move to another place. He would not be able to be used of God as long as he stayed in his current location.

We live in a very mobile society. People are on the go. Constantly moving. I moved often while growing up. Recount my moves. Relocating can be a traumatic thing. It is not easy to move to a new place. But that is what Abraham was called to do.

**Go** can be a scary word.

A young child stands on the edge of diving board, afraid to jump into the pool below, and then comes the command of a parent: Go.

A high school football player sits on the bench hoping his coach will send him into the game, but he's also unsure of matching up against a very tough opponent and doesn't want to embarrass himself in front of a home crowd. Then the coach gives him the word: You, go. Now!

The car is packed with luggage and all sorts of reminders of the home you've known for so long. The trip ahead will take you far from home. It's your first time say "good-bye" and be truly on your own without anyone

close to fall back on. Your heart tugs at you while loved ones hold you tight. And then they tell you - It's O.K. We'll miss you. But you need to do this. **Go.**

**Go was the word** that God gave to Abraham. According to Genesis 12 it was the very first word that Abraham heard from God. Does God still do that? Yes. He may call some of you to a new location before the end of this year. What will you do?

## **2) It involved Separation – *From your relatives***

It was also a call to separation. He was to leave his family behind. Not talking about his wife, but his parents, uncles, etc. His source of security.

Whenever God calls you to a new venture of faith, it will inevitably involve leaving some things or some persons behind. There are some things that you simply cannot bring with you if you are going to serve God faithfully.

**When God calls you to salvation, he calls you to lay aside your habits of sin. He calls you to lay aside your pride and self-sufficiency. He may call you to leave some relationships behind. You cannot come to salvation bringing that stuff with you.**

Same is true of a call to venture out in faith. Sometimes there is a call to separation. Abraham was called to leave his past, its culture, its idolatry, its hold on his life. All of the old represents the flesh and our sinful nature. In the same way we are called to a life of separation. Separation from sin, and to God.

## **3) It involved Faith - *Go in Faith***

Abraham was called to completely trust God. To go to a new land, and God would show him one step at a time. God often does it that way. A number of reasons. Here are a few:

First, God wants us to rely on him daily. If he gives us the complete picture, most of us will try to find a way to do it on our own.

Second, if we had the big picture, some of us would not understand and would try to change the plans of God.

At the heart of every call that God places in our lives, is FAITH. Without faith it is impossible to please God. God will seldom, if ever, call you to do anything that requires no faith. Faith, by its nature involves risk. So don't let the level of risk impact your answer to His call.

### 3. His Assurance

With the call to Abraham, God offered some powerful assurances.

#### 1) He promised the show the way (1b)

God would personally show Abraham the way one step at a time.

#### 2) He promised a great future (2-3)

He would make of Abraham a great nation, a great name and a blessing to others. Not only a future family but a future legacy. Remember that Abraham was childless at the time and long past the normal age for having children. He would be the father of generations. They would be a blessing to others and would be a potential catalyst of blessing for others. They would be a key people for the rest of time.

### 4. His Response

Don't you love the quick response by Abraham. God called him to go, and Abraham said *I will go*. Verse 4 simply states **so Abraham went forth**. His age is noted. This is important. He was not a young buck. He was 75 years old. Not the normal time for a new beginning. **Unless you are Abraham or maybe Moses, or maybe Caleb, or maybe Zacharias and Elisabeth, or maybe Noah.** I'm detecting a trend. Your age has nothing to do with the call of God on your life. I could also make a list of people called very young.

**Age is not** an excuse for saying no to God. Don't do it!

Status in life is not an excuse for saying no to God. Don't do it.

### Play Video Testimony of Tishia

1. God's call is not restricted by our past.
2. God's call often involves separation.
3. When God calls, nothing less than complete obedience will do.
3. God's call always requires faith. A step into the unknown.

Cattle-rustling is a problem in Uganda. The Ugandan army daily attempts to reunite cattle with their owners. The biggest difficulty lies in proving ownership. Problem solved in one northern village. An elderly woman stood before the herd and a remarkable thing happened. She called her cows by name and to the amusement of the soldiers, as each cow heard her voice, it lifted its head and then followed her. As far as the army was concerned, it was proof of ownership.

If you belong to God, when he calls your name, you will not only recognize his voice, but you will lift your head and start walking.

**Old proverbial saying** that we've all heard is so true.

***A journey of a thousand miles begins with one step.***

God is calling you to begin a journey with him. Will you take the first step?