

Then the Lord appeared to Abram and said, "To your offspring I will give this land." So he built there an altar to the Lord, who had appeared to him. From there he moved to the hill country on the east of Bethel and pitched his tent, with Bethel on the west and Ai on the east. And there he built an altar to the Lord and called upon the name of the Lord.

- GENESIS 12:7,8

FELLOWSHIP

(Start the conversation and get to know more about the people in the group. You can choose to answer one question.)

1. *What are you thankful for today?*
2. *Do you or someone else pack your things when you're going for a trip? Why?*

MEDITATE AND PROCLAIM

(Scripture to be gleaned from and how we can apply the Word in our lives and encourage others to do the same)

OBEDIENCE

In Genesis 12:5, we read that Abram took his wife Sarai, nephew Lot and all their possessions to go to a new land. This was no easy task. For Abram to lead this caravan (his family, servants and livestock), he really must have a big faith in God. Abram's journey with the Lord was just beginning and his faith was probably not that strong yet. But he was starting it right - with obedience in a big and awesome God!

Abram knew that God had called him to go to this new land, even though he didn't know exactly where he was going. When they arrived in the land of Canaan, it was inhabited (see Genesis 12:6). It probably did not make sense to Abram that God asked him to go to this new land and arrive there only to find out that someone beat him to it. But he kept his trust in God and his relationship with the Lord just grew deeper from then on. His faith gave him the courage and determination to live for God in a pagan land.

*Trust in him at all times, O people;
pour out your heart before him;
God is a refuge for us. - PSALM 62:8*

*Trust in the Lord with all your heart,
and do not lean on your own understanding.
In all your ways acknowledge him,
and he will make straight your paths. - PROVERBS 3:5,6*

DISCUSS: WAS THERE A TIME THAT YOU OBEYED GOD BUT THE RESULTS OF IT DID NOT INITIALLY MAKE SENSE? TELL US ABOUT IT.

THANKSGIVING

Abram faced his first trial after obeying God: Canaanites living in the land God promised to him. In Genesis 12:7, the Lord appears and speaks to Abram. The key to growing faith in the midst of trials is hearing and heeding the voice of the Lord. God made Himself real to Abram, the one who is a stranger in a foreign land, and reaffirmed him of His promise of offspring and ownership of the land. Abram *"built there an altar to the Lord, who had appeared to him."* (see Genesis 12:7)

The Hebrew word for altar is *'mizbeach'* - a place of sacrifice, its verbal root means 'to slaughter'. When Abram built this first altar, it was thankfulness and praise for God's reassuring of His promise and also possibly, to thank God for His protection from the Canaanites that could have attacked and destroyed them for trespassing in their land. But more than anything, this first altar was in response to God's new revelation of Himself to Abram.

*Offer to God a sacrifice of thanksgiving,
and perform your vows to the Most High,
and call upon me in the day of trouble;
I will deliver you, and you shall glorify me." - PSALM 40:14,5*

Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. - PHILIPPIANS 4:6

DISCUSS: WHAT IS ONE RECENT BLESSING THAT YOU ARE THANKFUL TO GOD FOR?

WORSHIP

Throughout Abram's life, we will see him building altars. The altars symbolised his worship and means of fellowship with God. When Abram began to follow the Lord, he became a true worshiper.

The call of God is a call to worship. Jesus said, *"but whoever denies me before men, I also will deny before my Father who is in heaven* (see Matthew 10:33). We cannot worship God in secret. Like Abraham, we must proclaim him and worship him everywhere we go. We were created to worship: to glorify God and enjoy him forever.

Abram was in a land full of idols and idolaters. However, as part of his call, he boldly worshiped the true and living God. This should be how we live as well. We can build our altars wherever we go. We can worship at work, school, during meals and even at play. Everything we do should be worship to God. The apostle Paul writes in 1 Corinthians 10:31, *"So, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.* Everything can be worship as we offer it to the Lord in prayer, as we work at it with all our heart, and as we seek to honour God through it.

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.

- **ROMANS 12:1**

Our worship is a response to what God has done for us. The greatest blessing we have received is Jesus, the Lamb of God, the perfect sacrifice on the altar for our sins. Our Heavenly Father did this so we could be restored in a loving relationship with Him, so we could truly worship Him.

The next day he saw Jesus coming toward him, and said, "Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!" - **JOHN 1:29**

In this the love of God was made manifest among us, that God sent his only Son into the world, so that we might live through him. - **1 JOHN 4:9**

DISCUSS: HOW ARE YOU LIVING A LIFE OF WORSHIP? IN WHAT WAYS IS GOD CALLING YOU TO WORSHIP HIM?

PRAY

(Remember to do this. Pray for one another; for everyone to live out the Word and for any other specific prayer needs)

Ask God for His grace to help us obey in faith, be thankful in all circumstances and be worshipful in everything we do.



EVERY NATION
CHURCH • SINGAPORE

   @everynationsg