

## Get into the Study



5 MINUTES

**LEADER PACK:** Display **Item 6: Walking in Confidence** poster to introduce the major theme of this study, along with the focus of each session.

### Walking in Confidence

- ▶ **THE BASIS FOR CONFIDENCE**  
Genesis 12:1-8
- ▶ **CONFIDENCE IN THE FACE OF FEAR**  
Genesis 12:10-13, 17-13:4
- ▶ **CONFIDENCE IN THE MIDST OF CONFLICT**  
Genesis 13:5-11, 14-18
- ▶ **CONFIDENCE IN SEASONS OF UNCERTAINTY**  
Genesis 15:1-6, 13-16
- ▶ **CONFIDENCE AFTER WE FALL**  
Genesis 16:1-5, 17:1-9
- ▶ **CONFIDENCE IN TIMES OF TESTING**  
Genesis 22:1-14

**DISCUSS:** Question #1 on page 82 of the PSG: **“When have you seen confidence in someone really pay off?”**



## SESSION 1

# The Basis for Confidence

### THE POINT

Confidence comes from trusting God.

### LIFE CONNECTION

Where does confidence come from? Some people seem to be born with self-confidence; others have it instilled in them by a parent, coach, or teacher. Others have been told they're not good enough, and they lack any sense of self-confidence. Confidence is related to faith, and our faith is only as good as what we're trusting in. The confidence we truly need is not grounded in ourselves; confidence comes from trusting God.

### THE PASSAGE

Genesis 12:1-8

### THE SETTING

Genesis is structured by a Hebrew word sometimes translated *account*, *generations*, or *records*. Genesis begins with the records of creation and continues with the records of Adam, Noah, and the sons of Noah, including Shem. The sixth records section is that of Terah, Abraham's father (Gen. 11:27), and that is where Abraham's story begins. Scripture does not reveal how Abraham came to worship the Lord. His story begins with his call.

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## GENESIS 12:1-3

**1** Now the LORD had said unto Abram, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will shew thee:

**2** And I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing:

**3** And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee: and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed.

**KEY WORD: Blessing** (Gen. 12:2)—To bless someone is to wish or declare God's goodness or favor on them. The greatest blessing given by God is the forgiveness and salvation offered by the work of Christ.

**1** ▶ **Verse 1.** Let's begin by answering a couple of questions. First, where was Abram when the Lord said, **Get thee out of thy country?** In Genesis 12:5, he took all his possessions and the people he "had gotten in Haran; and they went forth to go into the land of Canaan." Genesis 11:32 records the death of Terah, the father of Abram, in Haran. Genesis 12:1 then contains the call of God to Abram to go **unto the land** God would show him, the land of Canaan. We might assume the call of God to Abram occurred while he was in Haran, but perhaps not. Terah, Abram, Lot (Abram's nephew), and Sarai left Ur to go to the land of Canaan (Gen. 11:31). It is likely Abram left Ur to go to Canaan because God told him to go. However, some suggest Terah left for Haran, and Abram went because he was under Terah's authority. In Acts 7:2 we read, "The God of glory appeared unto our father Abraham, when he was in Mesopotamia, before he dwelt in Charran." The call of God came to Abram when he was in Ur, and by faith Abram obeyed God and traveled to Haran, which would have been a trip of about six to seven hundred miles.

The second question concerns the age of Terah when Abram was born. As recorded in Genesis 11:26, "Terah lived seventy years, and begat Abram, Nahor, and Haran." If Terah was 70 when Abram was born, and Terah lived 205 years (v. 32), and Abram left Haran at the age of 75 (12:4), then Terah lived another 60 years after Abram left. Scholars disagree about the best way to understand these numbers. Some argue Abram at the age of 75 left his father

### ACTIVITY (OPTIONAL):

Play a video clip of someone inspiring confidence in others. Then ask **Question #1**.

NOTE: A video option can be found at [BibleStudiesForLife.com/AdultExtra](http://BibleStudiesForLife.com/AdultExtra).

### ACTIVITY (OPTIONAL):

**In advance**, set up a game to start your group's time together. Ask for volunteers willing to demonstrate a confident walk or strut. Then, have the rest of the group grade the level of confidence on a scale of 1 to 5. You may also allow them to give a brief plug for why they should receive one point higher. Give a small prize to the person with the highest score. Contrast this display to how a person of God exudes confidence.

**GUIDE:** Direct group members to "The Bible Meets Life" on page 83 of the PSG. Introduce the importance of trusting God by reading or summarizing the text or by encouraging group members to read it on their own.

