

Begin Again Small Group Guide

Warm-up Question: (Choose one, make up your own, or skip this part altogether, depending upon the nature of your group.)

1. What is one thing you are looking forward to this year?
2. Generally speaking, is it hard for you to move on from the past? Explain.

Read the following passage: Genesis 11:27-12:4.

Terah and his family set out for Canaan but settled in Harran. We are not told why they settled in Harran, but most of us have had a similar experience. We have set out with a particular goal in mind only to settle somewhere else. All of us have places in our lives in which we are stuck and need to figure out how to get moving again. How do we do that? Abram's example can help us. Abram listened to God's word which addressed some of the most important areas of his life: his pain, his need for relationship with God, his identity, his relationships with other people, and his desire for significance.

Questions for Discussion (Choose several that are relevant for your group):

1. Are there any areas in your life in which you feel stuck right now? Explain.
2. Many people wait for God to give them very specific instructions like he gave to Abram. But what are some things the Scriptures instruct all of us to do? What can we do to position ourselves to hear more specific instructions from God? Alternatively, do you think it's okay to move forward in a specific direction that generally aligns with God's will even if you don't have a specific instruction from God to do so? Explain.
3. God instructed Abram to leave "[his] country, [his] people and [his] father's household." Are there any things in your life (including even good things) you feel you may need to "leave" or bring to an end in order to move forward this year? Explain. Compare Jesus' interaction with the man in Mark 10:17-21.
4. God's promise to Abram touched a very painful area of his life: his inability to have children with Sarai. ("I will make you into a great nation.") Do you have any unresolved areas of pain in your life? Explain. Author Donald Miller describes four main types of character and their different responses to pain.
 - The victim experiences pain and shuts down. "There's no way out."
 - The villain experiences pain and pursues revenge. "I'll feel better about myself if I make other people feel small."
 - The hero faces his pain and, with help, pursues transformation.
 - The guide has already experienced transformation and helps others experience the same thing.

What are some ways we act like victims or villains? How can we learn to face our pain and pursue transformation? How do the promises of God help us?

5. In Hebrew, being the son of something or someone meant having that thing's or person's character or identity. How should being God's son (or daughter) impact our identity and how we live?
6. Why do you think we so often wait for other people to change rather than focusing on what we can control, namely, our own behavior? How is Matthew 7:3-5 relevant?
7. What is one way you would like to move forward this year?

Pray