

## 98-08-30b

We're back now from our break and resuming our study in Genesis chapter 12. We saw in the first hour the relationship, how this story is integrated into what we have seen in the preceding chapters. It seems to make sense to us that the distribution of nations and the reason for it that is recorded in the preceding chapter in many ways sets the stage for this because you have the command coming up here in Genesis chapter 12.

The Lord had said to Abram, get out of your country from your family and from your father's house to a land that I will show you. I will make you a great nation. I will bless you and make your name great and you shall be a blessing.

I will bless those who bless you and I will curse him who curses you and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed. Before we look at this in detail, I would like to relate it to what we talked about in the first hour as far as the scattering and breaking up of the human race into smaller entities because it is the context in which this call and this proclamation of blessing is made. If you think about a monolithic human race all located or centered in the plain of Shinar, this would take on a completely different complexion for Abram to get out of his country.

There are only two alternatives. Abram goes and separates himself from this monolithic people and you can either go with Abram or you can remain in the plain of Shinar and you have this very clear polarity. As all of us know, life in God's economy is never that simple.

By breaking up the families of the earth and scattering them, there are now many alternatives. There are shades of gray. There are different choices you can make.

There are different places you can go. There are societies that are more or less pagan, more or less immoral, that are closer or more distant from the land of promise. There is diversity and there is an infrastructure and a fabric that exists in the planet in which believers move and against which we act and react.

So it is a part of God's plan that these things be here. We often hear people oversimplify the Christian life. Well, it is just us and Satan.

We have our life and old Satan is out there. Anything bad, any form of resistance, any heartache, any test, any challenge, any trial, anything that is not a part of our bed of roses idea of life is from Satan. Well, it is not that oversimplified.

Satan is a force in the world. He does walk up and down and to and fro in the earth, seeking whom he may devour. He is orchestrating principalities and powers and rulers, but there are other sources of challenge and other sources of temptation.

We have the world and the people that dwell therein and the circumstances that come

up just by nature of the fallen status and the curse that is on the ground and so forth. We have the flesh and our own weaknesses and our own failings, whether they are an innate part of us or what we acquire as we go along. We sometimes fight against baggage that we have accumulated in the past and we have tendencies and propensities.

We have examples from our family life or from our social life and all of this is the fabric in which we move and it is not just one single antagonist. It is not a nice little neatly packaged opponent. We look all around us and see the need for thought and for the setting of priorities and for the having of a viewpoint and a policy and a set of goals in life to redeem the time.

We looked at Psalm 90, the psalm from Moses this morning and saw that this is an issue. What are you going to shoot for? What is there to be accomplished in the time between your birth and your death? What is your life going to have by way of significance or meaning in the great sweep of history? It goes beyond just looking at one foe. David's life was much more than just the day he faced Goliath.

He had many tests, many trials, many opportunities for faith. He had many successes, he had many failures, but they were in a variety of areas that built in his soul faith and confidence in God and spiritual maturity that is of a much more complex nature. We find this discussed at the end of Hebrews chapter 5. Those who are mature have their senses exercised to discern good and evil.

There is no exercise and no discernment involved in saying, well that came from the plane of Shinar, that must be evil. We have to identify the good and the bad in things. We are now both blessed and cursed with the knowledge of good and evil.

It is a part of our calling in this life to have our senses exercised to discern good and evil. In the same way that to test a child's mathematical knowledge, you don't simply set one math problem in front of them, you give a test that's composed of many problems that may test different concepts and different skills, different levels of skill, levels of comprehension, whether it's math or science or English, spelling, whatever it may be. In the same way, God uses the fallen nature of the world and all of the things that dwell within it to sharpen us and to give us many opportunities for making decisions.

That's the context and the background. That's what we bring forward from chapter 11 into the career of Abraham in chapter 12. We noted toward the close of our first lesson this morning the brief but very significant story of Terah.

Terah is the father of three sons, like Adam and like Noah. But unlike Adam and unlike Noah, he is not given a position of prominence in the narrative. The implication here is that he has failed in some way because he does leave Ur, in this case called Ur of the Chaldeans, and his intention is to go to the land of Canaan.

He travels up to Haran, which is northwest, and is at a midway point between Ur and the land of Canaan on an upside-down V type of path. And there he stops. His intentions are good.

