FOLLOWING JESUS TOGETHER



STUDYING THE FAITH OF ABRAHAM TO DISCOVER HOW TO BE ALL IN FOR JESUS

SESSION 1



cornerstone.ag/allin

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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**

Then Jesus said to them all: "If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me. For whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses [or GIVES] his life for me will save it." Luke 9:23-24

ABOUT THIS SESSION

Jesus wants to leave His legacy through your life. You are someone's legacy. In fact, you are a result of many people who have stepped out in ways they didn't have to. Think for a moment about all the people who have spoken into and impacted your life. No, it hasn't always been in positive ways, but even negative stuff can end up affecting you in good ways. Life's hurts can help us become healers; and hardships can push us toward hope and character. The best way to be grateful for the legacy we've received is to decide and practice the legacy we want to leave those who come after us. The question we want to answer is, "Knowing what I have received, how will I provide the same (or even more) for others because of Jesus?"

For the next 5 weeks, we will study Abraham's life in light of Jesus. Though Abraham lived over four thousand years ago, his legacy of faith and obedience is still touching people around the world. He was a man of faith and of failures. In other words, he was someone we can identify with if we let ourselves. Abraham had to make a decision about what kind of legacy he was going to leave behind: a stay put, "same old, same old" legacy of never following where God led or a "step out in faith," obedient kind of legacy that God could bless in many ways. Abraham decided to go for it, even though he didn't know where he would end up.

As church family, this 5-week series called ALL IN is preparing us for a new season trusting God to do a great work in us and through us. May God bring us together in ways we've never experienced before to pursue our high calling of "Following Jesus together to grow generations that transform communities."

SERMON NOTES

DATE:

SERMON TITLE:







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Each of us has a story. The events of our life—good, bad, wonderful, or challenging—have shaped who we are. God knows your story, and He intends to redeem it—to use every struggle and every joy to ultimately bring you to Himself. When we share our stories with others, we give them the opportunity to see God at work.

As part of Come Together, pass around a sheet of paper to collect names and contact information, giving all present an opportunity to fill it out. Have every-one introduce themselves, then write down their contact information. Ask someone to make copies or type up a list with everyone's information and email it to the group this week.

Open your group with prayer. This should be a brief, simple prayer, in which you invite God to be with you as you meet. You can pray for specific requests at the end of the meeting, or stop momentarily to pray if a particular situation comes up during your discussion.

Whether your group is new or ongoing, it's always important to reflect on and review your values together. On page 114, there is a Small Group Agreement with the values we've found most useful in sustaining healthy, balanced groups. We recommend that you choose 1 or 2 values—and perhaps ones you haven't previously focused on or have room to grow in—so that they can be emphasized during this study.

We've come to realize that healthy groups rotate responsibilities. This helps to develop every member's ability to shepherd a few people in a safe environment. Even Jesus gave others the opportunity to serve alongside Him (Mark 6:30–44). Look at the FAQs in the Appendix for additional information about hosting the group.

Use the Small Group Calendar on page 114 to plan who will host each meeting. Take a few minutes to plan hosts for your remaining meetings. Don't pass this up! It will revolutionize your group.

QUESTIONS

- If your group is new, welcome newcomers. Introduce everyone—you may even want to have name tags for your first meeting.
- 2 What drew you here to this group? How are you anticipating God will grow you through this season of ALL IN?

You can **watch this lesson's videos online at cornerstone.ag/ALLin**. This first session video will give you a sense of the tone for ALL IN. Pastor Shawn will teach from the life of Abraham. Use the space provided to record any key thoughts, questions, and things you want to remember or follow up on. After watching the video, have someone read the Scripture passage and questions in the Learn Together section and direct the discussion among the group. As you go through each of the subsequent sections, ask someone else to read the questions and direct the discussion.



LEARN TOGETHER

God uses stories to guide us. In fact, the Bible is His story! When we read the true stories of Scripture, we learn what God is like and we see His plan unfolding. We also learn principles for our own lives. So how can we become a part of God's story? By aligning our stories with His and not just understanding what it means to follow Him, but actually doing it—changing our attitudes and actions to live as He would live.

