

COUNT THE STARS

MAIN POINT.

Authentic **faith** will lead us to **obey**, resulting in God's **blessing**.



CHRIST CONNECTION

God blessed Abraham by making his name great and making him into a great nation, where all people will be blessed through him. This blessing is ultimately fulfilled in his descendant, Jesus, who brought salvation to all people through His death and resurrection.



This week, we're covering the passages and main points below. But we encourage you to read all of the content on the timeline as you prepare to teach.

Genesis 12**Genesis 15****FAITH LEADS TO OBEDIENCE****GENESIS 12:1-9**

1 The LORD said to Abram: Go from your land, your relatives, and your father's house to the land that I will show you. 2 I will make you into a great nation, I will bless you, I will make your name great, and you will be a blessing. 3 I will bless those who bless you, I will curse anyone who treats you with contempt, and all the peoples on earth will be blessed through you. 4 So Abram went, as the LORD had told him, and Lot went with him. Abram was seventy-five years old when he left Haran. 5 He took his wife, Sarai, his nephew Lot, all the possessions they had accumulated, and the people they had acquired in Haran, and they set out for the land of Canaan. When they came to the land of Canaan, 6 Abram passed through the land to the site of Shechem, at the oak of Moreh. (At that time the Canaanites were in the land.) 7 The LORD appeared to Abram and said, "To your offspring I will give this land." So he built an altar there to the LORD who had appeared to him. 8 From there he moved on to the hill country east of Bethel and pitched his tent, with Bethel on the west and Ai on the east. He built an altar to the LORD there, and he called on the name of the LORD. 9 Then Abram journeyed by stages to the Negev.

OBEDIENCE LEADS TO REWARD**GENESIS 15:1-6**

1 After these events, the word of the LORD came to Abram in a vision: Do not be afraid, Abram. I am your shield; your reward will be very great. 2 But Abram said, "Lord GOD, what can you give me, since I am childless and the heir of my house is Eliezer of Damascus?" 3 Abram continued, "Look, you have given me no offspring, so a slave born in my house will be my heir." 4 Now the word of the LORD came to him: "This one will not be your heir; instead, one who comes from your own body will be your heir." 5 He took him outside and said, "Look at the sky and count the stars, if you are able to count them." Then he said to him, "Your offspring will be that numerous." 6 And he believed the LORD, and he counted it to him as righteousness.

BEFORE YOU TEACH

MAIN POINT.

Leaders: Thank you for preparing to teach God's Word. As you do, may He teach you new and wonderful truths (Ps. 119:18).

Authentic **faith** will lead us to **obey**, resulting in God's **blessing**.

BIBLICAL COMMENTARY

FAITH LEADS TO OBEDIENCE

GENESIS 12:1-3

"The many promises of the passage cohere into three strands: land, seed, and blessing. . . . But the blessing so bountifully promised is preceded by a word of command, 'Leave ...' (v. 1a). His answer to the command is not by word but by deed: 'So Abram left' (v. 4a)."¹

GENESIS 12:1-9

"God called Abram out of a pagan world and made amazing promises to him, promises that later became the Abrahamic covenant. The passage also extols the faith of Abram, teaching that faith obeys the word of the Lord. Here was a man who was middle-aged, settled, prosperous, aristocratic, and probably pagan (although it is possible that among the gods he revered there was a remembrance of the ancestral God Yahweh). Then suddenly the word of the Lord came to him, although it is not known exactly how. He obeyed the word, turned his back on the old ways, and obediently left Ur to follow God's direction. That is why Abram is the epitome of faith in the Bible, and believers are referred to as 'the seed of Abraham' (Rom. 4:1-3, 16-24; Gal. 3:6-9; Heb. 11:8-19; James 2:21-23)."²