He begins well. But like the Galatians, Paul says, you began well. Who hindered you? Who tricked you up? I think I mentioned several weeks back the race I saw where Mary, somebody or other, was a big-time world-class runner, and she had her chance to make her mark and win her gold medal and so forth.

She's running along, and this gal from New Zealand, I think her name was Zola Budd, was running barefoot. Mary, what's her name, is running well, but here comes Zola Budd, and she's barefoot, and her feet are kind of flying around, and she trips the gal who has the hopes and dreams of the medal, and she falls down. She could have gotten up and at least finished the race, but she felt so sorry for herself.

She just laid there and cried and shook her fist at the heavens and moaned and groaned about it for months afterwards in the media and just didn't ever seem to recover from the fact that in her moment of glory, somebody tripped her up. I always think of that. I have that picture because they showed the videotape over and over.

Here's poor Zola, a young kid running along with these awkward-looking flying feet, and this American lady everybody's focused on and has all the background stories on, and she trips and she's all over with. Well, like those examples, T.R.A. seems to have begun well. He says, I'm getting my family, and we're getting out of this pagan Ur of the Chaldees.

We're going to go to the land of Canaan. Why does he choose the land of Canaan out of all of the possible destinations? And when you look at a map, you realize that to get there, of course, he can't take a direct westward route because even in those ancient times, apparently this was pretty wild country. He's going to follow the Euphrates northwest and then come back down southwest on the other leg of the private chevron there, the other side of the upside-down V, to the land of promise to stay close to sources of food and water and so forth and not be out in the wild wilderness.

So he sets out, but why Canaan? Why not some other destination? Because to go on that route, when he goes on that northwest leg, he's going to pass right through what? The plain of Shinar, the land that they have left to wind up in Ur. He's got to go back through this Tower of Babel area to go to the land of Canaan. So we ask ourselves, first of all, why is he trying to go to Canaan of all places? And secondly, why doesn't he get there? Well, this is somewhat in the realm of speculation because the Bible does not explicitly say this, but we know from the language of chapter 12, verse 1, that we've had this story of the birth and marriage and travels of Terah's sons.

And then in 12.1 it says, Now the Lord had said to Abram, and the language here

indicates that this is not chronologically after the death of Terah or even the death of Haran or the trip to Haran. At some previous point, and the construction of the Hebrew here indicates that this was sometime previous. God had said to Abram, Get out of your country from your family, this is literally your clan, and from your father's house.

Technically the father's house is the family, then you have the clan, and then you have the country. So it gets more and more specific. You leave the country, you leave your clan, and you leave your immediate family to a land that I will show you.

And of course, when you get down to verse 5, you find that they're departing to go to the land of Canaan. Why the land of Canaan? Well, we have had this anticipated for us back in the previous chapters, haven't we? Remember the genealogy of the descendants of Noah, and particularly the descendants of Ham, where they were distributed, and in verse 15 of chapter 10, Canaan begot Sidon and Heth, the Jebusite, Amorite, Gerbushite, Hivite, Archite, and Sinite, the Arvidite, Zemurite, Hamathite. Afterwards, the families of the Canaanites were dispersed, and then beginning in 1019, you have the borders of Canaan.

The borders are from Sidon toward Gaza, toward Sodom, Gomorrah, Adma, Zeboim, Lashar, and so forth. And you have this sketch of the borders of Canaan. We know that these individuals, specifically the Canaan and his descendants, are under the curse that Noah pronounces after the episode we studied in chapter 9. So the land that God is going to show Abram is the land that is currently occupied by Canaan.

And we know that he's under a curse. So did Terah decide that this was the place to go because that's where the Canaanites went? Was this something that was revealed by God? Why did he choose Canaan? We don't have an explicit reference. It is possible, and I consider it likely, that Abram, in fact, received the call of Genesis chapter 12, verse 1, while he and his entire family were living in Ur.

God did not, according to the record here, speak to Terah. He spoke to Abram. The Lord had said to Abram, you get out of your country, away from your kindred, and go to the land that I will show you.

So the record indicates that when there was a departure from Ur, it was led by Terah, and he took everybody. Remember verse 31 of chapter 11, Terah took his son Abram and his grandson Lot. Now, I don't remember personally having this experience, but you see it in movies, you read about it, and some of you may have had this experience where maybe you have the idea that you're going to do something, but there's a dominant personality in your periphery.