**RECAP:** How do we get the assurance to jump when God is calling us in a direction that may feel unknown, extreme, or even farfetched? Let's take some cues from a man named Abram who demonstrated just that type of confidence.

**GUIDE:** Call attention to “The Point” on page 83 of the PSG: “Confidence comes from trusting God.”

**PRAY:** Transition into the study by asking God to help the group understand the importance of trusting in Him. Thank Him for being utterly trustworthy.

## Study the Bible

### Genesis 12:1-3



10 MINUTES

**LEADER PACK:** Display **Item 7: The Journey of Abraham** poster to give context for the events in these Scripture verses. Point to places and events on the map as they are discussed.



alive in Haran, and his father would die 60 years later. In that case, Abram did leave his **kindred** and his **father's house** to go to Canaan.

A second view is that not all three sons were born when Terah turned 70, and Abram was likely only listed first because of his importance in the Messianic line and not because he was the firstborn. Perhaps Terah's son, Haran (also the name of a city), was born when Terah was 70, and perhaps Terah was 130 years old when Abram was born. Seventy-five years later, Abram would have left Haran at the passing of Terah. This view is supported by Acts 7:4, where Steven said Abram “dwelt in Charran: and from thence, when his father was dead, he removed him into this land, wherein ye now dwell.” The answer to the question of Terah's age at the time of Abram's birth is elusive, but what's important is that Abram followed the Lord.

So why did Abram settle in Haran after God told him to go to the land of promise? It was likely due to the health of Terah. His father would die in Haran, and then Abram would continue his journey.

Notice the suddenness of God's call on Abram. Later, in a similarly surprising and sudden way, God called Abraham to sacrifice his beloved son Isaac (Gen. 22:1-2). God may suddenly call believers to follow Him today. When He does issue such a call, we often want a detailed explanation of what He plans to do, but God calls us to trust Him and follow Him even without full understanding. God told Abram to go from his land, his relatives, and his father's house to the land God would show him. One can imagine that Abram was interested to know more about what God had planned for his future, but God's leading is more like a flashlight in the dark, guiding us one step at a time, than it is like a bright light that fully illuminates the path. As Abram learned to obey God, his confidence in God would increase. Faith grows when it is stretched.

God called Abram to full obedience, and God calls believers today to entirely give ourselves to Christ and follow Him wherever He leads. Nevertheless, Abram's faith was incredible. Believers today have great examples of faithful servants of God both within Scripture and outside of Scripture. The writer of Hebrews declared, “we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses” and calls us to “run with patience the race that is set before us” (Heb. 12:1). But what great examples of faith existed before

Abram? It took great faith for Abram to fully surrender to God's call to leave his pagan culture and his family to travel to the land God would show him.

**Verse 2.** God promised to bless Abram with what some call the sevenfold blessing. The first four aspects of this blessing are in verse 2. God promised to **make of Abram a great nation**, second to **bless him**, third to **make his name great**, and fourth to make him **a blessing** to others.

The Hebrew language indicates God's plan for Abram was to *bless* him in many ways. First, God intended to make Abram **a great nation**, or people. Second, God purposed to **bless him**, meaning Abram would be empowered to be successful and prosperous, to have the ability to produce numerous offspring, and to enjoy a long life. God would bless Abram with both material and spiritual blessings. God would be the source of Abram's blessings, and Abram would find that the more faithful he was to God, the greater God's blessings would be to him and his offspring.

The third promise was to **make the name of Abram great**. The promise was not to make Abram's name great among men so that he might become proud; instead, Abram's name became great because he humbled himself before God, and others would see God's blessing on his life. Most notably, Melchizedek, king of Salem (Jerusalem), blessed Abram and recognized God's blessing on his life (Gen. 14:18-19).

The fourth promise was that Abram himself would **be a blessing**. God calls people to follow Him, and He blesses those who follow the call. And His desire is for those who follow Him to become a blessing to others. That was certainly true for Abram. Sin had divided the nations of the world, and it would be through obedience to God that Abram would begin the process of bringing unity to the nations.

**Verse 3.** The last three parts of the sevenfold promise were, first, God would **bless them that bless Abram**. Second, God would **curse him that curseth Abram**. And third, God would use Abram to bless **all families of the earth**. Many of God's blessings on a person's life depend on the attitude of the person toward God. God desires to bless all people, and He is gracious to all; however, it is those who seek God and love Him, like Abram, who are greatly blessed. Those who turn away from God and treat Abram and his descendants with contempt are under God's judgment.