OBEDIENCE LEADS TO REWARD

GENESIS 15:1-6

"The New Testament finds this a momentous chapter in two respects: first in its declaration that Abram was justified by faith (6), a phrase at the heart of Paul's gospel in Romans 4 and Galatians 3; and secondly in its record of the covenant—for this, rather than Sinai's, was the fundamental covenant, and it spoke of grace and not law (Gal. 3:17-22). To honour this promise God would bring his people out of Egypt (Ex. 2:24), and his Son into the world (Luke 1:72, 73)."³



CONTEXT

God's call of Abram, a descendant of Noah, seemed to come out of nowhere. Abram lived in a pagan culture, and whether or not he was aware of the one true God, Yahweh, is unknown. It's also unlikely. Abram's culture worshiped ancient Babylonian gods. During this time period, family ties ran very deep. It was rare for anyone to leave family and migrate hundreds of miles to resettle. **But the Lord's call was so clear, so real, so life-altering, that Abram responded in immediate obedience.** He believed God's words. The call of Abram marked a huge moment in human history: God's promise was for Abram's people and all people who are made coheirs in Christ. While Abram wouldn't always walk perfectly, he listened to God and believed His word.

THEOLOGY CONNECTION



God is faithful

God's faithfulness means **He keeps His word and always fulfills His promises** (1 Cor. 1:9; 2 Tim. 2:13; 1 Pet. 4:19). God's faithfulness is demonstrated in His fulfillment of the promises He made to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. The apostle Paul linked the attribute of "faithful" to God's coming through on His word in 1 Thessalonians 5:24. We reflect God by keeping the promises we make to Him and to others.

LEADER'S PRAYER

LORD, HELP US WALK IN OBEDIENCE. REMIND US THAT YOU'RE FAITHFUL, EVEN WHEN OUR CIRCUMSTANCES ARE DIFFICULT.



KICK STARTER

♡ HEART CHECK

Let's check in on how you're doing spiritually. How did you magnify God's name over your own last week? When did you struggle with pride or building your own towers instead of obeying the Lord?

These optional activities are designed to help your students interact. You'll find a Discussion Activity and a Cultural Connection, which touches on a relevant topic in today's teen culture. Each group is different, so adapt these activities to fit your group's needs. The goal is for students to connect more to the lesson as they connect to the topic and to one another.

1

WEIGH THE COST

SUPPLIES LIST: LIST OF WORTHLESS ITEMS, SENTIMENTAL ITEMS (OPTIONAL)

Look up a list of collectible items that people paid a lot for or expected to sell for a lot of money one day that are now worthless financially. For example, things like baseball cards, commemorative plates, model trains, porcelain dolls, and vinyl records. Share the list with the students, then share a sentimental item of yours that wouldn't bring in much money if sold but is priceless to you. Allow students to bring in similar items or just share about them if they want.

When making decisions, we often ask ourselves: What's it worth to me? Because choosing one thing means saying no to another. Sometimes, making a choice that honors God doesn't "look" worth it to those on the outside, but those who know God know honoring Him is worth it every time.

2

CULTURAL CONNECTION

Be honest. Have you ever questioned if following Jesus—obeying Jesus—would be worth it? Have you worried about all the things you might have to "give up" to obey God? What if He asks you to do something you don't want to do? Many of us have asked ourselves these questions. Jesus even encouraged us to weigh the decision to be one of His disciples because it will cost us (Luke 14:25-33). It may cost your popularity, your prejudices, your plans, your hobbies. You may pay a cost in the way you spend your time. But what you gain far outweighs anything you "give up;" you gain true life. Dietrich Bonhoeffer, a German preacher who was arrested during the Holocaust for speaking out against the Nazis, once said, "what has cost God much cannot be cheap for us."⁴ Let that sink in. Our redemption cost Jesus His life. Grace was costly, and it can't be cheaply gained. While salvation is a gift, walking in obedience comes with a cost—a cost that is always worth it.

DISCUSSION

MAIN POINT.

Authentic **faith** will lead us to **obey**, resulting in God's **blessing**.

FAITH LEADS TO OBEDIENCE

READ GENESIS 12:1-9

WHAT IS DIFFICULT ABOUT OBEDIENCE? WHAT DID ABRAM'S OBEDIENCE COST HIM?