It doesn't necessarily have to be your father, but it can be your mother, or it can be your spouse, or it can be if you're an employee working in a company and you get the idea that something needs to be done, and somebody else who's kind of a dominant,

prominent personality kind of catches that torch and sort of takes over. And you may have had the idea, but now they sort of glom onto it. Now, they're the shakers and movers, and they make it happen.

And you're kind of standing there, the thing has been kind of snatched out of your hands. This happens a lot with people's weddings. People say, will you marry me? They say yes.

They say, okay, great. Well, let's get a little chapel, and we'll hire the minister, the justice of the peace. And then one or the other of the mothers gets a hold of it, and suddenly you find the thing just blossoming into a monstrosity that you never anticipated or intended or even wanted.

And this could have been the case, and I'm just suggesting that if Abram got the call from God and said, get up away from here, and so he goes to his father Tira, and he says, Pop, I'm packing up, and we're leaving Ur, all this moon worship and so forth. God has called me and said that there's a land that he's going to show me that we should go to, and I'm leaving, and Tira says, you know, I'm getting sick and tired of Ur myself. Let's just all pack up and go.

And so he sort of takes charge of the project and says, that's fine. Let's just take the whole family. Well, when you look at the call to Abram, he said, get away from your father's house.

Get away from your clan. Well, here the clan and the father's house are all going together, and there is the necessity for separation from the father's house that is stated in chapter 12, verse 1 for Abram. So regardless of how this came about, it could have just been happenstance or a wild idea that Tira had on his own to leave, but we know from this that God does not specifically favor, and God does not specifically choose or call Tira to lead this migration.

There's something amiss with the leadership, the spiritual leadership, and the family leadership of Tira. He's not possessed of the faith of Abram. God does not choose to appear to Tira and say, get up out of your city and your clan and go to the land that I will show you.

It's Abram. Why is that? Tira is the dividing point. He's the man with the three sons.

He's the one that's analogous to Adam and to Noah. He is in position to be the founder of this new patriarchal age, but we get the idea that he misses the boat here. Well, look at what he does.

Regardless of how it came about, and again, I'm just suggesting that perhaps he sort of appropriates the call of Abram and says, fine, son, let me pack up the camels and we'll all go, that they go and they make it as far as Haran, which is as far away as you can get from both Ur and the land of Canaan, and then something about the circumstances in

Haran, he says, you know, this is away from Ur. Let's just stop here. It's not the land that God wants Abram to go to, certainly.

It's as far away as you can get. It's as far away as Abram will ever be from the land of promise, is when he's in Haran. Geographically, that's as far away as he's ever going to be from where God has called him to be.

He's with his father. He has not separated at this point from his clan and so on. So all of these ideas are circulating in our mind as we come to chapter 12, verse 1, because the Lord had said to Abram, he doesn't say it at this point, apparently.

It was some time previously. And so Abram wakes up to this and realizes that his father, he may have been able to justify it in his mind. Well, look, old dad's kind of getting on the train here.

He's moving with me. Maybe this will turn out all right. And so he sort of compromises the part of God's call that says get thee up away from your father's house.

But Terah stalls out in Haran. You also have in Haran, actually in Ur before they ever left, you have the death of the son Haran. These, by the way, are not the same word in Hebrew.

You might say, well, it seems pretty coincidental that Terah has a son named Haran and he goes up to this town that has nothing to do with Terah and it has the same name. The initial letter in these two words is different in Hebrew. The place name is C-H.

Haran, it's a hard C-H. One of those sounds that you hear in Hebrew even today if you hear somebody speaking Yiddish or Hebrew and you hear that. The Smothers brothers did a real funny thing when they were singing Hava Nagila one time on one of their records and they're going Hava Nagila and there's this saliva flying.

This is one of those hard letters that precedes the place name. It's a different letter. It's the soft H that's in the son's name.

If you're worried about that, they're not the same word. But they stall out up here in Haran and we have the notice of Terah's death in verse 32 of chapter 11. The days of Terah were 205 years and Terah died in Haran.

Then the Lord had said to Abram, get up out of your... You get the idea that they stuck around in Haran until Terah died and then Abram said, well, the old man's passed on, now we can pack up and go. That is not the case. If you go back to your genealogical information, we find that Terah is alive and well and living in Haran when Abram and Lot depart.

