



### **Key Verse:**

“By faith Abraham, when called to go to a place he would later receive as his inheritance, obeyed and went, even though he did not know where he was going” (Hebrews 11:8 NIV)

“And without faith, it is impossible to please God...” Hebrews 11:6 NIV

### **Hearing Gods Call on Your Life- God calls Abraham**

#### **Bible Background:**

The story of God calling Abram took place before there was any organized system of religion. There was no church, no scripture, no Law, no Rules, Rituals or regulations...just a relationship with God, the Creator, and the people worshiped Him in various ways (sacrifices, etc.) But, worship flowed out of a response of love rather than obligation to religious code. It was during this time that God calls Abram.

God asked Abram to respond in obedience to something that seemed to have no reason or logic behind it. But, because of God’s goodness and the relationship between them, Abram chose to trust God and follow His instructions without knowing what the end result might be. As a result, God blessed him mightily. In Romans 4, Paul even refers to Abram (Abraham) as the “father of us all” through faith and it’s by faith that God’s promises are transferred to us. Responding appropriately in faith is an important part of our Christian walk, so it’s necessary to look to Abraham as our model.

### **Read Bible Story: Genesis 12:1-9**

# God's Call Includes Great Promises for Those Who Obey

“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 12:2–3](#))

In addition, God's call comes with many great promises. When God calls us or moves in our lives, many times he doesn't give us reasons or calm the waves of our curiosity. He may not answer questions like, “Why?” or “What for?” Sometimes he doesn't even tell us “Where?” or “How?” but he always gives us promises.

In Scripture, God gives conditional and unconditional promises. “I will never leave you nor forsake you” is an unconditional promise. “Give and it shall be given unto you” is a conditional promise. With Abraham, God seems to give a conditional promise that later becomes unconditional (cf. [Gen 15](#)). God says to him “Leave ... I will make you into a great nation and I will bless you.” All of Abraham's promises were based on his obedience to God. As we consider these promises, they have specific applications to our call and walk of faith.

*Observation Question:* What promises did God give Abraham?

## 1. God promised to give Abraham a land.

This promise is later expanded. In [Genesis 12:7](#), God says, “To your offspring I will give this land.” God promised to give his offspring the land of Canaan.

However, it must be known that God's promise of a land was not just earthly—it was also heavenly. The writer of Hebrews says:

By faith Abraham, when called to go to a place he would later receive as his inheritance, obeyed and went, even though he did not know where he was going. By faith he made his home in the promised land like a stranger in a foreign country; he lived in tents, as did Isaac and Jacob, who were heirs with him of the same promise. For he was looking forward to the city with foundations, whose architect and builder is God. ([Hebrews 11:8–10](#))

Abraham never received the land while living in it. He always lived as a foreigner in tents. However, his true hope was in a heavenly city—of which Canaan was a type.

This should be true for us as well. Yes, God has a call for us on the earth including a territory or ministry for us to spread his name and fame. It may be to a group of people, a city, or a nation, and as we are obedient, God opens the door to that ministry and blesses it. However, our primary call is

heavenly. We must never let our earthly call—or successes or disappointments that come with it—dim the great call that we have in heaven. It must be our primary pursuit and endeavor (cf. [Matt 6:20](#)).

## **2. God promised to make Abraham a great nation.**

At the time Abraham received this promise, he was childless. His original name Abram meant “exalted father” while his later name, Abraham, meant “father of a multitude.”<sup>8</sup>

In that culture, it was shameful to not have any children. You can imagine the snickers that came every time Abram introduced himself: “What’s your name?” “My name is Abram.” “Really, how many kids do you have?” “None.” “Oh?” Abraham and his wife bore great shame and burden because of this reality. Obviously, it was always their hope to raise children.

Here, God promises to remove that shame and not only give them a child but to bring a great nation from him. This nation would be the nation of Israel. It was to Israel that God gave his covenant and his laws. He dwelt among them in the tabernacle and later the temple. It was through this nation that the messiah would come and bless the entire world. The nation of Israel is truly a great nation because of the spiritual lineage that came through them.

In addition, Scripture teaches that the church also came through Abraham. Again, [Galatians 3:7](#) says that we are “children of Abraham” because of our belief. He is the father of all who believe in God. It is through him and his lineage that God chose to bring redemption.

In a sense this promise is true about us and our callings as well. God’s desire is for us to have children—specifically spiritual children. In [1 John 2:12–14](#), John writes to fathers, sons, and children. Each believer is in one of these stages, but God’s will is for all of us to become fathers and mothers. This means that we are giving birth—leading people to Christ and discipling them. God’s call for us is also to raise up a nation of people who love and follow him.

Are you willing to allow God to raise spiritual children through you? Most miss out on this part of their call by staying in spiritual immaturity.