Obedience is costly. It often demands that we set aside our own desires. A lot of times, it means we don't do what we want to do or what we feel comfortable doing. **Abram's obedience cost him everything—his homeland, his extended family, his reputation, his comfort.** But in exchange for saying yes to God, Abram inherited a blessing unlike any other person who has ever lived—being the father of many nations.

DID ABRAM DO ANYTHING TO EARN HIS POSITION? WHAT DOES THAT REVEAL ABOUT GOD?

There was nothing inherently special about Abram. In fact, he likely lived in a very pagan culture and took part in idol worship. But God, in His kindness and goodness, chose Abram. **All Abram did was believe.** In the same way, we don't do anything to earn our position with God. God calls us to salvation and offers it as a gift. It's also a gift that God then chooses to use us to grow His kingdom.

REREAD VERSES 8-9. ABRAM LIVED IN A TENT BUT BUILT *ALTARS* (PERMANENT STRUCTURES) TO HONOR GOD. WHAT DOES THIS TELL YOU ABOUT THE IMPORTANCE WE GIVE TO OUR RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD?

Once Abram left Ur, he lived a nomadic life until settling in Canaan. Along the way, we're told that Abram pitched tents. But Abram built altars to the Lord—places to worship and sacrifice offerings to God—in several locations. When Abram left those areas, the altars remained. Maybe an interesting truth we can take from this is a lesson in what lasts. Our lives here are temporary. Our homes, our reputations, our material possessions, our trophies—none of these last, and we can't carry them with us when we die. **But when we worship the Lord, when we share the gospel, and when we invest in our relationship with God, we're building something that lasts. We're building the kingdom of God.** This is a great reminder for believers that we're truly just passing through on our way to heaven.

OBEDIENCE LEADS TO REWARD

READ GENESIS 15:1-6



WHAT WAS THE POINT OF GOD SHOWING ABRAM THE STARS?

Those stars represented God's faithful word. Not only would Abram eventually have a son, but Jesus would be his descendant too. Through people placing their faith in Jesus, Abraham would indeed have numerous spiritual offspring. **While Abram didn't have children yet and this promise must've felt impossible, God used this image of the stars to reassure Abram because He loved and cared for him.**



HOW DOES ABRAM'S STORY HELP US KNOW WE CAN TRUST GOD WHEN HE CALLS US, NO MATTER WHAT?

One of God's most defining attributes is His faithfulness. Paul explains that even if we are faithless, God will remain faithful because He can't go against His nature (2 Tim. 2:13). Ever. We can trust God with all our plans. **When He call us to do something or to go somewhere, we can step out with complete confidence because He simply can't be unfaithful to us.**

WHY IS IT IMPORTANT TO IMITATE ABRAM'S FAITH?

Abram's bold faith not only affected his family, but it affected the entire world—and all of human history. His yes and his obedience continued what was already in motion to bring about the Savior of the world. Abram became the father of Israel, God's chosen people. He trusted the Lord's word enough to leave every comfort without knowing exactly where God was leading him. **When we boldly say yes to the Lord's call, not only does it affect us, but it also affects those watching us: our family, friends, and peers.** You can faithfully obey God because He can't help but be faithful to you.

WRAP-UP

WHAT COULD GOD BE CALLING YOU TO LEAVE BEHIND TO FOLLOW HIM? WHY CAN YOU TRUST HIM?

When God calls us to do something, say something, or go somewhere, we always leave something behind. It may not be a physical home like it was for Abram, but it may mean leaving behind reputations, mistakes, toxic relationships, addictions, or our plans for our lives. Obeying God and trusting in His faithfulness may mean we become unsettled; it may mean huge change; or it could be small change. **No matter what God calls you to do, you can trust Him. God will never lead you to a place where He won't go with you.** Isn't that amazing? The God of all creation walks with believers at all times because the Holy Spirit lives within them! Even though obedience often involves walking away from something, you'll be blessed for walking in obedience to the Lord.