

## CLOUD OF WITNESSES | 03:: Abraham

**PRAYER:** Life can be so busy and crammed with things to do, but don't rush past these moments with the Lord. Savor it! Sit for a second and just talk with Jesus and pray about whatever comes to mind. Ask the Holy Spirit to reveal something new to you and to give you something specific to carry into your week. He loves you and I know He will not withhold when you seek Him.



Have you ever wished you knew what the future was like? Have you ever longed for something that was coming in the future? Wondering sometimes if it was actually coming? Our next guy knows what it's like to follow God and have no roadmap. As we continue down our list of great cheerleaders in the faith, we come to Abraham.

And let me just say right now – these next few studies have a lot of questions. And it would be a really good practice for you to get your journal out and maybe write out the questions and then write your answer to each of these. Writing the answers will help you remember the information you are learning so that it is locked in your brain and you can pull it out when you need it later. If you don't want to write the questions, that's fine. It will just help you have context when you're flipping back through your journal in the future. Don't forget that there is also a printable version of all these posts at the bottom of the page.

If you've been following along this whole series, I'm sure you can guess what we need to do first.

**READ HEBREWS 11:8-10. WHAT DOES IT SAY ABOUT ABRAHAM IN THESE VERSES? CAN YOU PICK OUT THE PHRASE THAT SETS HIS FAITH APART?**

Spoiler Alert! Abraham obeyed God (definitely seeing a pattern here...) and left his home even though he did not know where he was going. Hold your spot in Hebrews (we'll be coming back to it a lot) and let's read the full story in Genesis. But first, let's get a little background.



## READ GENESIS 11:27-32. WHAT WERE ABRAHAM'S AND HIS WIFE'S ORIGINAL NAMES?

### WHERE WERE THEY FROM ORIGINALLY? WHERE DID THEY MOVE?

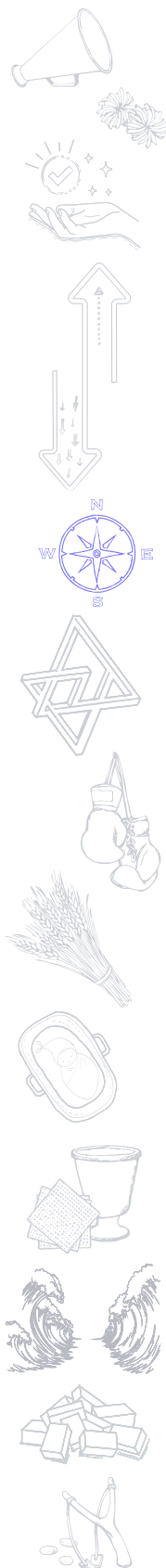
We'll wade through all of this in the next post. It's not just random facts – just wanted to lay the groundwork for some context. But, right now let's take a sharp turn from Abraham's background to God's initial promise. Hold on tight and let's dig into Genesis 12.

### READ GENESIS 12:1-9. LIST ALL OF THE THINGS THESE VERSES MENTION ABOUT ABRAM.

We don't know how long Abraham (Abram) and his family had been in Haran, but we do know that he had enough time living there to accumulate wealth. He had livestock, he had employees (herdsmen, servants, etc. – verse 5 says "he took the people he had taken into his household"). This was his home. His extended family was there and the Lord asked him to move.

Sometimes the Lord calls us out of where it's comfortable and draws us into the uncomfortable. This isn't to be mean or to "take something away from us," it is so we will learn to trust Him. When you were little did you take swim lessons? Do you remember what it's like to swim in the deep end as you are just learning to swim? Maybe there was a time you had to rely on floaties or a boogie board or a pool noodle just to stay above water. That's what trusting the Lord is like when He calls you to the deep. He wants to be your floaties, your pool noodle. He wants you to cling to Him with all you've got and rely on Him to get where you are going – because He is taking you somewhere and doing something with your life.

Let me clarify something – if you are in an *uncomfortable situation*, like, let's say your parents are constantly fighting, or you are being (or have been) abused, or there's a bully at school, or you feel pressured by someone to do things you are uncomfortable with – those things are **NOT** God calling you to the deep. Yes, in these moments He wants you to rely on Him as a life raft, but these are not from Him. What we're talking about, here, is moments where God asks you to do something that is out of your comfort zone. Like: giving up a friend that you've known a long time but is now living in a way that could pull you from Jesus, or having to move to a new city or to a new school and make new friends or asking you to share with a friend who doesn't know Jesus even though they could reject you... These are things that we might consider to be uncomfortable when He asks but are actually good for us. See the difference?



