



Dilemmas and Decisions Bible Study Leader's Guide

[Please provide: Bibles and copies of the Bible study for attendees.]

Most of us change homes multiple times in our lives. We start with our first move from our parents' houses, whether we are going to college, getting married, or starting our first career. Then there may be a transfer to another town, a need for a bigger home, downsizing as empty nesters, or the addition of a vacation home in our future. Whatever the case, moves are always a bit frantic.

There are things to eliminate (sell, toss, or give away), things to pack (ship, carry, or delegate to the professionals), arrangements to be made with utilities and other incidentals (pets, school records, or changing banks). Timelines are enforced. Have you sold your house? Have you found a new one? Does it include everything on your wish list while still in your price range? **Facilitate a discussion about different moving experiences.**

These dilemmas are not new. We are not the first ones to have to pack and move into the unknown. Read about Abram's move in **Genesis 12:1-9**.

Genesis 12:1-9 Now the LORD said^[a] to Abram, "Go from your country^[b] and your kindred and your father's house to the land that I will show you. ² 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. ³ 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." ⁴ 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. ⁵ And Abram took Sarai his wife, and Lot his brother's son, and all their possessions that they had gathered, and the people that they had acquired in Haran, and they set out to go to the land of Canaan. When they came to the land of Canaan, ⁶ Abram passed through the land to the place at Shechem, to the oak^[c] of Moreh. At that time the Canaanites were in the land. ⁷ 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. ⁸ 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. ⁹ And Abram journeyed on, still going toward the Negeb.

Can you imagine leaving your home and not even having an exact destination in mind? Where does the Lord tell Abram he is going in verse 1? **God does not tell him where, only that He will show him.**

God promises Abram that he will be blessed. In fact, He stresses that to Abram multiple times. How many times is a form of the word "bless" used in verses 2 and 3? **5**

What was the blessing? **God will make Abram a great nation and make his name great so he can be a blessing to others. Those who bless Abram and his family will also be blessed.**

Read **Luke 1:73-79**. What blessing is promised here?

Luke 1:73-79 the oath that he swore to our father Abraham, to grant us

⁷⁴ that we, being delivered from the hand of our enemies,
might serve him without fear,

⁷⁵ in holiness and righteousness before him all our days.

⁷⁶ And you, child, will be called the prophet of the Most High;
for you will go before the Lord to prepare his ways,

⁷⁷ to give knowledge of salvation to his people
in the forgiveness of their sins,

⁷⁸ because of the tender mercy of our God,
whereby the sunrise shall visit us^[a] from on high

⁷⁹ to give light to those who sit in darkness and in the shadow of death,
to guide our feet into the way of peace.”

The salvation of mankind. This is the blessing Zechariah spoke after the birth of his son. We know him as John the Baptist. The blessing is not just that John would a prophet, but that there would be one to bring salvation to all people. The Most High, our Savior, Jesus.

If you have experienced a stressful move, how many people did you move? How many people do you think Abram was moving? (verses 4-5. These are listed above.) Remember *all their possessions that they had gathered* would include servants, laborers, children, and possibly relatives other than the named Lot. Without modern conveniences, this would be quite an undertaking. There is no number attributed to the “people he had acquired in Haran” but historian Josephus quotes from the fourth book of Nicolaus of Damascus that “(Abram)...came with an army out of the land above Babylon,... and went into the land called Canaan, but of the land of Judea...”

Abram stops at the oak of Moreh in verse 6. In Hebrew, Moreh means teacher. What happens there (verse 7)? The Lord appears to Abram telling him he will give the land to him and his offspring so Abram builds Him an altar.

When we are in the middle of a tremendous undertaking, do we stop to listen to God and worship Him? How might that change things? Answers will vary but help steer the discussion to thinking about God’s guidance in our lives.

Abram continues on to the hill country east of Bethel (verse 8) and builds another altar. Bethel means house of God. Later, in **Genesis 28:18-22**, who else encounters God at Bethel? What is his promise to God?

