

life

- WITH -

**GOD THE FATHER**

*lessons & devotions*

“I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service. And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.” Romans 12:1-2

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▪ All scripture is from the English Standard Version (ESV).

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# Introduction

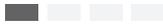
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This booklet contains lessons and devotions for the four-part series on “**God The Father.**” The devotions will supplement and compliment the lessons. After each lesson, you can delve deeper into the context through the study of these daily devotions. Devotions are available Monday through Friday following each lesson. Saturday allows you to catch up if you missed a day.

Before you attend your **life**group on Sunday, pray for God to anoint your teacher to explain and apply God’s Word. Also pray for each member to receive and obey God’s Word.

May our Father bless you abundantly as you pursue Him through His Word!

# worshiplife: God's Love For Us



Genesis 22:1-19

1. Worship \_\_\_\_\_ with an \_\_\_\_\_ of God's love.  
*Genesis 22:1*

A. Abraham understood who God \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_ He loved him.

1. God's love is seen through \_\_\_\_\_.  
*Genesis 1:1-19*

2. God's love is seen through \_\_\_\_\_.  
*Genesis 1:20-25*

3. God's love is seen through \_\_\_\_\_.  
*Genesis 1:26-27*

4. God's love is seen through \_\_\_\_\_.  
*Genesis 2:18-24*

5. God's love is seen through \_\_\_\_\_.  
*Genesis 3:1-20*

B. Abraham realized it was God \_\_\_\_\_  
a loving relationship.

2. Worship is \_\_\_\_\_ by an \_\_\_\_\_ from God.  
*Genesis 22:1-2*

A. God's invitation is \_\_\_\_\_.

The invitation of God hinges on the history of His \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ and His \_\_\_\_\_.

**\*What is the character of God?**

God is \_\_\_\_\_.

God is \_\_\_\_\_.

God is \_\_\_\_\_.

**B.** God's invitation is \_\_\_\_\_ from human wisdom.

**3.** Worship \_\_\_\_\_ through an \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_.

*Genesis 22:3-14*

**A.** Abraham's response was \_\_\_\_\_.

**B.** Abraham's response was \_\_\_\_\_.

**C.** Abraham's response was \_\_\_\_\_.

**D.** Abraham's response was \_\_\_\_\_.

**4.** Worship is \_\_\_\_\_ when we give \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_.

*Genesis 22:14-19*

**A.** Abraham made a declaration to God.

**B.** Abraham made a declaration to man.

Monday, January 9

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### **UNDERSTANDING THE VALUE IN WORSHIP**

*"After these things God tested Abraham and said to him, 'Abraham!' And he said, 'Here I am.' He said, 'Take your son, your only son Isaac, whom you love, and go to the land of Moriah, and offer him there as a burnt offering on one of the mountains of which I shall tell you.' So Abraham rose early in the morning, saddled his donkey, and took two of his young men with him, and his son Isaac. And he cut the wood for the burnt offering and arose and went to the place of which God had told him. On the third day Abraham lifted up his eyes and saw the place from afar. Then Abraham said to his young men, 'Stay here with the donkey; I and the boy will go over there and worship and come again to you.'" Genesis 22:1-5*

Over the last several years, sports have dominated much of the culture of our world. Billions of dollars are spent each year on both collegiate and professional sports. More specifically, people often spend their money on the merchandise supporting their favorite player. No matter which sport or team you follow, one particular conversation takes place: Who is the M.V.P.? Recently, I was amazed at all of the sports news shows that spent hours analyzing the different M.V.P. possibilities for a specific sport and team. One day, I even found myself talking to the television. With great enthusiasm, I asked the announcer if he even knew what words the letters "M.V.P." represented. One announcer waxed eloquently and shared statistics about his particular favorite and then finally one voice of reason said, "It's really who has the most value." Ta da! Bingo! Yahtzee! They finally got it. The M.V.P. is the person who simply has the most value!

That is a lot like worship. I often hear much talk about the value of worship. However, the conversation is usually about the environment surrounding the person's worship experience. I hear about certain songs and speakers, and even about the lights and screens on the worship stage. But often times, the most valuable thing about worship is not even discussed. I believe this happens because most people don't understand what worship is. So, what is worship? If you asked five different people, you may very well get five different answers. It may be a particular day,

an event, a gathering, or even a particular experience. Whatever the case may be, some believers have come to view worship as something that has a beginning and ending. The truth, however, is that the true definition of worship can only be found in God's Word. In *Genesis 22:5* we see the first mention of the word worship. This word literally means "to bow down, prostrate oneself before God in homage". The root word of "worship" which is worth-ship, is an act of affirming God's worth. Worship is not flattery or boosting God's self-esteem. Worship is declaring with your life that God is worthy. It is exalting God and humbling yourself. A simple definition of worship is valuing God above everything. This is what Abraham understood. He knew that worship was not about a place or a time. It was not an event or even an experience. Worship is an action and it is all about valuing God. It is an outward act that comes from an inward understanding of a personal God that can be trusted with everything. So, what is worship to you? Is God the Most Valuable Person in your worship? Do you have a relationship that trusts God with everything? Today, think of some practical ways you can value God more in your life.

