



LOVE

—THIS—

BOOK

SERMON NOTES

A BETTER STORY

“The Lord had said to Abram, ‘Go from your country, your people and your father’s household to the land I will show you. I will make you into a great nation, and I will bless you; I will make your name great, and you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and whoever curses you I will curse; and all peoples on earth will be blessed through you.’” (Genesis 12:1-3)

“Understand, then, that those who have faith are children of Abraham. Scripture foresaw that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, and announced the gospel in advance to Abraham: ‘All the nations will be blessed through you.’ So those who rely on faith are blessed along with Abraham, the man of faith.” (Galatians 3:7-9)

GO...from your country (v. 1)

- I will make you into a great nation
- I will bless you
- I will make your name great

BE...a blessing (v. 2)

- I will bless those who bless you (v. 3)
- I will curse those who curse you
- All the people of the earth will be blessed through you

Two Themes:

- Calling

“Now there was a famine in the land, and Abram went down to Egypt to live there for a while because the famine was severe.” (Genesis 12:10)

- Blessing

“expresses God’s purpose to give his creatures all they need to fulfill their lives in his creation as he intends for them”

LOVE THIS BOOK

WEEK ONE: GENESIS 12, 13-14, 22

Description for Series

LOVE THIS BOOK: Shaped by God's Story will take us further into the narrative of God by introducing us to ordinary people as they wrestled with their circumstances and how to respond to the events in their culture. We will meet real people who were less than perfect in their obedience to God but often continued to pursue him even in the midst of their struggle. We will also meet people who seemingly never truly understood what it looked like to follow God's ways.

Engaging the Study:

1. Begin each study with expectant prayer. Ask the Spirit to guide your thoughts as you read the passage and engage the questions. Then, conclude your time with a prayer that seeks how you can apply what you gleaned from the study during your day.
2. For this study, we will use the rhythm of **Read, Reflect, and Respond**. Read the passages several times during the week and then take three days to engage the questions. The **Read** portion of the study will help you gain information about the story, the **Reflect** portion will help you focus on the formational element of your faith journey, and the **Respond** portion will allow you to act on how the Spirit is prompting you from your study.
3. You are encouraged to journal your thoughts as you engage the passages.
4. Use the links on hfcinfo.com to connect you to additional resources that will expand your understanding of the passages.

WEEK 1 | JANUARY 3

Genesis 12, 13-14, 22

As we start this study, we will revisit a key passage in Genesis. In Genesis 12, God reveals his promise to Abraham, but this promise is intended to go beyond Abraham's life. It is a covenant that is formally made with Abraham but intended to extend to others who choose, by faith, to embrace the promise, which is the foundation of God's mission. Put yourself in Abraham's shoes this week and think about what it means for you to embrace the promise and the mission of God in your life.

View this week's video on hfcinfo.com which overviews the covenants in the Bible.

Take time to view the Bible Project overview of chapters 12-50 in the book of Genesis before engaging the passages for your personal devotions.

DAY ONE

READ Genesis 12.

- Note how many times the word “you” is used in the first three verses. What does this tell you about the way that God was communicating with Abraham?

REFLECT on the promises of God to Abraham in the first three verses.

- What do they tell you about the power of God? What are the implications for you today?

RESPOND to the reading by focusing on the remaining verses in chapter 12. Abraham responds obediently to God’s words.

- Are there ways that the Spirit is prompting you to respond to the promise to be a blessing to others? What can you do today to bless others?

DAY TWO

READ Genesis 13-14. Abraham returns to Canaan after his time in Egypt where he gives in to fear and attempts to protect Sarah with his own plan, which fails. However, the Lord is still faithful to his promise to Abraham and continues to bless him. When Abraham meets Lot, he is confronted by Lot’s desire to separate from Abraham and choose his own place to live. Abraham gives Lot the freedom to choose the place where he will live.

- Why do you think Abraham was able to give Lot the first choice of land? What has changed in his perspective? Why was Abraham willing to rescue Lot?
- What assurances does God give to Abraham after Lot chooses the land where he will live?

REFLECT on the interaction between Abraham and Lot. What can you learn from Abraham about how to face conflict with another person?

RESPOND by acknowledging individuals with whom you have had conflict. Discern if you need to



DAY THREE

READ Genesis 22. This last interaction reveals Abraham's most difficult test of faith. God asks him to sacrifice his only son, the son whom he loves with his whole heart.

- How does Abraham respond to God's voice? What is his response to Isaac when they start their journey?

REFLECT on a time when your faith has been tested and stretched. What was your response to God's voice?

RESPOND by asking God to show you how you can overcome fear with faith in a circumstance that you are currently facing.

Take-away: How has looking at the life of Abraham reminded you of God's faithfulness in your life?

SMALL GROUP & FAMILY DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What excites you about doing the Love This Book Study together as a family/small group? What would you like to get out this study?
2. What are some of your favorite stories? What sets those stories apart for you? Why are stories important in culture and in our lives?
3. If you were thinking of the Bible as a movie plot, how would you describe it in 1-3 sentences? What would be the key themes for this film?
4. Spend some time reading Genesis 12 together.
 - Why do you think Abraham was willing to leave Ur even though God hadn't revealed the name of the place where he was to settle?
 - Who are the key characters in this passage? What are they key themes from this passage?
 - Think about the trip to Egypt. Why was it hard for Abraham to fully trust God? What happens to our outlook and responses when we lose control or don't understand what God is doing? How can we practically trust God even when you don't always know what's happening?
5. The Love This Book study this year focuses on what it means to be shaped by God and his grace. What does it mean to be both a recipient and an agent of God's grace? What are some practical ways you can be an agent of grace this week? Who could be a recipient of grace in your life?