**READ:** Ask a group member to read aloud Genesis 12:1-3 on page 84 of the PSG.

**GUIDE:** Use Commentary **1** on pages 87-90 to help explain God's promised blessing.

**RECAP:** God made this covenant with Abram long ago, but it's a promise that still lives on today. As Christ followers, we get to live in the benefits of this fulfilled promise. This was the promise that God would not forget about His creation, but He would provide a way for us to be in a right relationship with Him. This was the starting point of God's unfolding grace. We see this promise ultimately displayed and fulfilled with the birth of Jesus Christ, who was a descendant of Abram (Gal. 3:16).

God told Abram that He would make his name great; in other words, the patriarch would be famous. Today, all three major world religions—Islam, Judaism, and Christianity—identify Abraham as a key figure. God did as He had promised: He made Abram famous. But far more than just being well-known, Abram's greatness would be significant because all peoples of the world would be blessed through him when his descendant Jesus Christ came to earth.

**DISCUSS:** Question #2 on page 85 of the PSG: “When have you sensed God leading you to do something challenging?”

*Alternate: How have others been blessed as a result of God blessing you?*

**RECAP:** The more we understand the heart of God, the stronger our dependence and confidence will grow in Him. As a result, when God calls us to something specific, His voice no longer seems foreign to us; instead, it will seem familiar. This will help give us the confidence we need to move and act on what God is calling us to do. When we trust God, we act on that trust.

**TRANSITION:** God calls us to follow Him. In the next verses, we see that we are to respond to God’s call with obedience.

## Study the Bible

### Genesis 12:4-6



10 MINUTES

**READ:** Ask a group member to read aloud Genesis 12:4-6 on page 86 of the PSG.

The promise of blessing in Hebrew is in the plural: **I will bless them that bless thee** (emphasis added). But the promise to curse is in the singular: **I will curse ... him that curseth thee** (emphasis added). People may viciously curse others, but God’s curse is judicial, not arbitrarily vindictive. God never does anything unjust. The type of cursing that humans do could be treating others with contempt, but when God curses someone it is always a righteous judgment.

God promised that through Abram **all families of the earth [shall] be blessed**. It would be through the Lord Jesus Christ that this promise would find its ultimate fulfillment (Gal. 3:8,16). ◀

## GENESIS 12:4-6

**4 So Abram departed, as the LORD had spoken unto him; and Lot went with him: and Abram was seventy and five years old when he departed out of Haran.**

**5 And Abram took Sarai his wife, and Lot his brother’s son, and all their substance that they had gathered, and the souls that they had gotten in Haran; and they went forth to go into the land of Canaan; and into the land of Canaan they came.**

**6 And Abram passed through the land unto the place of Sichem, unto the plain of Moreh. And the Canaanite was then in the land.**

**2 ▶ Verse 4.** Abram had no children at this point in his life. How would God **make him a great nation** when he had no descendants? Abram surely wondered what God had in mind, but God called Abram to trust and obey. Abram demonstrated true faith by his obedience. Eventually he would see how God would keep His promises, though he did not know how God would do it. God was in the process of building a durable, confident faith in Abram just as He wishes to do in us.

At the age of seventy-five, Abram left Haran. It is not a person’s age that determines usefulness to God; it is his or her availability and willingness to obey God that really matters. Moses spent forty years in Egypt and forty years

in the desert before God called him to set His people free from Egypt (Acts 7:23,30). God is very patient with His people. His plan often unfolds slowly.

Abram left Haran with Lot. Lot's father, who was also named Haran, had died in the city of Ur (Gen. 11:28). Abram likely served as a father figure to Lot, and that probably was the reason Lot went with him.

Abram's obedience was essential. God told him to go, and he obeyed. He exemplified true belief. Abram was confident of God's calling on his life, and he responded without hesitation. Though he did not know where he was going, he obeyed anyway. True faith is exhibited in obedience to God's will, not in understanding God's will. Abram had the promises of God, and the promises of God are always enough to take the next right step.

**Verse 5.** Abram **took Sarai his wife**, and it's good that he did. His precious wife Sarai was a key to the fulfillment of God's promises. Abram also took **Lot his brother's son**. While Lot did not live an exemplary life, he was a man of faith. The apostle Peter would later refer to Lot as a righteous man (2 Pet. 2:7). God's forgiveness of sin is based on faith, not righteous living. And yet, true faith does result in righteous living, though we continue to stumble. Despite Abram's great faith, he had his moments of doubt and sin as he lied on occasion about his wife Sarai, claiming she was his sister (Gen. 12:13; 20:2).

Abram also took **all their substance that they had gathered**. God did not tell Abram to leave his belongings because it was essential he have them. Without resources, Abram would have had to serve others to provide what he and his family needed. His possessions and his servants were a blessing that allowed him to focus on the mission God had for him.