Tuesday, January 10

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### THE IMPORTANCE OF KNOWING GOD IN WORSHIP

*"Then God said, 'Let us make man in our image, after our likeness. And let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over the livestock and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.' So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them. And God blessed them. And God said to them, 'Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it, and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over every living thing that moves on the earth.' And God said, 'Behold, I have given you every plant yielding seed that is on the face of all the earth, and every tree with seed in its fruit. You shall have them for food. And to every beast of the earth and to every bird of the heavens and to everything that creeps on the earth, everything that has the breath of life, I have given every green plant for food.' And it was so. And God saw everything that he had made, and behold, it was very good. And there was evening and there was morning, the sixth day." Genesis 1:26-31*

*"O LORD, you have searched me and known me. You know when I sit down and when I rise up; you discern my thoughts from afar. You search out my path and my lying down and are acquainted with all my ways. Even before a word is on my tongue, behold, O LORD, you know it altogether. You hem me in, behind and before, and lay your hand upon me. Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; it is high; I cannot attain it. Where shall I go from your Spirit? Or where shall I flee from your presence? If I ascend to heaven, you are there! If I make my bed in Sheol, you are there! If I take the wings of the morning and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea, even there your hand shall lead me, and your right hand shall hold me. If I say, 'Surely the darkness shall cover me, and the light about me be night,' even the darkness is not dark to you; the night is bright as the day, for darkness is as light with you. For you formed my inward parts; you knitted me together in my mother's womb. I praise you, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made. Wonderful are your works; my soul knows it very well. My frame was not hidden from you, when I was being made in secret, intricately woven in the depths of the earth. Your eyes saw my unformed substance; in your book were written, every one of them, the days that were formed for me, when as yet there was none of them. How precious to me are your thoughts, O God! How vast is the sum of them! If I would count them, they are more than the sand. I awake, and I am still with you." Psalm 139:1-18*

*"For nothing will be impossible with God." Luke 1:37*

*"For while we were still weak, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly. For one will scarcely die for a righteous person - though perhaps for a good person one would dare even to die - but God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. Since, therefore, we have now been justified by his blood, much more shall we be saved by him from the wrath of God." Romans 5:6-9*

My wife knows Nick Saban. I know that may come as a shock to some but I can prove it. She has a picture on the refrigerator that was taken of them together at the school where she works. She and Nick, as she puts it, had a conversation over a cup of coffee when he came to recruit a player. She said everyone was afraid to talk with him so she jumped right in and made a cup of Joe and started talking. Several

years later, she occasionally reminds me when we are watching a game that she knows Coach Saban. I fondly smile and say, “*Yes baby, I know.*” The truth is, she may have met him, but she doesn’t really know him.

This is the case in worship. You will never really worship God until you begin to understand and know Him. We live in a culture that knows very little or nothing at all about the Creator of the Universe and the God of the Bible. People have invented their own ideas and philosophy about who God is and how He relates to them. The concept of “God” has even grown to become culturally relevant and popular as long as the deity does not infringe upon personal beliefs, values, and morals. It is essential, however, for believers to know who God is. Many know about God but they do not personally know Him. You can only know God intimately through spending time with Him. The God of the Bible reveals himself in Scripture and makes it possible for His followers to know Him in an intimate way. As believers, we will better understand God as we begin to understand our purpose here on earth. Our understanding of God shapes our belief in God. Our belief in God shapes our attitude about life. Our attitude about life shapes our actions toward others.

So, who is God? Let’s look at three characteristics of God. First, God is Omniscient. This means He is “*all*” knowing. God knows everything about my past, present, and future. He also knows everything about every situation and circumstance that has happened or will happen. Second, God is Omnipotent. This means He is “*all*” powerful. There is nothing too great for Him. He can and will accomplish his grand purpose through us in His story. Finally, God is Omnipresent. This simply refers to the fact that God is “*all*” present (everywhere). Nothing takes place in this world apart from the eyes of God. The God of the Bible is eternally wise, exceedingly powerful, and remarkably everywhere. You can truly know the Creator of the Universe. God desires to reveal Himself to you today. A proper understanding of God will change the way you live. What does your understanding of God reflect about how you live? Get to know God better today.

wednesday, january 11

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### **AN INVITATION FROM GOD TO WORSHIP**

*"After these things God tested Abraham and said to him, 'Abraham!' And he said, 'Here I am.' He said, 'Take your son, your only son Isaac, whom you love, and go to the land of Moriah, and offer him there as a burnt offering on one of the mountains of which I shall tell you.'" Genesis 22:1-2*

Not too long ago I received an invitation to attend an event with a friend locally. I had several things to do and was thinking about declining until I heard who was going to be speaking at the event. To my surprise, a well-known personality was going to be giving the keynote address and so I cleared my schedule and made plans to go. Upon arrival, I learned that I was receiving V.I.P. seats, a goodie bag, and an autographed book written by the speaker. My response to my friend had more to do with the outcome of the invitation than it did with the one who invited me.

This is not the case with an invitation from God. God's invitation to worship is not like any other. God's invitation to Abraham was not a casual invitation. It was a call to a life that would experience the supernatural. The invitation of man hinges on the response of an individual. The invitation of God hinges on the history of His eternal reputation and His eternal character. God's invitation to Abraham was radically different from human wisdom. God invited Abraham to take his only son Isaac and to worship through sacrifice. In other words, God invited Abraham to value Him above the most important thing to him in the world. Isaac represented the hopes, dreams, and ultimate future of Abraham and his entire race. God was inviting Abraham to trust and obey him with everything. Abraham worshiped (valued) God because he had an intimate history with God and knew exactly who God was and that He could be trusted. God invites all of his children to a life of faith and worship. Has God called you to worship (value) Him in a specific way? Does your response hinge on the possible outcome or does it rest in the character of God? Ask God today to continue to shape your understanding of Him. Worship (value) and obey God for who He is and not what He will do.