Terah, in fact, is alive throughout most of the episodes that we will see in the life of

Abram. Terah dies just two years before Sarah does, after the birth of Isaac, after Isaac's marriage, after a lot of these things take place. It is not until the two years before... I believe Abram is 135 when Terah dies and he's 137 when Sarah dies.

So, you know, the birth of Isaac is when Abram is 100 years old. So, Isaac himself is 35 years old or so when Terah finally passes on. So, there is a real sense in which Abram gets himself up out of his father's house at this point and leaves that baggage behind.

It also helps explain to us why all of these episodes in the life of Abram are labeled under this is the story in verse 27 of chapter 11. This is the generation or the genealogy of Terah because the oldest patriarch alive, it's deference to their title or their authority in the family. This is what happens during his patriarch period.

And he's alive for much of what happens to Abram. But it's such a shame because he's alive, but he's not a player. He leaves Ur.

He starts well and he gets as far as Haran and then he disappears off the scene. And he's still there. And indeed, Isaac and Jacob are going to go back to Haran for their wives.

They're going to go back to the clan for their spouses. They're going to either travel themselves or send a servant back up to that area. But we don't hear tell of Terah anymore.

So, he's set up. He's in position. He has all the potential to be the great patriarch that God could have been saying, I am the God of Terah, of Abram, of Isaac, and of Jacob.

But he's not going to say that. Terah's not mentioned. Why? The strong implication is Terah, like Saul, who is the first king of Israel and has all the potential, God makes potentially available to him all of the same promises and the dynasty and the name in Israel that David will inherit.

But Saul misses out because he doesn't seize the opportunity. He isn't the man of faith that David is. And Terah is not the man of faith that Abram is.

And God will look for and center his plan around those who are willing to trust him, those who are willing to act on their faith and do what is necessary when called, who have a sense of the calling and a sense of the purpose of God. And we know that Abram, from what we will see in his story, that he is manifestly, even though, like David, he's going to have many failures, he is characteristically a man of great faith. And God honors that faith in spite of horrendous failures.

Abram's going to make some terrible mistakes, just as David will several hundred years later. But David is a man after God's own heart. Abram is called of God.

By the way, just as an anticipation, there's another interesting point of contact between

Abram or Abraham and David that is worth noting. This idea of the name. Notice in verse 2 of chapter 12.

I will make you a great nation. I will bless you and make your name great. Turn with me over to 2 Samuel.

Keep your finger in Genesis, but turn over to 2 Samuel chapter 7. If you remember our study of 2 Samuel, you already know what's in chapter 7. This is one of those chapters. There are certain chapters of the Bible you should kind of have, I would suggest, you have in your memory. 1 Corinthians 13, we all know, that's the love chapter.

Love suffers long. Love is not puffed up and so forth. You need to have that one in your memory.

We know certain chapters in Romans. Romans chapter 4, the application of the life of Abram to church age truth. 2 Samuel chapter 7 is another chapter to remember.

This is the chapter where the covenant promises are made to David. 2 Samuel chapter 7. David wants to build a house for the Lord, but the prophet Nathan comes and communicates the word of the Lord to David. There's the statement in 2 Samuel 7 verse 8. God tells Nathan, Thus you shall say to My servant David, Thus says the Lord of hosts, I took you from the sheepfold, from following the sheep, to be ruler over My people, over Israel.

And I have been with you wherever you have gone, and have cut off all your enemies from before you, and have made you a great name, like the name of the great men who are on the earth. Interestingly, the idea of a name in the Old Testament is always associated with God. It is God's name that is on the line.

And over and over again, when you have references to the name, it's God's name. My name will be held in esteem among the people. I will show forth My great name amongst the nations and so forth.

There are only two exceptions to that. There are only two human beings that God says anything about making a name for. One is Abraham and the other is David.

And we have before us here the two passages where that is made note of. There's no mention of making a name for Moses, no mention of making a name for Joseph or any of the prophets or any of the other great figures in the Old Testament. Abraham and David are the two that God says, I will make your name great, or I have made you a great name.

And of course, they are the two outstanding examples of faith in the Old Testament. And God, in making them a great name, magnifies His own name. So, an interesting parallel there.