Abram also took **the souls that they had gotten in Haran**. Some of these people were likely slaves and servants, but there is no indication Abram mistreated his slaves. Abram would later seek to make his servant Eliezer his heir (15:2-3). Those Abram had acquired may have considered it a blessing to serve a kind and gracious man, and they probably were glad to go with him. The practice of slavery at this time in Israel's history should not be considered an approval of slavery. God desired to change the hearts of people. Once hearts are changed, the social structure of society can be changed too. In obedience to God, Abram and those with him then set out to the land of Canaan.

**RECAP:** God told Abram to go, and that is exactly what Abram did. Abram packed up his possessions and left everything he knew. Although he "took Sarai his wife, and Lot his brother's son," and others with him, other family members that he loved and invested in were left behind in Haran. In that culture and time, land and family had a powerful emotional bond connecting them, but for the sake of survival, they also formed a strong economic bond. Relocating had a whole other depth of meaning compared with relocating in our world today. Abram responded to God's call with obedience. He did not respond by simply affirming what God had said; he responded with action.

**DISCUSS: Question #3** on page 88 of the PSG: "**When have you found it challenging to follow God's leading?**"

*Alternate: What are some obstacles to following God's leading?*

**GUIDE:** Use Commentary **2** on pages 90-92 to help explain the significance of Shechem in Israel's history.

**RECAP:** It can be easy for us to lose confidence in the direction God is leading us. We can easily be swayed from obedience to disobedience. Thankfully, God does not leave us alone. As His followers, He has placed His Holy Spirit in our lives. We are to trust the Spirit of Christ when we're not feeling confident.

**TRANSITION:** In the next verses, we see that a relationship of trust leads us to worship.

## Study the Bible

### Genesis 12:7-8



15 MINUTES

**READ:** Ask a group member to read aloud Genesis 12:7-8 on page 88 of the PSG.

**Verse 6.** Abram stopped at **the place of Sichem**. Shechem would become a significant city in Israel's history. It was the first capital of the Northern Kingdom, and even after Samaria became the capital, Shechem retained religious significance. Jacob likely dug a well there, and Jesus probably met the Samaritan woman at Jacob's well (John 4:12). In the time of Jesus, the village of Sychar was either Shechem or near the town of Shechem.

On the **plain of Moreh** might have been a tree considered sacred and used by Canaanite diviners. That could be why the verse mentions that **the Canaanite was then in the land**. While the location of the plain of Moreh is not known today, the site would have been well-known earlier in Israel's history. ◀

## GENESIS 12:7-8

**7** And the LORD appeared unto Abram, and said, Unto thy seed will I give this land: and there builded he an altar unto the LORD, who appeared unto him.

**8** And he removed from thence unto a mountain on the east of Bethel, and pitched his tent, having Bethel on the west, and Hai on the east: and there he builded an altar unto the LORD, and called upon the name of the LORD.

**3 ▶ Verse 7.** Abram obeyed God, and God appeared to him and made him another promise. God had made great promises to Abram, and now God explained in part how He would keep some of those promises and why God had led Abram to this land. God would give the land to Abram's descendants. Many of Abraham's physical descendants would inherit the land when Joshua led Israel to conquer Canaan more than four hundred years later. Still, their continued occupation of the land depended on their continued faithfulness to God. Some of Abram's descendants, like Esau, would not inherit the land. God later told Moses that if the Israelites disobeyed God, they would be "plucked from off the land" they were entering to possess (Deut. 28:63). Abram's life reveals that true faith leads to obedience, and obedience to God leads to

blessing. By contrast, disobedience to God leads to a loss of God's favor and His blessings.

It is not uncommon that a word or concept used in the Old Testament has a greater meaning or fulfillment in the New Testament. Many of the people considered the offspring of Abram were his physical descendants, but many, like Rahab the harlot, were not his physical descendants. The spiritual descendants, those who had faith like that of Abram, were the ones who indeed inherited the promises given to Abram. Jacob and Esau were both physical descendants of Abram, but only one of them had faith like that of Abram. So Paul explained in Galatians 3:29 that if we belong to Christ, we then are "Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise." The faithful obedience of Abram would have more significant consequences than he could imagine. Likewise, our faithful obedience to God can have a greater impact than we can imagine.

What was the response of Abram to God's promise that his descendants would receive the land of Canaan? Immediately, he **there builded he an altar unto the LORD, who appeared unto him.** An altar was an elevated place or platform where sacrifices were offered to God. Incense was also burned on an altar (Ex. 30:1). These sacrifices were a means of worship and a way to draw close to God. The blood offering reminded the worshiper that forgiveness of sins was only possible by the shedding of blood.