Thursday, January 12

## RESPONDING TO GOD

*"So Abraham rose early in the morning, saddled his donkey, and took two of his young men with him, and his son Isaac. And he cut the wood for the burnt offering and arose and went to the place of which God had told him. On the third day Abraham lifted up his eyes and saw the place from afar. Then Abraham said to his young men, 'Stay here with the donkey; I and the boy will go over there and worship and come again to you.' And Abraham took the wood of the burnt offering and laid it on Isaac his son. And he took in his hand the fire and the knife. So they went both of them together. And Isaac said to his father Abraham, "My father!" And he said, 'Here I am, my son.' He said, 'Behold, the fire and the wood, but where is the lamb for a burnt offering?' Abraham said, 'God will provide for himself the lamb for a burnt offering, my son.' So they went both of them together. When they came to the place of which God had told him, Abraham built the altar there and laid the wood in order and bound Isaac his son and laid him on the altar, on top of the wood. Then Abraham reached out his hand and took the knife to slaughter his son. But the angel of the LORD called to him from heaven and said, 'Abraham, Abraham!' And he said, 'Here I am.' He said, 'Do not lay your hand on the boy or do anything to him, for now I know that you fear God, seeing you have not withheld your son, your only son, from me.' And Abraham lifted up his eyes and looked, and behold, behind him was a ram, caught in a thicket by his horns. And Abraham went and took the ram and offered it up as a burnt offering instead of his son. So Abraham called the name of that place, 'The LORD will provide'; as it is said to this day, 'On the mount of the LORD it shall be provided.'" Genesis 22:3-14*

*"Likewise the Spirit helps us in our weakness. For we do not know what to pray for as we ought, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words. And he who searches hearts knows what is the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints according to the will of God. And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose." Romans 8:26-28*

September 11, 2001 is a day that Americans will never forget. It was the largest attack to take place on United States soil. It was a time for many U.S. citizens, where fear struck the center of every part of their lives. I remember exactly where I was on that day and remember feeling as though my family and I were at risk in Alabama. I can't even imagine what was going on in the hearts and minds of those that were in the middle of that horrible attack. It was a time of utter chaos and confusion for the entire country. However, in the midst of the chaos, pain, death, and tragedy, something incredible happened. A specific group of people stepped onto the scene and was instrumental in bringing thousands of people to safety - emergency responders. These responders served as police, firefighters, military, and E.M.T.'s. People who were not even formally trained responded to the disaster. Lives were saved because men and women faithfully responded and fulfilled their calling.

Abraham was one of the earliest emergency responders in history. He had a history with God. He responded correctly because he had been training for years through a life of obedience and faith. When crisis hit with his son Isaac, Abraham responded. He was up to the task. Scripture does not tell us all of the emotions that went on inside of Abraham but no matter what they were, he still answered the call. His response was personal, immediate, and specific because he had a history and personal relationship with the Creator of the Universe. Abraham's response rested in the fact that God can do no wrong and would work everything out for the very best in his life and ultimately for God's glory. As followers of God we should live in such a way that we are ready, willing, and able to respond to the call of God. How are you responding to Him? Is your response immediate or are there things that would keep you from following His call? Ask God to help you be an immediate responder to His call.

friday, january 13

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## A LIFE OF WORSHIP

*"By faith Abraham obeyed when he was called to go out to a place that he was to receive as an inheritance. And he went out, not knowing where he was going. By faith he went to live in the land of promise, as in a foreign land, living in tents with Isaac and Jacob, heirs with him of the same promise. For he was looking forward to the city that has foundations, whose designer and builder is God." Hebrews 11:8-10*

*"I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect."  
Romans 12:1-2*

I have always been drawn to movies that are about heroes. I enjoy the struggle of good vs. evil and especially knowing that in the end, the hero will triumph. However, one of the things I like most about a good hero movie is “tension”. You may be saying, “What do you mean by tension?” Well, tension is that part of a movie that you didn’t see coming. It is that piece of the puzzle that doesn’t seem to really fit. It is a particular struggle or set of circumstances that makes you feel like the characters are normal just like you. Struggles and circumstances often set the stage for the grand finale at the end. You see, the more difficult the circumstances in a journey, the more glorious the triumph in the end.

This is how it was in the life of Abraham. If you just pick up his story in *Genesis 22*, you may think that Abraham had it all together and was the perfect follower of God. One could even see Abraham as “*Super Christian*,” able to leap sin, doubt, and indecision in a single bound! It’s a bird! It’s a plane! It’s super Abraham! In all actuality, Abraham blew it many times before the great worship chapter found in *Genesis 22*. Abraham’s story is one far from perfect. In *Genesis 12*, Abraham tried to

pass his wife off as his sister when they traveled to Egypt. In *Genesis 16*, he had to deal with some bad family issues between Sarai and Hagar. Then in *Genesis 20*, Abraham tried to pass his wife off again as his sister. If you only saw individual parts of Abraham's story, it would be easy to come to the conclusion that he was a pretty messed up guy. However, once you read the entire story, you come to the conclusion that Abraham was an ordinary man with an extraordinary relationship. The act of worship that we view in *Genesis 22* is simply the climactic point that occurs from a lifelong journey of faith, obedience, missing the mark and forgiveness. It was a journey of worship. For the believer, worship is not one act, event or gathering. It is a lifelong journey of valuing God above everything. It is daily conforming to His will and a life of obedience. You may have a scene in your story that you would like to erase but remember a life spent valuing God above all else is a life that triumphs in the end. Meditate on the grace, the goodness and the power of God as you end your week of devotions. Remember that God is the author of your story! In Him, we triumph in the end. Begin valuing God today in your thoughts and your actions. Be a worship hero every day!

# disciplelife: God's Faithfulness To Us

Genesis 12:1-3

1. God can be \_\_\_\_\_ because God is \_\_\_\_\_.

## A. The Command

### Genesis 12:1

*Go from your country and your kindred and your father's house to the land that I will show you...*

1. God invites us to \_\_\_\_\_ all, \_\_\_\_\_ Him, and trust His \_\_\_\_\_.

## B. The Comfort

### Genesis 12:1

*...to the land that **I will** show you... (emphasis added)*

1. God invites us to find \_\_\_\_\_ in His \_\_\_\_\_.

## C. The Covenant

### Genesis 12:1-3

*"Now the Lord said to Abram, 'Go from your country and your kindred and your father's house to the land that I will show you. And I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and him who dishonors you I will curse, and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.'"*

1. God's \_\_\_\_\_ demonstrate His \_\_\_\_\_.

Monday, January 16

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### GOD'S CALLING

*“Now the LORD said to Abram, ‘Go from your country and your kindred and your father’s house to the land that I will show you.’” Genesis 12:1*

Has God ever asked you to do something that seemed crazy? Maybe you felt impressed to go across the world on a mission trip, or maybe you felt led to give up a great job for one that paid less and had less status. Perhaps God made it clear that you needed to introduce yourself to the neighbors on your street and invite them to your **life**group.