But the Lord had said to Abraham in Genesis 12-1, Get you out of your country, from your family, and from your father's house to a land that I will show you. This reminds us of the principle we reviewed last time about the importance of separation. That there is a time when we need to be divided away from others.

God split up the peoples at the Tower of Babel and made it possible by dividing and cutting asunder the monolithic evil that was represented in the plain of Shinar. This, you might think, well, this is just distributing evil over the whole planet. But it also cuts its power and prevents it from imposing its will without any possibility of opposition, without any possibility of departure.

And God does this. We recognize this principle. We have the antitrust laws in the United States.

We don't want any one company or cluster of industrial giants gaining a monopoly and enforcing unfair and non-beneficial products or policies or whatever it might be in the United States. The antitrust laws, when properly applied, are a good thing. It's designed to prevent monolithic control.

Monolithic control is bad when it's in the hands of men. Monolithic control is a wonderful thing when it's in the hands of God. When is it that the world will be united? When is it that you will have one government and one speech and so forth? It's when it's in the hands of God.

When it's in the hands of man, it is necessary to keep it broken up. And you have God throughout human history acting in grace to prevent the overwhelming power of evil centering itself in groups. When it is divided and in smaller packages, the people of God can circulate and survive and in some cases even benefit.

And in turn, the descendants of Abram will be a blessing. So there are going to be many opportunities, many different ways to interact, many opportunities for choices to be made. So when he gets out of his country from his family and from his father's house, there is a time for separation.

There is a time when something is an insurmountable obstacle to growth or function. And this is one of the criteria for separation within the life of a believer. There unfortunately is a time for the dissolving of a marriage.

It is not God's design. God's design is that a man leave his father and mother and cleave to his wife and for the two to be one flesh. You have the discussion that Jesus engages in with the religious leaders of His day about marriage.

He says, Moses permitted you to divorce your wives because of the hardness of your hearts, but in the beginning it was not so. Divorce is a provision. It is a grace provision.

It is not a concession. It is not a concession to evil. It is not a concession to the fact that, well, I need to let them dissolve their marriages because they are just getting tired of their wife or whatever.

It is a means of deliverance of someone from a hopelessly evil spouse. Paul echoes the same ideas when he talks in the New Testament about if you find yourself converted and a follower of Jesus Christ in your spouse does not respond in the same way, stay with them if you can, but if they want to depart, let them go. There is intrinsic in that the idea that if there is such a difference spiritually that you are unable to function or your spouse is unable to function, there is grounds for dissolving the marriage in that regard.

There is a time to separate. Family is a good thing. Honor your father and mother is a biblical principle.

It is part of the Ten Commandments. Here God tells Abram, Get away from your father. Get away from your family.

Family is a divine institution. It is the unit that God has ordained as a part of his plan, and yet he says, Get away from your family in this case. Why is that? What kind of family is Abram coming from? It's a family that can't get out of Haran, can't get out of the center of moon worship, can't get up the gumption to go to the promised land, to move out in accordance with the expressed will of God.

When we think about this in terms of application in our own lives, we think, well, does this mean I've got to say, well, this member, that member of my family, you're not interested in the things of God, so sayonara, don't call, I'm not going to write, I'm deleting your address out of my email list. When God tells Abram to get up and leave, he doesn't say, you know, cut them off and treat them as though they're dead. He says, you've got to go on to the destination.

You can't be hindered from getting to the destination. So you cut whatever strings are necessary to enable you to get to the destination. Now there is still regard and family allegiance within the clan.

Remember, Isaac and Jacob will get their wives from the clan. They're going to go back or send representatives back to Haran, back to the father's house for spouses. But he's not going to have himself tied up in Haran.

You can get the idea that Terah says, oh, son, look at where we're prospering. How do we know we're prospering up there? Look at verse 4. Abram departed as the Lord had spoken to him, and Lot went with him. Abram was 75 years old when he departed from Haran.

Abram's brother took Sarai, his wife, and Lot, his brother's son, and all their possessions that they had gathered and the people whom they had acquired in Haran. Now this is an

interesting detail. They left, they packed up, packed for a journey, went out of Ur and moved up to Haran and spent apparently a period of many years in Haran.

And while they were there, they prospered. Abram has acquired all of these possessions and all of these people. People have been added to his household.