Genesis 28:18-22 ¹⁸ So early in the morning Jacob took the stone that he had put under his head and set it up for a pillar and poured oil on the top of it. ¹⁹ He called the name of that place Bethel,^[a] but the name of the city was Luz at the first. ²⁰ Then Jacob made a vow, saying, “If God will be with me and will keep me in this way that I go, and will give me bread to eat and clothing to wear, ²¹ so that I come again to my father's house in peace, then the LORD shall be my

God, ²² and this stone, which I have set up for a pillar, shall be God's house. And of all that you give me I will give a full tenth to you.”

Jacob The Lord will be his God and he will give back a tenth of everything the Lord gives him.

But Abram was still not to his destination. In verse 9, where is he heading? Negeb

Abraham (earlier known as Abram) travels most of his life. He begins in “Ur of the Chaldeans” (Genesis 11:28, 31), migrates to Haran (Genesis 11:27-32), is called to Canaan (discussed above), sojourns to Egypt during the famine (Genesis 12:9-20), returns to Canaan (Genesis 13), nearly sacrifices Isaac at Moriah which is possibly current day Jerusalem (Genesis 22) , and continues until his burial near Mamre (Genesis 25:9-10).

Abraham traveled most of his life and, actually, never owned any of the land on which he lived. He knew his final resting place was in heaven, and he was only passing through this world. Abraham’s life journey has lessons for us today. When we are too busy with our hectic itineraries to spend time with God, what should we do? Read the following:

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Read the following for guidance:

Acts 17:26-28 ²⁶ And he made from one man every nation of mankind to live on all the face of the earth, having determined allotted periods and the boundaries of their dwelling place, ²⁷ that they should seek God, and perhaps feel their way toward him and find him. Yet he is actually not far from each one of us, ²⁸ for “ ‘In him we live and move and have our being’, as even some of your own poets have said, “ ‘For we are indeed his offspring.’”

Seek God. Perhaps feel your way toward him and find him. In Him, live and move and have our being.

Proverbs 15:22-25 Without counsel plans fail,
but with many advisers they succeed.

²³ To make an apt answer is a joy to a man,
and a word in season, how good it is!

²⁴ The path of life leads upward for the prudent,
that he may turn away from Sheol beneath.

²⁵ The LORD tears down the house of the proud
but maintains the widow's boundaries.

Seek counsel from many good sources. Be prudent and not proud.

Colossians 3:2 ² Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth.

Set your mind on things above and not earthly things.

Hebrew 11:8-11 ⁸ 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. ⁹ 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. ¹⁰ For he was looking forward to the city that

has foundations, whose designer and builder is God. ¹¹ By faith Sarah herself received power to conceive, even when she was past the age, since she considered him faithful who had promised.

Be led by faith in the promises of God. As God's people we are blessed to have His word to guide us. He also gives us the Sacraments of Baptism and Holy Communion to give and strengthen our faith in Him. We seek the Lord and his counsel, we are blessed to have faith in Him, but our biggest blessing is in Him choosing us. We are His by His work alone, not by anything we have done.

It does not help to worry over the dilemmas that are thrown our way. I know that is easier said than done. But trusting in the Lord rather than relying on our own understanding is a biblical calling. Have faith, seek wise counsel, and move forward with the plans the Lord has made for you.

Read **Psalm 20:4-7**. Shout for joy over your salvation as you trust in the name of the Lord our God.

Psalm 20:4-7 May he grant you your heart's desire and fulfill all your plans! ⁵ May we shout for joy over your salvation, and in the name of our God set up our banners! May the LORD fulfill all your petitions!

⁶ Now I know that the LORD saves his anointed; he will answer him from his holy heaven with the saving might of his right hand. ⁷ Some trust in chariots and some in horses, but we trust in the name of the LORD our God.

Closing Prayer: Prayer: Lord, sometimes I feel like I am traveling in circles, with no global positioning system to point the way. Help me seek Your way for my life, Lord, so that my destination is always in the arms of Jesus. In Jesus' name. Amen.