As you discovered in your **life**group on Sunday, in *Genesis 12*, God told Abram to do something crazy. He told him to leave his country, kindred, and family. Imagine what this would have felt like? This passage is reminiscent of *Matthew 4* when Jesus sees Peter and Andrew and says, *“Follow me.”* The passage goes on to say that Peter and Andrew immediately left their nets and followed.

In *Genesis 12*, Abram is brought to a point of decision – he must choose to follow God or stay and reject God’s command. *Genesis 12:4* says, *“So Abram went...”* Just as Peter and Andrew left all behind to follow Jesus, Abram leaves his country, kindred, and family to follow God. This act of following was not a one-time moment for Abram. If Abram was going to get to where God was leading, he had to daily make the choice to follow God.

Just as God had a desire to lead Abram and use him for His glory, God has a desire to lead you and use you for His glory. However, you must choose to follow Him daily. In *Matthew 16:24*, Jesus says, *“If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me.”* You may be thinking, “I want to follow, but I am not sure where to go or what to do...” *Psalms 119:105* says, *“Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path.”* Allow God’s Word to guide and direct you.

Today, God wants you to trust Him. He wants you to trust His Word. He wants you to know He is faithful. As you go throughout today ask God what He is specifically calling you to do.

*Tuesday, January 17*

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### COMFORTS OR CALLING

*“Now the LORD said to Abram, ‘Go from your country and your kindred and your father’s house to the land that I will show you.’” Genesis 12:1*

Our passage for the week has been the first part of *Genesis 12*. Yesterday we talked through Abram’s calling. Did you begin praying about what God is calling you to do? Continue that prayer for today. However, let’s go back to the passage and think through some potential road-blocks that may cause you to say “no” to what God is calling you to.

For Abram to follow God, he had to leave his country, kindred, and father’s house. Each of these was comfortable to Abram. However, God was not calling Abram to be comfortable. God had much bigger plans. What if Abram would have rejected God’s command and stuck with what was comfortable and familiar? God wanted Abram to be comforted, but He wanted to be that comfort.

Where is your comfort? Is it in stuff? Or is it in the God of comfort? If we are not careful, we will allow the comforts of this world to hinder us from saying “yes” to our calling. Take a moment and jot down a few comforts that you know could potentially keep you from saying “yes” to God’s calling. If you need help thinking through these, here is an example list: job, money, house, vacations, family, relationships, cars, boats, T.V., safety, etc.

Notice that each of the items in the list above is a good thing or a neutral thing. There is nothing inherently sinful in them. However, these comforts can come between us and God if we are not careful. They will prevent us from saying “yes” to His calling.

In *Luke 14:33*, Jesus says, “...any one of you who does not renounce all that he has cannot be my disciple.” Jesus is saying that nothing should come between Him and us. He must be the priority.

Take a moment and pray. Pray that God would help you put your comfort in Him instead of stuff. Pray that the comforts of this world would not have a hold on your heart.

wednesday, january 18

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### GOOD COMPANY

“Now the LORD said to Abram, ‘Go from your country and your kindred and your father’s house to the land that I will show you.’” *Genesis 12:1*

Have you ever read a familiar passage of Scripture and discovered something new that you have never seen before? As we continue to look at *Genesis 12:1*, the hope is that you are discovering valuable truths that you have not seen before. Take a look at the last part of the verse, “...to the land that I will show you.”

When God called Abram to leave his comforts and follow Him, He was inviting Him on a journey. However, this was not a journey of solitude. This was a journey with the almighty God. God told Abram that He would show him the land he was supposed to go to. This meant that God was going to be leading Abram. God was going to be journeying with Him.

Just as God journeyed with Abram, God journeys with the believer. At the end of *Matthew 28*, Jesus gave His disciples one final charge. He told them to go make disciples. This was their calling. This is our calling as well! But that’s not all that Jesus said. His final words in *Matthew 28:20* are, “...And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.” Did you catch that? Jesus journeys with believers to fulfill their calling! Just as God was with Abram, God is with you.

Perhaps there were moments when Abram left his homeland and thought, “*God, are you still with me? I can’t feel your presence...*” Do you think guys like Peter, John, or James ever felt like that? If they were anything like people today, it is safe to say that they did feel like that. However, these men knew that God’s presence is more than a feeling. It’s a fact! God told Abram that He would show him where to go. This promise was not dependent on Abram’s ability to feel God’s presence. When Jesus told the early disciples that He was “*always with them,*” this was not dependent on their ability to feel His presence. Praise God, that we serve a God that is not slack concerning His promises! Even when we do not feel Him, He is near – He promised He would be.

Abram had good company on his journey to an unknown land that God would reveal. The early disciples had good company in their efforts to spread the gospel. Believers today also have good company. As we seek to follow God and live out His calling for our lives we can trust that we are in good company because the God of the universe journeys with us.

Take a moment and spend time praying and thanking God for journeying with you. Remember, just because you can’t feel God’s presence does not mean His presence is absent. Ask God for strength to know that He is with you and that He will not leave you. Today, rest in this truth, and allow it to strengthen you as you live out God’s call for your life.