These can be by marriage, they can be servants, they can be hired hands, whatever they are. He's accumulated a group, sort of a mixed multitude, in Haran that are going to depart with him to go to the land of Canaan. So they're prospering, they're doing well, and this gives us a clue as to why Terah doesn't want to leave.

Things are going well. He's got a great amount of material prosperity. Abram certainly does.

They're acquiring possessions and acquiring influence and people, servants, and the family is growing and so forth. He's got his roots there. And that takes precedence in Terah's mind and he doesn't want to leave.

Abram, on the other hand, in spite of everything that he's collecting and amassing by way of material wealth, responds to the call of God. And whether the call came to him in Haran and he responds and leaves or whether this call was originally issued in Ur and Haran was a delay is... I don't know. I can't figure it out.

The one thing that makes me think it came in Ur, the two things that make me think this call came to Abram in Ur are, first of all, the fact that they leave with the intention of going to Canaan. Why Canaan? Well, because this is the land that God specifies in the call to Abram. He says, get thee up to the one I will show you.

And when Abram does finally leave Haran, he's headed for Canaan. So this is... Apparently there was some additional information in the call from God. He says, I want you to go to the eastern shore of the Mediterranean Sea.

This is the land I'm going to show you. So because that's also Terah's destination, you get the idea of where did this information come from. Well, it probably came from the call.

Secondly, God had said to Abram, get out of your country. Haran is not the land of Abram's birth. Ur is the land of his birth.

And the call says, get you out of your country. Why would God... You see these people driving around here in Texas with the little bumper sticker, native Texan. Well, it doesn't matter how long you've lived here or how much you love the state of Texas or how much you've... Paul had a sticker on the back of his pickup truck that said, I wasn't born in Texas, but I got here as fast as I could.

There remains the fact that you're either a native Texan or you adopt Texas. George Bush was not born in Texas either, our former president. But he has adopted Texas as his home and Texas more or less claims him, especially since he was a success.

So when God says, get out of your country, this strongly suggests to me that this call came in Ur and Abram has been instructed by God to leave his country. Haran is not his country. But I wouldn't die for that.

That's just what I am led to believe by what we have before us. So remembering this call and apparently realizing that it's never going to happen as long as he sticks with his father in Haran, in my understanding, Abram then departed. His conscience is starting to afflict him that, well, we've stalled out here in Haran and his tiara may have said, oh, son, just another year.

Let's just get one more harvest to make sure we have enough to make the trip. And, oh, look, we just closed this business deal here and we really have to stick around and make sure these granaries get built or we fulfill this contract with these... You get all of this verbiage, all of these well-intentioned, well-meaning, oh, next year, there's just a delay and a delay. But Abram remembers the call of God and there's a point at which he says, these strings are preventing me from fulfilling the plan of God.

Why are we dwelling on this a little bit? Well, what are the practical parameters of the doctrine of separation? When do you know you have to separate? You can stick with a relationship. You can stick with interaction with others up to a point. You can wait to see if maybe there's going to be a response.

Maybe this person in your periphery, whether it's family or friend or co-worker, maybe they are going to be responsive. And so you watch and you hope that speaking the truth and love and so forth is going to... the lights are going to come on and this person is going to move forward with you and you're in step and together you're pursuing the things of God. This can be in a church or in a social group or in any sort of family relationship.

You can also reach a point where you realize that this person may be talking a great fight but their heart is really elsewhere. At the point that that begins to deter you from making your own journey to the promised land, at the point that you realize that as long as you continue in this relationship or in this association, it is going to be impossible for you to make progress, that's the point where you start looking at what Abram does and realize that it may be time to do the same thing. It is not a step to be taken lightly.

It is not something to be done after an emotional encounter where you're in the grip of anger or bitterness or resentment or frustration. It is something to consider calmly. It is a time to focus on the word of God and to judge ourselves, to analyze are we in the faith? Are we walking? Are we just looking for an out? Are we looking for an excuse? Or do we

realize that there is a genuine impediment? There is a genuine hand here that we need to cut off so that we can enter into life.

There is an eye here that we must pluck out, as painful as it may be, in order to enter into life. That's the criteria for when to separate. This is a great illustration.

Abraham sticks with his father as long as his father is on the path to the promised land. But when his father stalls out and gets comfortable in Haran, which is the furthest point away from the land of promise, Abraham, you get the idea that he waits and he waits and he waits and his father says, next year, next year. He says, okay, okay.

