



# JOURNEY OF FAITH

WALKING BY FAITH, NOT SIGHT

*Small Group Discussion Guide*



## PREPARATION

### ❏ STUDY

Spend the week studying Genesis 12:10–13:4. Consult the commentary provided and any additional study tools to enhance your preparation.

### ❏ PRAY

Pray for our pastors and this week's message, the upcoming group time, your group members, and their openness to God's Word.

### ❏ LANDING POINT

God is faithful to forgive, even in my failure.



## GROUP DISCUSSION

❏ **CONFIDENTIALITY** | What's said in the group stays in the group.

❏ **NO CROSS-TALK** | Be considerate of others as they share. Refrain from side conversations and texting during group time.

❏ **NO FIXING** | We are not in the group to fix each other. Jesus does that part.

❏ **SHARING** | Be sensitive to the amount of time you share. Don't talk too much or too little. Every person brings something valuable to the group.



## INTRODUCTION

*As your group time begins, use this section to introduce the topic of discussion.*

# FAILING FORWARD

*Men at their best are at their best men.*

Martin Luther

Great storytelling includes three-dimensional characters. In a good story you can relate to one or more of the characters and say, “Yep. I’ve been there before,” or “I know how that feels.” The Bible is such a great story because it doesn’t try to hide or overlook the flaws of its characters. The characters are real, and there are times when they fail the test of faith. Noah got drunk. Moses had a temper. David committed adultery and murder. In a moment of cowardice, Peter denied knowing Jesus.

If you want to grow your faith, you should expect to grow through some failures. You will have to learn to fail forward. This week your group will discuss Abraham’s first test of faith and how he responded.

**Q:** *Why is it important to acknowledge that we all fail?*



## DEEPER DIVE

*Select 2–3 questions to discuss as a group.*

# IN A BIND

Abraham finds himself in a crisis moment. There’s a famine in the land, which is potentially disastrous for a traveling nomad like himself. He’s in a bind and needs to do something. But instead of seeking God, Abraham comes up with a half-baked plan that backfires terribly.

**Q:** *Have someone read Genesis 12:10–13:4. After the passage is read, have a volunteer*

*retell the story in their own words.*

Q: *What's the best way to handle a crisis? What's the worst way?*

Q: *What could Abraham have done differently in this situation?*



## REFLECTION AND NEXT STEPS

# RETURNING TO GOD

Abraham failed his first test of faith. He acted foolishly and out of his flesh. But Abraham's failure wasn't the end of the story. God welcomed him back, and Abraham worshiped God at his altar with a renewed sense of God's grace and mercy.

What can Abraham's failure and return teach us? Let's look at four points:

- *Crises will come.* God doesn't promise you a problem-free life. In fact, He tells you that you will face difficulty. Storms will blow their way into your life and test your faith.
- *Seek Him in the crisis.* God wants to use the hardships and crises of life to grow your faith. These are where God does His best work to grow your faith. So when your faith is tested, don't panic. Don't rely on your feelings in the moment. Don't take matters into your own hands. Seek God. Go to Him in prayer. Go to His Word. Go to other believers.
- *Everyone stumbles.* A life of faith is a journey, which means there is a progression. And we all stumble on our journey. In the face of failure, the enemy will tell you that your failure is final or that you're a failure. When you fail, remember that failure is an event, not a person. Repent, receive God's grace and walk in that grace on your journey.
- *God waits for your return.* God doesn't hold your failures against you like the enemy does. He is the God of new beginnings and welcomes you back when you return to Him.

Q: *Share about a time when God grew your faith through failure.*

Q: *How is your faith being tested currently? How are you seeking God in response?*

Q: What are healthy ways to address those who have failed you?

Q: How can the group be praying for you this week?



## COMMENTARY

**GOD'S FAITHFULNESS** “In spite of the trouble Abram caused for himself, God was faithful to His word and did not let the foolishness of this man throw His plan into jeopardy. Abram probably felt that the easiest way *out of* danger was to manipulate deceptively. But such scheming put him in danger and jeopardized the promise.”<sup>1</sup>

**FORESHADOWING THE EXODUS** “Abraham’s exodus from Egypt prefigures the nation’s later exodus: God sends a famine (v. 10; 47:4); the Egyptians afflict them (vv. 12–15; Ex. 1:11–14); God sends plagues on the Egyptians (v. 17; Ex. 8–11); the Egyptians let them go with great wealth (vv. 16, 20; Ex. 12:33–36); they return to the land by stages through the wilderness (13:3; Ex. 17:1); and finally arrive back in the land, where they worship the Lord (13:3; Ex. 15:17).”<sup>2</sup>

**GOD OF PROMISE, GOD OF PROVISION** “Here again, we find that Abram is a bright example of faith—this time, faith, not simply in the promises of God, but also in the provision of God; faith in the God who justifies the ungodly! And we, failures though we are, must be people of the same faith. God makes wonderful promises for those who trust and obey. But even better news is that he has also made wonderful provision for those who haven’t yet done so—not in a lamb from Abram’s fold, but in the ‘Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world’ (John 1:29). Jesus has made provision for our forgiveness so that all of us who, with Abram, will ‘call on the name of the Lord will be saved’ (Rom. 10:13).”<sup>3</sup>

### ENDNOTES:

1. Allen P. Ross, “Genesis,” in *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures*, ed. J. F. Walvoord and R. B. Zuck, vol. 1 (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1985), 49.
2. R. C. Sproul, ed., *The Reformation Study Bible: English Standard Version (2015 Edition)* (Orlando, FL: Reformation Trust, 2015), 33.
3. Kurt Strassner, *Opening up Genesis, Opening Up Commentary* (Leominster: Day One Publications, 2009), 68.