*Thursday, January 19*

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#### **JUST DO IT**

*“So Abram went, as the LORD had told him, and Lot went with him...”*  
*Genesis 12:4a*

Unfortunately, many Christians never experience the fullness of God because of their lack of faith and trust. They want to follow God, they know God has called them to do something specific for Him, but they never act upon this calling. Maybe fear holds them back, fear of the unknown, fear of failure, or maybe the fear of being forsaken by God. In 1988, Nike came out with a slogan, “*Just do it.*” Since then, this

phrase has become a global expression recognized by the masses. Although the expression is geared towards athletes for motivation, Christians would be wise to follow the direction of the phrase. Just do it.

In *Genesis 12:4*, we read, “So Abram went...” Abram had heard God speak, and he had a decision to make. To say “no” would be a rejection of God and His commands. It would forfeit future blessings and lead to an unfulfilled life outside of God’s will. To continually ponder if he should trust God and take a step of faith would essentially be saying “no” to God’s commands. Although Abram needed time to process what God was calling Him to, he couldn’t just sit back and wait. At some point he had to take the leap of faith and just do it.

Has God been calling you to do something that you haven't said, “yes” to? What is keeping you from making disciples? What is keeping you from loving your neighbor? What is keeping you from going “all in” for God?

Take a moment to read and pray over *Matthew 19:16-22*. In this passage, a man’s riches keep him from following God fully. Ask God to reveal anything that may be keeping you from following Him fully. Will you surrender those to Jesus today?

*friday, january 20*

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### REMEMBER, REST, AND REJOICE

*"Arise, walk through the length and the breadth of the land, for I will give it to you." Genesis 13:17*

Take a moment to read *Genesis 13:14-18*

When we started this journey into Abram’s story we began with the calling God placed on his life. The call required trust and courage. To say, “yes” to the call would require complete dependence upon God. Abram was forced to leave comforts, but thankfully he was not alone. God was journeying with Him. His obedience was bold and daring, and in *Genesis 13* Abram saw God stay true to His word. In *Genesis 12:1*, God

told Abram He would show him the land he was to go to. In *Genesis 13:14-18*, Abram finally sees this land. Abram is affirmed that God can be trusted. He is a God that keeps His promises.

In *Genesis 13:17*, God tells Abram to walk the land that He is giving to him. Can you imagine what would have been going through Abram's mind as he was walking this land? Surely, God's Words from *Genesis 12:1* were on his mind and had been on his mind throughout this journey. It was important for Abram to remember what God had promised. Now, seeing and walking the land, Abram could rest in God's care and provision.

Just as Abram clung to God's promises, are there promises that you need to cling to and remember? Perhaps you have forgotten what God has done in your life thus far. Or perhaps you have simply forsaken God's promises because the journey seemed too difficult. John writes in *Revelation 2* about the church in Ephesus. In *verse 4* he says, "...you have abandoned the love you had at first." Take a moment to remember and reflect on what God has done in your life and the promises that you may have forgotten.

Most journeys worth taking must include rest. Rest throughout the journey and rest at the final destination. When Abram came to the land God had promised, can you imagine the rest that came over his soul? Can you imagine how Abram would have trusted in God even more? Picture a smile coming over Abram's face as God tells Him, "*Here you are son. You made it.*" Abram was able to rest in what God had done for him because he had faith in God. *Hebrews 4* speaks of resting in God. Are you currently resting in God? Are you resting in His ability to lead and guide you? Are you resting in Jesus' finished work on the cross? Are you resting in what God has done for you?

In *Genesis 13:18*, Abram makes it to the land God promised, and he constructs an altar to the LORD. Abram worshiped. He rejoiced in what God had accomplished. Today, will you make a choice to remember, rest, and rejoice?

- Remember God's Word
- Rest in God's Will
- Rejoice in God's Work

# communitylife: God's Involvement With Us



Genesis 1:26-27; 12:1-5; 2;18

## God desires to be involved with Abraham.

God loves us and wants to be \_\_\_\_\_ involved in our lives.

God wants us to live in “community” which means “complete \_\_\_\_\_” with Him.

## 1. The Ways God Made It Possible For Us To Be Involved With Him In Community *Genesis 1:26-27*

God made us in His image and likeness in the following ways:

- A. \_\_\_\_\_: we are created to represent and worship God.
- B. \_\_\_\_\_: we are created with a personality, self-consciousness, and purpose.
- C. \_\_\_\_\_: we are created with a moral compass to know right from wrong.
- D. \_\_\_\_\_: we are created with the ability to think, to know, and to learn.
- E. \_\_\_\_\_: we are made to experience intimacy with and compassion for God.
- F. \_\_\_\_\_: we are created with an insatiable desire to create.
- G. \_\_\_\_\_: we are made with the capacity to relate both to God and man.

## 2. The Characteristics of Community *Genesis 12:1-5*

Community occurs when the group:

- A. Can \_\_\_\_\_ and recognize God's voice. *Genesis 12:1a*
- B. Possesses a common \_\_\_\_\_ to trust God. *Genesis 12:1b*
- C. \_\_\_\_\_ God's commands. *Genesis 12:4-5*

## 3. The Opposition That Can Potentially Prohibit Community *Genesis 2:18*

Our adversary knows what God can and will accomplish if His people live in community. He has devised a scheme to thwart God's design. The devil wants to separate you from:

- A. \_\_\_\_\_
- B. \_\_\_\_\_ people
- C. \_\_\_\_\_ people

God is not distant, non-caring, or unapproachable. His desire and design are to be involved in the lives of mankind.

Monday, January 23

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### CREATED IN GOD'S IMAGE

*"Then God said, 'Let us make man in our image, after our likeness.'"*  
*Genesis 1:26a*

Growing up, various people always said I was the spitting image of my dad. My aunts and uncles would tell me I looked like my dad when he was a boy. Everyone called my dad "Jonesey" and me "Little Jonesey." You can only imagine how thrilled I was to know I looked like my dad!