Use the following questions to guide your discussion of the teaching and stories you just experienced along with the Bible passage below. You may also want to refer to the study notes on the next page to guide your reading and discussion.



SCRIPTURE

READ: GENESIS 12:1-8

1The Lord had said to Abram, "Go from your country, your people and your father's household to the land I will show you. **2** "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. **3** I will bless those who bless you, and whoever curses you I will curse; and all peoples on earth will be blessed through you." **4** So Abram went, as the Lord had told him; and Lot went with him. Abram was seventy-five years old when he set out from Harran. **5** He took his wife Sarai, his nephew Lot, all the possessions they had accumulated and the people they had acquired in Harran, and they set out for the land of Canaan, and they arrived there. **6** Abram traveled through the land as far as the site of the great tree of Moreh at Shechem. At that time the Canaanites were in the land. **7** The Lord appeared to Abram and said, "To your offspring I will give this land." So he built an altar there to the Lord, who had appeared to him. **8** From there he went on toward the hills east of Bethel and pitched his tent, with Bethel on the west and Ai on the east. There he built an altar to the Lord and called on the name of the Lord.





QUESTIONS

Who is someone at Cornerstone (or someplace else) who has left a legacy of God's grace and love in your life?

- Think for a moment about being a member of Abram's household. He announces at breakfast one morning, "Last night the Lord spoke to me.Today we're packing up and hitting the road." What would be some of your questions?
- Based on this passage in Genesis, what kind of legacy was Abram creating by his actions in Genesis 12:1-8?
- In Luke 9:23 Jesus invites His disciples to get on "the road with Him" to Jerusalem where He will give His life for the world. What was something they have to give up or step into in order to follow Jesus in that way?

STUDY NOTES

The Lord said to Abram (v.1). Before God changed his name to Abraham (father of many), the patriarch of Israel was Abram (exalted father). When we see the title "Lord" (Large cap), it indicates God's name Yahweh, which won't be explained until Exodus 3. But since Moses was writing these chapters, he used the title for God that was most familiar to him.

I will bless (v.2, 3). We bless when we speak or deliver good into someone's life. God not only promised to do good for Abram, He also promised to make Abram's life into something good for others.

In you all the families of the earth shall be blessed (v.3). The idea of legacy has a lot to do with understanding that the blessings of God aren't supposed to stop with us. Blessings flow through us to others. We can't even imagine how much God might bless others through us.

There he built an altar to the Lord and called on the name of the Lord (v.7). Abram was aware of God's company and leading. But it was more than knowing He was there; he responded in worship. He acknowledged the Lord and expressed his confidence in Him.

G R O W T O G E T H E R

Our Creator is certainly after more from us than an acknowledgment that He exists. There are plenty of people who are willing to admit there's a God, but they still don't want to have anything to do with Him. God wants you to be a part of His Kingdom—to weave your story into His. **That will mean change—to go His way rather than your own.** This won't happen overnight, but it should happen steadily. By starting with small, simple choices, we begin to change our direction. We can build a legacy that will please God. The Holy Spirit helps us along the way—giving us gifts to serve the body, offering us insights into Scripture, and challenging us to love not only those around us but those far from God.



In this section, talk about how you will apply the wisdom you've learned from the teaching and Bible study. Then think about practical steps you can take in the coming week to live out what you've learned.

- As He did with Abram, in what ways do you feel that God is calling you out from something or away from something, so that He can leave a legacy through you? What has been your response so far?
- 2 How does the challenge to leave a legacy change your perspective on how you're living right now?
- **3** Read Luke 6:38. When it comes to stewardship and giving to God, would you say that God wants something FOR you or FROM you? What's the difference between those two perspectives? How does it connect to Abraham's life?
- 4 Cornerstone is all about "Following Jesus together to grow generations that will transform communities." Why do you believe this is a mission worth sacrificing for in light of legacy?



Stewardship may be a new term in your Christian experience. It has long been used to refer to God's entrusting us with the management of the resources He gives us: time, talents, and treasure. These things may seem to be ours, but they ultimately belong to Him. Even what we earn, we have earned using time, strength, and skill God has provided to us.

