

Blessed to Bless : Abraham

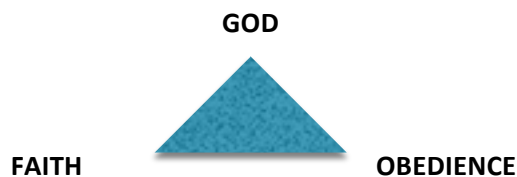
SCRIPTURE: Genesis 12: 1-2 *Now the LORD said to Abram, “ Go forth from your country, and from your relatives and from your father’s house, to the land which I will show you. And I will make you a great nation, and I will bless you, and make your name great; and so you shall be a blessing.*

God commanded Abram to leave everything he had been accustomed to and go to a place where God would show him. Abram had no map, no idea where God was sending him and yet he followed God by faith. What does this phrase “by faith” mean ? Hebrews 11:1 defines to us what faith is : ***Faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen.*** And verse 6 continues to teach us why it is important: ***without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is and that He is the rewarder of those who seek Him.*** So by faith, Abraham obeyed going out to a place which he is to received. (verse 8)

Many times this is an area where we all struggle with. We are unable to have complete faith in God because we do not know Him and do not know His commandments. And when we do know a little of God’s word, we try to bend it and interpret it to fit our needs.

Why did God want Abram to leave his homeland? First because his family had served pagan gods (Joshua 24:2) and God wanted to bless Abraham (Genesis 12:2). God told Abraham in Genesis 12: 2-3 ***And I will make you a great nation, and I will bless you, and make your name great; and so you shall be a blessing; And I will bless those who will bless you and one who curses you I will curse, And in you all the families of the earth will be blessed.*** This was God’s promise to Abraham – a promise of protection and blessing. Abraham knew the Lord, knew His characteristics and knew that He would keep His promises that is why despite his age, Abraham packed his wife Sarai, his nephew Lot and all his possessions and went forth completely obeying God’s command.

God’s triangle of blessings



If you want to experience God’s blessings you must live in the triangle of divine blessings. There are three things we must understand about this triangle.

1. GOD – blessings come from God. It is His nature to bless but you must first have a relationship with Him. In order to have a relationship with God, we must have a personal encounter with God.
2. Faith – you must have faith in God. You must trust and believe that God is a rewarder of the faithful. In order to strengthen our faith, we have to study His word and draw closer in our relationship with Him.
3. Obedience – is the evidence of our faith. This is the completion of our faith. They are inseparable because faith without obedience is dead. (James 2:17)

True faith is centered on God and His word that is then evidenced by obedience, resulting in blessings.

When Abraham arrived in the land of Canaan, it was occupied by the Canaanites. But Abraham did not falter, instead he built an altar and called upon the Lord. But during his journey, they had encountered famine. This is something we have to remember – even though we are obeying God, it does not exempt us from problems. Being in God’s will does not mean we will live without trials instead our faith and obedience will be continually tested.

This happened to Abraham. When they entered into Egypt, out of fear for his life he told Sarai that in Genesis 12:13 to say that she is his sister. When we are outside the protection of God, we will fall into sin. How did Abraham go outside the circle of God’s protection? Isaiah 30:2 says they ***proceeded down to Egypt without consulting Me, to take refuge in the safety of Pharaoh and to seek shelter in the shadow of Egypt.*** Abraham had forgotten that God had promised to be their protector and their provider. Instead they had relied on the riches and promises of Egypt.

But God used Pharaoh, a pagan king, to rebuke him. God struck Pharaoh and his house with a plague so Pharaoh threw them out of Egypt. In God’s graciousness, He still blessed Abraham despite his disobedience and his sin. Abraham then returned to the place where he encountered the Lord, and returned to the altar he had built for the Lord.





Today, we too have been blessed. Galatians 3:14 says ***in order that in Christ Jesus the blessing of Abraham might come to the Gentiles, so that we would receive the promise of the Spirit through faith.*** We too can partake in the God’s promised blessing and protection to Abraham if we have a personal relationship with Jesus Christ.

So how do we do this since we are all sinners? In Joel 2:12-13 it says ***yet even now, declares the Lord, “return to Me with all your heart, and with fasting, weeping and mourning; and rend your heart and not your garments. “ Now return to the Lord your God, for He is gracious and compassionate, slow to anger, abounding in lovingkindness and relenting of evil.”***

This is what God is asking us to do – to mourn over our sin, to lament over our sin, to tear our hearts and return Him because He is gracious and compassionate. God is asking us to return to Him with ALL OUR HEART. Have we gone back to the place where we first encountered Jesus?

APPLICATION:

Patiently listen as God reveals where you can apply the passage’s lesson in your life. Write down specific action points to what He has revealed to you.

	<p>Personal: What is keeping you from completely trusting and obeying God? Have we been too focused on the blessings, that we have forgotten the source of our blessings? Where are you in your spiritual journey? Are you finding refuge in Egypt or are you in the place where you first encountered God?</p>
	<p>Family: How are you as a family growing in your faith? How are you progressing in your spiritual walk? Is God asking you to move out of your comfort zone and go to a place where He wants to send you?</p>
	<p>Discipleship: How are you actively participating in God’s redemptive plan of salvation? How are you sharing your blessings to others?</p>
	<p>Church/ Ministry: God’s desire is for everyone to know of His great love and mercy. What are you doing in order to share this to others? God commands “ Go and multiply! Go and make disciples” Have you responded “yes Lord!” What are you doing to obey His command?</p>

PRAYERS:

Lift all the things that you learned back to God. Share your thoughts to Him. If He is impressing a sin in your life, confess it to Him. He is always ready to forgive.