As I have grown, not only do relatives and close friends say the older I get the more I look like my dad, they also say my mannerisms and voice are just like my dad's. Looking like my dad was not just a childhood phase, it has encompassed my whole life. Now that my dad has passed, relatives remind me quite often how much they can see my dad in me. Not only did I possess a first impression of my dad to others with whom I met, I have become a lasting impression of my dad to family and friends.

When God created man, He wanted man not only to relate to Him but to resemble Him as well. The intention is for others to see the image of God in and through our lives. The image of God is not clear cut in reference to physical appearance since no earthly being has ever seen God. So how do we resemble God? We resemble Him in our attitude and actions. As proclaiming Christ followers, through our attitude and actions, we are able to help others draw a conclusion as to who God is or could be. People can know that God is love by the way we love them. People can know God cares by the way we care for them. People can know God rejoices in their obedience when we rejoice in their obedience. People can know God feels the pain of their disappointments when we feel their pain. We, like no other part of God's creation, have the awesome privilege to relate to our Creator as well as resemble Him.

### Questions to consider:

When people meet you or you meet people for the first time, do you leave them with a glorifying first impression of God?

The more you spend time with new acquaintances, friends, and family, are you leaving them with a lasting impression of God?

Tuesday, January 24

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### TO TELL THE TRUTH

*"Now these are the generations of Terah. Terah fathered Abram, Nahor, and Haran; and Haran fathered Lot...Terah took Abram his son and Lot the son of Haran, his grandson, and Sarai his daughter-in-law, his son Abram's wife, and they went forth together from Ur of the Chaldeans to go into the land of Canaan, but when they came to Haran, they settled there." Genesis 11:27; 31*

In 1956, the television show, *To Tell the Truth*, aired on CBS. The show featured a panel of four celebrities whose object was to guess the correct identification of a described contestant who had an unusual occupation or had undergone an unusual experience. This “*central character*” was accompanied by two impostors who pretended to be the central character. The panel asked a series of questions to each contestant. The impostors were allowed to lie but the central character was sworn to “*tell the truth.*” After questioning, the panel attempted to identify the person whom they believed was telling the truth.

In *Genesis 11*, we are introduced to Terah. Terah had three sons: Abram, Nahor, and Haran. Abram had an unusual experience: God Almighty spoke to Him and expressed His desire for Abram to obey Him and become a part of His glorious community. Do you think Abram shared this conversation with his dad and brothers and perhaps invited them to join him on this journey? If so, Haran had passed away so that just left Terah and Nahor to oblige. Scripture does not mention a response from Nahor. Maybe he was not invited because Abram knew he would prove to be more of a problem than an asset.

Maybe he was not interested in following Abram on a whim because he had all the gods a person could worship. Could it be Nahor was unwilling to leave the comforts of home? Terah, on the other hand, not only accompanied Abram, he led the expedition. The trip bogged down once they reached Haran. Terah, an idol worshiper, became a deterrent to God's plan. Was the desire of Terah's heart toward the moon god more than Jehovah God the reason for the delay? Regardless of the reason, twenty-five years later and the ultimate death of Terah, the mission trip resumed. Of the three characters, Nahor and Terah proved to be imposters while Abram became God's central character who lived and served according to the truth.

**Question to consider:**

Concerning God's will for you to be in community with Him, who are you most like: Nahor – your heart is not in it so you refuse to follow God, Terah – your heart is not in it but you pretend to follow God until something “better” comes along, or Abram – your heart is in it and you follow God with all your heart?

*wednesday, january 25*

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**WHO IS THIS?**

*“Now the LORD said to Abram,” Genesis 12:1a*

If you are like me, when certain people call you, it is not necessary for them to preface the conversation by telling you who is speaking because you recognize their voice from multiple dialogues with them. When my son was a child, he would call me at work and begin the conversation with, “Hi dad, this is Jeremy!” It was not necessary for him to tell me his name because I knew it was Jeremy for one simple reason. When that squeaky male voice said, “Hi dad,” I knew who he was because I only had one son. I could not mistake that voice! My dad has been in heaven for four years and if by chance, God allowed my dad to call me on the phone, I would recognize his voice. I can still hear his voice as I reminisce over conversations we have shared.

Prior to *Genesis 11:27*, Abram had never heard the voice of God. In *Genesis 12:1*, God spoke to Abram. The wonder of wonders is this - Abram recognized this voice as being the voice of God the very first time he heard God speak! He could have said, "*Who is this?*" but he did not because it was so obvious with whom he was speaking.

In the Old Testament, God spoke only to His patriarchs, prophets, priests, and kings. He did not communicate with His entire chosen race. In the New Testament, God incarnate - Jesus Christ spoke with mankind. After the death, resurrection, and ascension of Christ, God's Holy Spirit began speaking to His children through His written Word and His still small voice within the spirit of man. The voice of God was no longer relegated to the patriarchs, prophets, priests, and kings; every child of God could hear from God. *John 10:27* says, "*My sheep hear My voice and they follow Me.*"

God speaks specifically and clearly to us so we can know who He is and what it is He wants us to do. To know how much He wants to be involved in our lives, we must hear and recognize His voice.

**Questions to Consider:**

Can you recognize the voice of God?

Has God spoken to you from His Word or through His spirit?

What has He said recently to you?