PRAY TOGETHER

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To close your time together, spend some time praying.

Ask everyone to share, "How can we pray for you this week?" Be sure to write prayer requests on our Prayer and Praise Report on page 120.

Close your meeting with prayer.

DAILY Devotionals

There are six days of devotions. On the last day, read back over your responses and let that guide a final time of reflection.

Use these daily devotions to go deeper into this week's topic. Each day, take your time reading the verse given. Ask God to speak to you through His Word. Notice which word or phrase stands out to you. Then take some time to write your response back to Him. You can write whatever is on your heart. Answer the "Reflect" question only if it's helpful. Feel free to go another direction if you sense God leading you. On the first day, you may want to read over all the verses for the week to get the "big picture" of the passage. But then walk slowly, verse by verse. Listen to what God wants to say to you through His Word, and respond to Him as you meditate on the truths of Scripture.

After Day 3 of each week, you will have an opportunity to take what you have learned and put it into practice. These "Action Steps" will challenge you to respond to these truths in your daily life.

MEMORY 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

DAY 1

Read Hebrews 11:8

"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."

REFLECT

It's easy to think, "If God told me to go, I'd go." But, have you? Under what circumstances have you responded to God the way Abraham did?

DAY 2

Read Matthew 28:19-20

"Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."

REFLECT

In what ways are you personally ALL IN to Cornerstone's mission of Following Jesus Together to Grow Generations that Transform Communities? What do each of those terms mean to you?

DAILY Devotionals

DAY 3

Read Proverbs 3:35 "The wise inherit honor, but fools get only shame."

REFLECT

Note that legacy parallels inheritance. What would you say are 3 main examples of the faith legacy you have created (or are creating) to leave behind at this point in your life? What would you change?

ACTION STEPS

During this week spend some time thinking about 2 things:

- What do you feel you are known for now?
- What do you want to be known for towards the end of your life?

DAY 4

Read Ephesians 2:8-9

"For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God— not by works, so that no one can boast."

REFLECT

What you have in Christ you have not, in any way, earned. As you begin to engage with the ALL IN study, in what areas of life are you wanting to be more active in sharing the inheritance you have in Christ?

DAY 5

Read Philippians 4:19 "And my God will meet all your needs according to the riches of his glory in Christ Jesus."

REFLECT

How can we know the truth of this promise unless we are willing to stop gripping on to the things of this life as if they were our true security? What are some things you need to release into God's hands as you seek to be ALL IN to what He wants to do in you and in us?

DAY 6

Use the following space to write any thoughts God has put in your heart and mind about the things we have looked at in this session and during your reflection time this week.





You are now members of the family of God and are built upon the foundation laid by the Scriptures of the apostles and prophets, **the cornerstone** being Christ Jesus Himself. We are carefully joined together in Him, becoming a holy temple for the Lord. Through Him you too are also being made part of this dwelling where God lives by his Spirit. **Ephesians 2:19-22**

Jesus is before all things; and in Him all things hold together. Colossians 1:17

I am the vine; you are the branches. If a man remains in me and I in him, he will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing. John 15:5

By this all people will know that you are My disciples, if you love one another. John 13:35



This new logo for our church family shows how we live out the truth that Jesus is The Cornerstone of our lives and of our church.

Priority

At the center of the logo design is The Cornerstone, Jesus Christ, around which all of the other elements are situated. Without Him we can do nothing and are nothing. He is the One who saves and transforms. This logo reminds us that Jesus is the center and greatest priority of our church's identity, purpose and future vision.

Personally

Ephesians 2:19-22 is from where we get our church name. The three elements around the Cornerstone represent the Spirit of God, the Word of God and the people of God. When these three elements are active in our lives we will stay Jesus centered. As we do this, we contribute to the creation of a church that is truly a "holy temple" for people outside of Christ to come to and be saved and transformed.

Community

The three different shapes around the "Cornerstone" also represent the three major cultures of our community: African American, Anglo & Latino. By these three, plus many more, cultures coming together around The Cornerstone, we can find great unity and love for each other and become a powerful witness to our community of how Jesus and His Gospel are the answers it needs.



