

Life Lesson 7

Abraham

Text: Genesis 12:1-7, Romans 4:3

Introduction

Imagine for a moment that you came home from school and found your parents packing up to move!

"Where are we going?" you would probably ask.

What if they answered, "We don't know. We're just moving. God will tell us where we are going when we get there."

Don't you think that would be just a little bit scary--to move away from your family and friends and home, not even knowing where you were going? That is exactly what happened to the people in our story today. The main character in our story is a man named Abram.

The Story

Abram was the first of the patriarchs. You remember that we have been learning about the two main parts of the book of Genesis. The first part is the *Primeval Period* or *Early Days*. The second part is called the *Patriarchal Period*, or *Early People*. The word "patriarch" means "father." The people we will be studying the next few weeks are the men who are the fathers of the Israelite nation. That means that their grandchildren, great-grandchildren, and great-great-grandchildren - and so on - over the years became known as the "Children of Israel." Sometimes they were called Israelites or Hebrews. The very first patriarch was a man named Abram. Later on his name was changed to Abraham.

I'm glad to say that Abraham loved God. In fact, the Bible says he was known as the "friend of God." If you knew the president of the United States personally, it would be pretty exciting, wouldn't it? Probably everyone in your school would speak of you as "the kid who's the

friend of the president." That would be quite an honor! Think how much more of an honor it was for Abraham to be known as the Friend of God.

The first we hear about Abraham is in chapter 12 of the book of Genesis. Let's read together what it says in verses 1-3. "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 show thee. 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: 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."

That was quite a promise! If he obeyed, God would bless him and make him great. Don't you think it took a lot of faith to go ahead and move--leaving everything behind--and just take off not knowing where he was going? He must have truly believed that God would do as He promised, or he never would have left the land of Ur of the Chaldees.

He did leave, though. He packed up his possessions and servants, his wife, and his nephew Lot, and followed God to a place he probably had never heard of. God led him to the land of Canaan.

He said, "Unto thy seed I will give this land."

Now here is another situation that required faith. God said this land of Canaan would belong to Abram and his children. There was just one problem -- there were already people living in the land, and they were big people.

But, Abram believed what God said, and he built an altar there to the Lord. There on the altar he offered an animal sacrifice as God commanded. Do you remember why the Old Testament believers offered an animal on the altar? It was because they understood that they were sinners and that the wages of sin is death. They shed the blood of an innocent animal as a

sign that they believed God would send a perfect Messiah to shed His blood to atone for their sin.

Did the animal save them? No, that was only a symbol of Christ who would come to save them.

Let's look at Romans 4:3 to see another verse about Abram, or Abraham. "Abraham *believed* God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness."

It doesn't say that Abraham was an extra good man--or that he was righteous. It says that he *believed God*, and God counted it for righteousness.

The Life Lesson

We know that we can never be good enough for God. God wants is for us to be like Abraham. He wants us to believe Him. He wants us to believe and trust in Jesus as the Messiah, or Promised One who came to save us by paying for our sins on the cross. That's how we are saved, not by being baptized, or by going to church, or by doing good things. We can never be righteous. We can never meet up to God's standard, but we can believe Him and surrender to Him, and He will "count" it to us as righteousness.

Then the same wonderful thing that was true of Abraham can be true of us. We can be friends of God.

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Review Questions

What does "patriarch" mean?

Father

What nation did the grandchildren and great-grandchildren, and so, of the patriarchs become?

The "Children of Israel."

What are some other names for the children of Israel?

The Israelites, Hebrews, or Jews.

Who was the first patriarch?

Abram, or Abraham

Abram was known as _____.

The friend of God.

Where did Abram live?

Ur of the Chaldees.

What did God tell Abram to do?

Leave his home and family and go to a strange land.

Did Abram obey God?

Yes.

What did Abram do to show he believed God's promise?

He built an altar and made a sacrifice.

Abram _____ and God counted it for righteousness.

Believed God.