# Thursday, January 26

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## TRUST AND OBEY

*"Go from your country and your kindred and your father's house to the land that I will show you.'...So Abram went, as the LORD had told him, and Lot went with him. Abram was seventy-five years old when he departed from Haran." Genesis 12:1b; 4*

During my junior and senior years of college in Tennessee, I served as a student minister in a small country church. After graduation, our plan was to move to Texas for seminary. However, I loved serving this country church so much that I wanted to remain for another year but the pastor and my parents persuaded us to make the move to seminary. It seemed too late to enroll at Southwestern Seminary in Ft Worth, Texas, so I opted for New Orleans Seminary which was much closer to home. During my first semester, I struggled with being in New Orleans. It was not the city that bothered me, it was the fact I was attending a seminary of my choice, not the Lord's choice! As I neared the end of the first semester, I asked Karen what she thought about transferring to Southwestern for the spring semester and she replied, *"I can be ready to go in one hour!"* Needless to say, I submitted the paper work for transfer in November. After the first semester, we traveled home for Christmas. On our return to New Orleans, we expected to find a letter of acceptance from SWBTS in the mail box but there was none. The next day, we loaded a U-Haul trailer and, by faith in God, moved to Ft Worth without knowing whether or not I had been accepted. We did not have a place to stay, a job, or a school but we trusted God to provide, and He did!

God spoke specifically to Abram and commanded him to get out of his country, leave his family and his father's house. God also spoke generally to Abram and commanded him to travel to a land He would show him when he arrived. Although God spoke specifically and generally, neither command made sense. Who in their right mind would walk away from their family without a definite place to live? God's involvement with Abram required him to trust God completely. As difficult as it was, Abram passed this test because he obeyed God and did what He commanded.

I like the words from the hymn, "Trust and Obey." "When we walk with the Lord, in the light of His Word, what a glory He sheds on our way, while we do His good will, He abides with us still, and with all who will trust and obey. Trust and obey, for there's no other way, to be happy in Jesus, but to trust and obey."

**Questions to consider:**

What is God's specific purpose or command for your life?

What evidences or results prove your obedience to God's purpose or command?

Are you seeing general commands becoming more specific as you trust and obey?

*friday, january 27*

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**OBSTACLES**

*"Then the LORD God said, 'It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a helper fit for him.'" Genesis 2:18*

During my childhood, I had a paper route in a very large mobile home park. In the middle of the park was a laundry mat. One day, as I was riding my bicycle delivering papers, a big, older boy stepped out from the laundry mat and stopped me. He said he noticed me delivering papers and decided today was the day he would stop me from doing my job. He knocked over my bike and said if I ever came this way again he would beat me up! I got on my bike and rode home without finishing my route. In the days to come, I delivered papers but I avoided his street and the streets on both sides of the laundry mat. One day as I returned home from my route, my mother said the Newspaper called complaining that many of my customers had not received their papers in over a week. At first, I played dumb but eventually confessed my situation. The next day, my mother told me to deliver every paper, so I did but I saved the middle section for my last stop because I was afraid of the inevitable encounter with my bully. With fear and trepidation,

I passed the laundry mat with no sign of my bully. As I glanced to the side of the laundry mat, I noticed my big brother confronting my bully. Needless to say, my bully never bothered me again!

In *Genesis 2*, God conversed with Adam. He told him it was never a good idea to be alone. God created Adam to enjoy relationships with Him and with those whom He would ultimately create. However, the devil, our big bully, was eavesdropping and decided to become an obstacle to God's desire for involvement and fellowship with mankind. From this point forward, Satan has plotted to separate mankind from God, godly people, and good people. If he is successful in accomplishing his task of separation, then man cannot accomplish God's will. *"But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ." 1 Corinthians 15:57*

**Questions to consider:**

Are you aware of times when the devil tried to separate you from God, godly people, or good people?

Was he successful?

How did you reconnect?

Can you think of people within your realm of influence who are separated?

What can and will you do to help them reconnect?

# sharelife: God's Mission Through Us



*Genesis 12:1-4*

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## 1. God Shares His Mission With Abraham *Genesis 12: 1-4*

1. God made a \_\_\_\_\_, or a divine promise to Abraham.

## 2. What Is The Mission of God? *Psalms 67 and Psalm 117*

1. His Name is \_\_\_\_\_.

2. His \_\_\_\_\_ is established.

3. The World is \_\_\_\_\_ to Himself.

## 3. God Uses People To Reach People *Matthew 28:18-20*

God's mission is for every individual, every people group, and nation to know Him.

1. Through \_\_\_\_\_ *Genesis 12:2-4*

2. Through \_\_\_\_\_ *Exodus 3:14*

3. Through \_\_\_\_\_ *2 Samuel 7:12-16, Luke 2:1-2*

4. Through \_\_\_\_\_ *Luke 24:44-46*

5. Through \_\_\_\_\_ *Revelation 5:6-14*

## 4. How To Be On Mission With God

1. To be on mission with God requires \_\_\_\_\_.

2. To be on mission with God requires \_\_\_\_\_ in the Gospel of Jesus. *Galatians 3:26-29*

3. To be on mission with God requires \_\_\_\_\_.  
*Genesis 12:7-8; Proverbs 3:5-6*

Monday, January 30

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**BE AWARE**

*"But Jesus answered them, 'My Father is working until now, and I am working.'...So Jesus said to them, 'Truly, truly, I say to you, the Son can do nothing of his own accord, but only what he sees the Father doing. For whatever the Father does, that the Son does likewise.'" John 5:17; 19*

God The Father always had a plan before the beginning of time for you. His plan was not just for you, but also every other person that has or ever will live. God The Father is on mission to see His name glorified, His kingdom established, and to reconcile the world to Himself.