## READ GENESIS 12:1 AND 12:4-5 AGAIN. WHAT WAS ABRAHAM'S RESPONSE?

Notice God didn't say, "Hey Abram! Pack your bags and I'm going to take you to X, Y, Z place." Or send him a roadmap floating down from the sky and landing at his feet. The Lord said, "Go to the place I will show you." And let me say – God is omniscient, meaning He knows everything. What was. What will be. What is right now. He sees all of it for the whole world. Every person's life, words, actions... where they're going... what they'll do next. So, it's not like God was like "Hey! Let's go on a road trip and I'll just figure it out as I go." He was intentionally withholding information from Abram.

## WHY DO YOU THINK GOD WITHHOLDS INFORMATION FROM US?

Let's think about this. Once you learned to tie your shoes, did you go to your parents or

older siblings to tie your shoes anymore? No. You are independent, now, in that and you can tie your own shoes. That's kind of what it's like with us and God. Pastor Louie put it best in his talk (and below you can find the link to his message on Abraham from PCC's Hebrews 11 series) when he said,

*"God isn't interested in giving you a map. He's interested in you taking a step. If God gave most of us a map, He'd never see us again. God didn't create you for a map, He created you for a relationship with Him. And if He told you what the next 10 miles were, He probably wouldn't hear from you for the next 10 miles. But if He told you what the next step was, you'd take hold of His hand and say, 'Ok. If you're gonna call me to take one step, I'm gonna take one step. And then – oh great! We're going to have to do this again because You're going to have to show me the next step 'cause I don't know anything but one step, but I've got You and an encounter with you and I'm willing to take that step with you.' "*<sup>1</sup>

And I would add to his point that we naturally crave to be in control. We want what we want. If God said, "Hey! I know you've been praying for X, and I just want you to know that in the end, I'm going to come through and X is going to happen." You would most likely take that knowledge and try to manipulate the situation to make X come faster. Or try to "help" God move things along. Or if He told you that there were going to be a few roadblocks or detours along the way, you'd complain and wonder why we couldn't just go the straight path. Maybe you wouldn't obey Him if you knew the path included hardship. But instead, we're called to trust Him. To rely on Him. To put faith in the fact that He is over *all things*. There is nothing that will thwart His authority. There is nothing that will get in the way of Him getting what He wants. He uses all things to bring about that purpose and





Basically, this passage is saying that everyone listed in this “Hall of Faith” was walking by faith every day until he or she passed away. Some of the stories in this series tell of a promise that people did get to enjoy. But most of them were only part of the bigger gospel story and they all passed away before Jesus arrived on the scene. Regardless, they believed God and worshipped God and were looking forward to Heaven. They trusted that the promises would be fulfilled even if it wasn’t in their lifetime. It also says that if they wanted to, these people could have turned around and “gone home” rather than obeying God, which shows that their acts of faith were by choice. And we all have this choice.

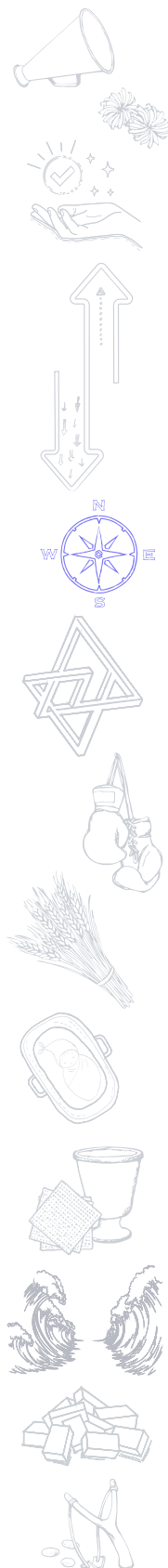
## NOW, LET’S FLIP TO THE LAST BOOK OF THE BIBLE AND READ REVELATION 21:2-4 & 21:9-14. DESCRIBE THE CITY IN YOUR OWN WORDS.

Abraham walked with God. He longed to be with God, and he wasn’t just walking to the physical piece of land that God promised Abram, he was looking forward to another city – the eternal city of Heaven whose architect and builder is God! This city, the New Jerusalem, is Heaven. It’s a place where God will dwell with His people again – physically – like He did in the garden of Eden. It’s a place where sin doesn’t exist. Brokenness and pain don’t exist. Abram knew this wasn’t his home. He understood that God’s purpose for him and his family was not just to live out life here on Earth and be happy, but to glorify God and live their life in pursuit of Him and obeying Him. James 2:23 says, “And the scripture was fulfilled that says, ‘Abraham believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness,’ and he was called God’s friend.” God wants to be our friend, too, and that starts with a relationship with Him.

