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Hearing God's Call

Genesis 12

In J. R. R. Tolkien's classic tale *The Lord of the Rings*, a hobbit named Frodo is told he must leave his comfortable home in the Shire and travel to a distant land. When the initial shock wears off, he comments, "Of course, I have sometimes thought of going away, but I imagined that as a kind of holiday, a series of adventures like Bilbo's or better, ending in peace. But this would mean exile, a flight from danger into danger. . . . As for where I am going, it would be difficult to give that away, for I have no clear idea myself, yet . . . where am I to go? And by what shall I steer? What is to be my quest? . . . I feel very small, and very uprooted, and well—desperate."*

GROUP DISCUSSION. Describe a time when you were asked to leave your comfort zone and do something unfamiliar and difficult.

PERSONAL REFLECTION. Why do you think God sometimes asks us to leave our comfort zones?

In Genesis 12, God commands Abram to leave everything that





10 ————— *Abraham*

is familiar, comfortable and secure in order to fulfill God's plan for his life. *Read Genesis 12.*

1. What would be difficult about leaving your country, your people and your extended family in order to go to an unknown destination (v. 1)?

2. What are the various facets of the promises God makes to Abram (vv. 2-3)?

3. In what ways does God call us to give up our comfort and security in the present in order to embrace his promises for the future?

4. Clearly the author of Genesis isn't interested in the details of Abram's journey: "They set out for the land of Canaan, and they arrived there." What is the primary focus of verses 4-5, and why? (See also Hebrews 11:8.)

5. In verses 6-7 what two key statements seem to clash with each other and create tension?





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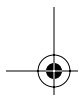
6. How do you typically respond when God's promises seem to clash with present realities?

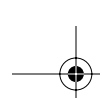
7. What evidence do we see that Abram resolved this tension in his own heart and mind (vv. 7-9)?

8. In verses 10-16 how do the changes in Abram's life and circumstances threaten both his faith in God and the promises God made to him?

9. Why do you think God punishes Pharaoh, who acted in ignorance, instead of Abram, who acted in disobedience and unbelief (vv. 17-20)?

10. What does Genesis 12 teach you about the practical realities of living by faith?





12 ————— *Abraham*

Three times in this passage we are told that Abram built an altar to the Lord and worshiped him (12:7-8; 13:4). Take time now to thank God for his promises to you and his faithfulness in your life.

Now or Later

Biblical scholars often see parallels between Abram's time in Egypt and Israel's stay there prior to the exodus. Read the following texts. What similarities do you see in these two accounts?

Genesis 12:10 and 47:4

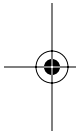
Genesis 12:12-15 and Exodus 1:11-14

Genesis 12:17 and Exodus 7:14—12:30

Genesis 12:16, 20 and Exodus 12:33-36

Genesis 13:3 and Exodus 17:1

Genesis 13:3-4 and Exodus 15:17**



*J. R. R. Tolkien, *The Lord of the Rings* (Great Britain: HarperCollins, 1994), pp. 61, 64-65.

**Bruce K. Waltke, *Genesis* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan, 2001), p. 217.