## **3. God promised to bless him.**

The word “bless” is a rich word. It can be translated “happy.” God’s blessing brings joy in the life of a person—no matter the circumstances. Blessing has to do with approval. When a man wants to marry a woman, he gets her father’s “blessing”—meaning his approval. Abraham would be approved by God for his obedience. But, it also has the connotation of favor. God was going to place his favor on Abraham’s life, as we see throughout his story. God prospers him with wealth; he gives him a baby when he and his wife were past childbearing age. The greatest blessing was obviously God’s presence.

God would speak with Abraham and visit his house ([Gen 18](#)). Scripture calls Abraham God's friend ([James 2:23](#)).

This is true for us as well. Faithful obedience brings God's blessing on our lives. In fact, we see a similar promise in [Psalm 1:1–3](#). God blesses the man who stays away from the path of the wicked (even as Abraham left his idolatrous home and country) and who delights in God's law—therefore, meditating on it day and night. God promises to prosper everything he does.

Abraham was a man who obeyed God and received his blessing. Will you obey God and receive his blessings as well? Many forfeit God's blessing by living in compromise and disobedience.

*Application Question:* What types of blessings have you received as a result of obedience to God? How have you experienced his discipline for not being obedient?

**4. God promised to make his name great.**

**5. God promised to make him a blessing.**

**6. God promises to bless those who bless Abraham and curse those who curse him.**

**7. God promised that all the people of the earth would be blessed through him.**

This is the most precious promise given to Abraham, and it is a key verse in redemptive history. God promised to bless all the people of the earth through Abraham. How would God do this? The primary way was by sending the messiah, Jesus Christ, through Abraham's lineage. The messiah would be both divine and human. He would die for the sins of the world and rise from the dead on the third day. Jesus Christ is a blessing to all the peoples of the earth. This is true because he is the only way to salvation. There is no other way for people to have eternal life except through him. Christ said this, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No man comes to the father but through me" ([John 14:6](#)).

Certainly, this should be true about us in one sense as well. God's call for us is to share the messiah with others. This is done directly through the gospel and indirectly by living the gospel.

[First Peter 2:12](#) says, "Live such good lives among the pagans that, though they accuse you of doing wrong, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day he visits us." The reason pagans will glorify God on the day of the Lord is because they came to know Christ through us. This is part of God's call on every believer's life.

As we consider the seven promises given to Abraham, we must remember that God also gave us many great promises. By one person's count, the Bible contains over 3,000 promises. [Second Peter 1:3–](#)

[4](#) says, His divine power has given us everything we need for life and godliness through our knowledge of him who called us by his own glory and goodness. Through these he has given us his very great and precious promises, so that through them you may participate in the divine nature and escape the corruption in the world caused by evil desires.

God gave us great and precious promises through which we can participate in the divine nature and escape the world's corruption. Essentially, this means that the promises in Scripture are given to make us holy and deliver us from sin.

Sadly, many Christians do not drink deeply from these promises. While Abraham was in Canaan being tempted to be like those around him, he had to remember the great promises God gave him. It would help him to faithfully follow God and be the person God called him to be. In the same way, God gave us many great and precious promises which apply to our calling as well. We should memorize them, quote them, and cling to them, especially when tempted or in trial.

Consider these promises:

[Proverbs 3:6](#) says, “in all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make your paths straight.” God promises to give direction to the person who puts him first and seeks to glorify him in everything.

[Matthew 5:6](#) says, “Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled.” God promises that if we truly hunger for righteousness—to know the Word of God, to see souls saved, to get rid of sin in our lives and become more holy—he will give it to us. The question really is, “Do we really hunger for righteousness?”

[Matthew 6:33](#) says, “But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.” God promises that if we seek first the kingdom and his righteousness that he will always meet our needs. Many people seek their needs first and, therefore, find themselves impoverished and in lack.

[Second Corinthians 9:6–8](#) says, Remember this: Whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows generously will also reap generously. Each man should give what he has decided in his heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. And God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that in all things at all times, having all that you need, you will abound in every good work.

In considering our call, God may not tell us where, who, or how. But he does give us promises to help along the way, and many of these promises are conditional—coming after our obedience. God's call is full of promises for those who obey. Are you obeying?

# Taking a Faith Inventory

**Instructions:** It can be helpful to clarify and evaluate our faith by taking inventory. Next to each statement is a continuum with 1 = Total Unbelief and 10 = Total Belief. Read each statement and decide how much or how little you believe it, and circle the appropriate number.

1. I believe God exists	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
2. God loves me	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
3. I love God	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
4. Jesus is God's Son	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
5. God forgives my sin	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
6. God hears me when I pray	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
7. God answers my prayers	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
8. There will be a resurrection of the dead	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
9. The Bible is totally true	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
10. I do what the Bible says to do	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10