So how does this apply to us? Well, you, too, are a human being living on Earth that is made to glorify God and honor Him and be in relationship with Him. Maybe you feel like this Earth is not your home... like you don’t fit in. Like you wish you could be with Jesus right now. Or maybe you feel the opposite. Maybe you are comfortable here on earth. Maybe you fit in really well and you identify with a lot of the culture, and you really don’t feel like a fish out of water here. We’ll explore this a bit more in Dig a Little Deeper, but just know – if you feel out of place, you’re not alone. That is a normal thing to feel as a Christian and the Lord will be with you in that and strengthen you.

## LET’S FLIP TO THE MIDDLE-ISH OF THE NEW TESTAMENT AND READ 2 CORINTHIANS 5:1-2 & VERSES 7-8. HOW DOES PAUL DESCRIBE OUR EARTHLY BODIES?

This is a passage on Heaven, and it’s something we can explore later, but I wanted you to see that the concept of tents as a metaphor for our lives is woven throughout the Bible.



I love how the New Living Translation puts verses 1-2:

*"For we know that when this earthly tent we live in is taken down (that is, when we die and leave this earthly body), we will have a house in heaven, an eternal body made for us by God Himself and not by human hands. We grow weary in our present bodies, and we long to put on our heavenly bodies like new clothing."*

This whole passage in 2 Corinthians is saying that earth is not our true home. It is temporary. And Christians long to be present with the Lord and to shed our earthly bodies that are inclined to be selfish and judgmental and bitter and angry and carry anxiety and depression. Like Abraham, we long to throw our brokenness and sin away and be with Jesus, where peace and joy and goodness will last forever.

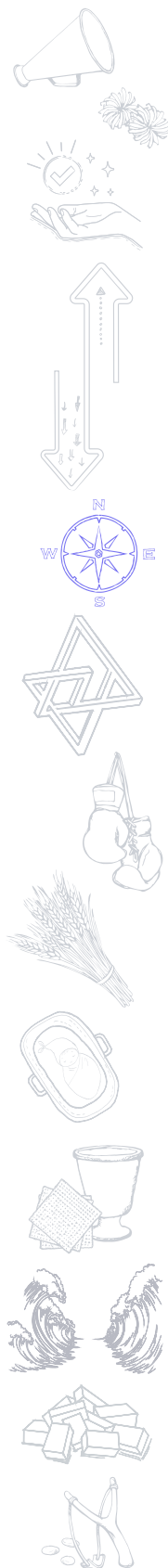


## DIG A LITTLE DEEPER:

\* Have you ever felt like the Lord sent you on mission to do something but didn't give you all of the steps? Write about that experience in your journal. How did you see the Lord move? How did He guide you?

\* What does it look like, practically, to use the Lord as a pool noodle and rely on Him while we're in the deep end of life? Find and read the verses below. Then list in the chart what each verse says we can do.

VERSES	HOW IT APPLIES TO MY LIFE
<b>Psalms 28:7</b>	
<b>Philippians 4:4-7</b>	
<b>Joshua 1:9</b>	
<b>Psalms 37:5</b>	
<b>Isaiah 41:10</b>	
<b>Proverbs 3:5-8</b>	



\* Do you feel like earth is your home or do you long for your Heavenly home, like you don't belong here? The answer is personal to you. Take time to think and journal about it. Be honest. It's just you and the Lord.

\* Look up the verses below and answer the questions attached to each one. If (NLT) is by the reference, look it up in the New Living Translation, where I feel it is written in a way that is easier to understand:

**1 John 2:15-16 (NLT)** | Based on these verses, what does it mean to "love this world and the things it offers you"? What things do these verses list that the world offers? Do you struggle with any of these things?

**John 15:19** | If you are a Christian, have you ever felt like the "world" didn't accept you or your faith? Describe how that looks in your life. Based on this verse, why does the world hate Christians?



**John 17:14-15** | This is Jesus praying to God. Why does Jesus say the world hates Christians? Why do you think He would pray that we are protected from the Devil but also ask that we stay in the world?

**Romans 12:1-2 (NLT)** | What does it mean to give your body to God? What are some “behaviors and customs of the world” that you can think of? Why would it be wise to follow what this verse says and not copy the world? What does this verse say we should do instead? How can we accomplish this?

\* How has Abraham’s faith inspired you personally?

\* If you’d like to check out Louie’s talk “The Power of a Promise” you can find a link to it on the Flourishing Faith website under this post.

## Reference Notes

<sup>1</sup> Message from Passion City Church (Louie Giglio), The Power of a Promise, Feb. 2022

[www.girlswithflourishingfaith.com](http://www.girlswithflourishingfaith.com)