God could have used an army of Angels, but He didn't. Instead He chose His Son, Jesus. God The Father shared His plan and His Son said "Yes." Jesus must have said, *"I will, on one condition. You must show me and tell me what to do."*

In our scripture reading today, notice that Jesus recognized that God The Father was at work (on mission) to accomplish something spectacular. Jesus told His followers, *"I'm only doing what I see My Father doing."*

Be aware today. Open your spiritual eyes to see what God is doing around you. Be aware of what He says to you through His Word as you read it. Be aware of God using people you encounter today. Be aware of the circumstances you find yourself in today. Be aware and ask God as you move through the day, *"God, how are you on mission at this moment and how can I join you?"*

**Prayer:** *Heavenly Father, thank you for this day. I give this day to you. Use my life for your glory. Help me to be aware of your presence and your work around me. Amen.*

# Tuesday, January 31

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## BE OPEN

*"Jesus said to them again, 'Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, even so I am sending you.'" John 20:21*

How did yesterday go? How did you see God at work? It's amazing what we see once we become aware. Just like cars. You never saw a particular model before, but once you buy your new car, you see them everywhere on the road! Take a moment to write down what you saw God doing yesterday and thank Him for letting you see.

God uses people to reach people. Someone just like you. The disciples Jesus chose were nothing special. Just ordinary people. Several fishermen, a tax collector, and a banker (treasurer). Among them was a doubter, a thief, and prideful know-it-all. Other followers of Jesus were quiet, some were rambunctious and loud.

Jesus chose ordinary people to do extraordinary things.

Paul affirms this truth that God uses people to reach people. He wrote in *Romans 10: 14-15* *"How then will they call on him in whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in him of whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without someone preaching? And how are they to preach unless they are sent? As it is written, 'How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the good news!'"*

Be open today to truth. Jesus wants to use you. Surrender your imperfect life to a perfect Father. God wants to use you just like He used the people you saw at work around you yesterday.

*Prayer: Heavenly Father, I surrender my life and this day to you. Use me as I am for your glory. Forgive me for doubting that You could use me. Thank you that I am fearfully and wonderfully made by You. I make no more excuses to you Lord. Use me to reach others for Jesus today. Amen.*

# wednesday, february 1

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## BE READY

*"Stay dressed for action and keep your lamps burning,...You also must be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect."  
Luke 12: 35,40.*

What is the one word to describe your experience yesterday walking with God in awareness of His work around you and your openness to be used? Be honest. Take a moment to write it down.

Perhaps your word was "great" or "scary" or "disappointing". Whatever your experience yesterday, God is still working to fulfill His mission. No matter what happened yesterday or today, be ready. Be ready for God to use you. Be ready for Jesus' second coming.

In *Luke 12: 35-40*, Jesus uses a parable of expectant employees, waiting for their boss to return. He says to stay dressed for action and keep your lamps burning. You never know when or where The Lord will need you for His service, but you must be ready. Remember Paul's words to young Timothy, "*Be diligent to present yourself approved to God as a workman who does not need to be ashamed, handling accurately the word of truth.*" Stay faithful to the reading of God's Word and to prayer. Be ready. Jesus is returning one day. Be found faithfully loving God and serving people when He returns.

**Prayer:** *Heavenly Father, thank you for today and the opportunity to serve you. Help me to be ready to serve you. Help me continually be aware of what you're doing. I am ready to do whatever you ask of me today.*

# Thursday, February 2

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## BE WILLING

*"And going a little farther he fell on his face and prayed, saying, 'My Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as you will.'" Matthew 26:39*

Like a player on the bench, were you ready to jump in the game when God called yesterday? Write down your response to God's promptings from the previous day.

God has a plan to redeem the world to Himself. It required the sacrifice of His holy and beloved Son (*John 3:16*). Jesus was obedient and willing to do whatever it took to save us from our sin and restore us to relationship to God The Father, even if it meant His own death.

Just hours before His crucifixion, Jesus was alone in prayer to The Father. Jesus knew His time had come to suffer. He asked The Father, *"if it be possible let this cup pass from me"*. But He continues, *"Nevertheless, not as I will but as you will."*

Jesus was willing to go to the cross. Jesus has asked His followers to take up their cross. *"Then Jesus told his disciples, 'If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me.'" Matthew 16:24.*

It's great that you have learned to be aware of God's work around you. It's fantastic that you're open and ready for God to use you. But you must be willing. There is a difference between being ready and willing. To be ready means *"I can"*, to be willing means *"I want to"*.

Be willing. Like an eager child in a preschool class with his hand raised high to the teacher saying *"Choose me!, Choose me!"* Be willing to join God on mission today to make His name known, His Kingdom established and the world reconciled to Himself.

*Prayer: Heavenly Father, I'm so grateful you chose me today to be a part of your kingdom work. I eagerly look forward to this day. I choose to act in obedience to your promptings even if it comes at great cost to me. With anticipation I pray for an opportunity to honor You by blessing others and pointing them to Your Son, Jesus. Amen.*

*friday, february 3*

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### **BE ABLE**

Here we are at the end of the week. With each devotional we have moved from being aware of God's mission to joining Him in His work. Today's reading is a prayer. One written by the Apostle Paul to the Ephesian Church.

*"For this reason, because I have heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love toward all the saints, I do not cease to give thanks for you, remembering you in my prayers, that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give you the Spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of him, having the eyes of your hearts enlightened, that you may know what is the hope to which he has called you, what are the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints, and what is the immeasurable greatness of his power toward us who believe, according to the working of his great might that he worked in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly places, far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and above every name that is named, not only in this age but also in the one to come. And he put all things under his feet and gave him as head over all things to the church, which is his body, the fullness of him who fills all in all." Ephesians 1:15-23*

Be able. Know that God The Father has not only called you, but He has enabled you with His power. His power is great towards those who believe. Go today in His strength. Be able because God is able. It is in God that we "live, move and have our being" (Acts 17:28). God has equipped you and anyone who will believe with power through The Gospel of His Son, Jesus (Romans 1:16).

**Prayer:** *Thank you Heavenly Father that you have made me able. I do not have to walk through today in my own strength. You have given me the ability to do all things you ask of me today. I am confident and not ashamed of the Gospel, for it is your power that saves me and everyone I share Jesus with today. Let my eyes be aware of your work and let me follow you in obedience and power. Amen.*