But Abraham comes to a point of realizing it's just not going to happen. Terah is not going to leave Haran. I've got to go.

If I'm going to make progress and fulfill the call of God, I've got to pack up and go. And that's what he does. And it's a hard step.

What about honor your father and mother? Well, you do not sacrifice the end for the means. The Ten Commandments, the principles of the Word of God, those are there as the means to an end. It's a means of walking the worthy walk and living in a way that pleases God.

But if in honoring your father and mother, you never respond to the call, you never fulfill the call, you've thrown things out of balance. Your priorities are reversed. You've made an end out of the means.

You've said, well, as long as I accomplish these means, I'm pleasing God. But you've lost sight of the goal. Honoring the father and mother was so that you may live long in the land which the Lord your God gives you.

That's the so that. If you go back and read the Ten Commandments, honor your father and mother, that your days may be long in the land which the Lord your God gives you. And the goal is to live in the land.

And honoring the father and mother is a means to that. But if you use that as an excuse to never get to the land, it's a mistake. So there's a lot of grist for the mill there.

There's a lot of food for thought. And I would counsel and encourage all of us not to make a snap decision about separation. It is a step to be taken after a lot of thought and a lot of prayer, and not while you're under emotional duress.

It has to be made when you can see clearly and you know that the ground you're standing on is firm. This is especially true in the case of marriage or in the case of close family relationships. If you're going to cross a bridge and burn it behind you, you had better be standing on solid ground on the other side, or you will have not only those

people to cope with, but also the Lord God Himself.

We have to be mature and have our senses exercised to discern good and evil. And you can take something good, you can use something good as an excuse to do something that's really not right. Abram, in verse 4, this is in accordance with the will of God.

Abram departed as the Lord had spoken to him, and Lot went with him. Lot, of course, is his nephew. Lot's father has died long before they left Ur apparently.

And Abram, who is now 75 years old and has been married to Sarah for decades, has no children. And you get the idea that because Lot has lost a father and because Abraham has no son, and you'll forgive me, I'm going to probably say Abram and Abraham interchangeably. You know who I'm talking about.

But Abram has no son. Lot has no father. And Lot seems to be somewhat responsive in the area of faith or in the area of God's will.

Abram says, I'm going to the Promised Land. Lot, do you want to come? And Lot throws in his Lot with Abram and says, sure, I'll go. Because this is something of a risk to leave the known, stable, prosperous situation inherent.

So you chalk up a point next to Lot's name that he's willing to pack up and go with Abram. Of course, he may also have his eye on everything that Abram has got. Because Abram is quite prosperous, being blessed by God.

So, Abram is 75 when he departs from Haran. Abram took Sarah, his wife, and Lot, his brother's son, all the possessions that they had gathered and the people whom they had acquired in Haran. And they departed to go to the land of Canaan.

And so, they came to the land of Canaan. Well, this is in response to the call of God. We're going to see that Abram is going to do some things once he arrives in the land.

We're going to see how the information that we have gained here in the last several verses sets the stage for what follows. But Abram takes the step. It's hard.

Terah is still alive and well in Haran. But Abram, his first priority is the call of God. And we'll see that this is a pattern, even in spite of his failures.

This is why Abraham is given as the model of faith. Abraham and David are the two great names that God has written in the pages of the Old Testament. And it's because of their faith.

They are willing to risk all, to sacrifice all, to leave father and mother for the sake of the call of God. It's the same call that Jesus mentions to His disciples in the New Testament. Unless you're willing to leave father and mother and houses and lands and follow, we're not worthy to be disciples.

This is a characteristic that Abram represents and illustrates. Paul spends an entire chapter on it in Romans 4. And it's something that we want to give consideration to. We'll pick up our study next week in Genesis 12.

Let's close here in a word of prayer. We thank you, Father, for the wonderful opportunity and call that you have placed before us. We pray that we will see clearly where that path lies and that we will have the insight that comes from your word and your spirit to know what connections and what relationships we may need to put distance in in order to pursue and fulfill that calling in our lives.

We thank you for the clear guidance you have given us, for the divine resources that are at our disposal. We pray that as we meditate on these things and seek to apply them in our lives, that we will walk the worthy walk and our lives will reflect your glory. We pray these things in Jesus' name.

Amen.