**Verse 8.** The trip from Haran to Shechem was about 400-500 miles, but it was only about twenty miles from Shechem **unto a mountain on the east of Bethel.** The Canaanites occupied the most fertile land. Eventually, the descendants of Abram would inherit the land, but for now, Abram moved and lived where he could. It would not be easy for him. God promised to bless Abram, but God did not guarantee there would be no obstacles in his journey. Indeed, the obstacles in the life of Abram were designed by God to build Abram's faith.

At Bethel, Abram **builded an altar unto the LORD.** Wherever God led Abram, he would set up an altar to worship the Lord. To call upon **the name of the LORD** means to address Him by name and to cry out to Him. The obstacles in the life of Abram would lead him to a greater understanding of his continual need for God's presence and guidance. Abram's confidence to handle whatever life threw at him came from trusting God. It's the same for every follower of Christ. God tests our faith

**RECAP:** The more we learn to trust God, the more our confidence will grow. What is amazing about God is that as we trust Him more and more, He is faithful to increase our faith by continually reaffirming us along the way. Before Abram set up camp on "a mountain on the east of Bethel," the Lord appeared to him. This surely reassured Abram during his journey; God's presence affirmed that God was always with him. God not only reassured Abram of His presence, He also reaffirmed His promises of land and children.

**DISCUSS:** Question #4 on page 90 of the PSG: "What is a marker in your life that helps you remember God's faithfulness?"

**GUIDE:** Use Commentary **3** on pages 92-94 to help explain the significance of Abram calling on the name of the Lord.

**RECAP:** We recognize an altar as a place of worship, a place where we bow in worship before the Lord, but an altar also could serve a second purpose: a place of remembrance. Even as Abram worshiped, he created a marker for himself, the Canaanites currently living in the land, and future generations of His people.



**DISCUSS: Question #5** on page 90 of the PSG: **“What are some ways we can grow in confidence in our walk with God?”**

*Alternate: When have you seen an example of following the Lord leading to personal sacrifice?*

**DO:** Direct group members to complete “Engage” on page 90 of the PSG to help reinforce “The Point.”

**GUIDE:** Refer back to “The Point” for this session: **“Confidence comes from trusting God.”**

**ACTIVITY (OPTIONAL):** Play the song “Confidence” by Sanctus Real to allow group members to thank and praise God for the confidence He gives us. Then close with prayer.

NOTE: A video option can be found at [BibleStudiesForLife.com/AdultExtra](http://BibleStudiesForLife.com/AdultExtra).

through trials, delays, failures, and more, teaching us that He is absolutely faithful to us and can be trusted. First Peter 1:6-7 describes the process so well: “Wherein ye greatly rejoice, though now for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations: That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ.”

Abram’s faith is unmatched in the Old Testament, and the New Testament continually refers to his faith as an example of true and living faith. The true descendants of Abraham are not the physical descendants of Abraham but those who have faith like Abraham (Rom. 4:16; Gal. 3:7,29). ◀

## ENGAGE

**God promised in Genesis 12 to bless Abram with a community, a reputation, and a home. How has God blessed you in similar ways? List below. Then write a prayer thanking God for His promises.**

Community:

Reputation:

Home:

My Prayer:

## LIVE IT OUT

Confidence comes from trusting God. Choose one of the following applications:

- ▶ **Evaluate.** Be real and take some honest, personal inventory and determine how distant or how close your relationship with God is right now. Talk to God about how you truly feel things are going in your relationship.
- ▶ **Move.** Is there some area in your life where God has been stirring in you to make a move but you just keep ignoring it? What move can you make today to start heading in the direction of what He has called you to do?
- ▶ **Write it down.** Pick up a pen, grab a journal, and begin to write. Reflect and remember how God has shown His presence and His promises to you in your life over the past month.

## Live It Out



5 MINUTES

**READ:** Direct group members to page 91 of the PSG. Encourage them to choose one of the applications to carry out this week.

## Wrap It Up

**SUMMARIZE:** Read or restate this idea from page 90 of the PSG:

*And when we remember, we are moved to lift Him up in worship and anticipate that He will do it again. In the process, our faith is strengthened—and so is our confidence.*

**PRAY:** Thank God for giving us an example of trust in Abraham. Ask Him to help group members live with confidence because of our own trust in God.



**EXTRA!**

Free additional ideas for your group are available at

[BibleStudiesforLife.com/AdultExtra](http://BibleStudiesforLife.com/AdultExtra)