

# Invited to Go the Distance

Week Five

if you will follow God's pathway or your own pathway. You cannot have it both ways. ***To be with Him and know the sweetness of His fellowship, you must take the path He chooses for you.***

If you want God to be your greatest desire, then you have to be willing to lay down other desires. You may longingly look back at the choices you placed at your Father's feet and feel the tug of self-pity or the sting of hurt pride. Sometimes the pain of doing things God's way seems unbearable. Eventually, however, our desire to have our own way will be eclipsed by our desire to follow God. The love and light we feel in His presence will grow so substantially that we desire His presence more than we desire to have our own way. God's way always proves best...and good...and ***ultimately wonderful.*** ***When we begin to sense our Father's deep love for us, we learn that the journey is easiest to travel when we walk hand in hand together with the Divine.***

Where are you in your own journey with God? Have you been stuck in one of the conditions listed above? ***Circle where you have been until recently and then star which place you are committed to be.***

**Boredom      Complacency    Fatigue      Doubt      Fear    Surrender**

***What area of your own heart and life resonates with what you've considered here?***

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***How do you need to respond to and cooperate with God?*** \_\_\_\_\_

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***With what new hope or insight do you close today's study? Write it here as God's special gift to you and keep this thought before you.***



***God's Special Gift to Me:*** \_\_\_\_\_

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***This week's theme: " \_\_\_\_\_."***



***Take-Away: I can hold my Father's hand and trust His heart on this journey. He will not fail me.***

## Day Four: At the Teacher's Feet

**Make your whole self available to God. Rest quietly now, reflectively. As you reflect on yesterday's events, what made an impact on you? Name here any thoughts, questions, or feelings that linger.**



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***Ask God where He may be moving in these things and include that reflection here.***

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# Discovering the Father's Heart

What does your heart desire for God to do for you in these unfinished situations?

\_\_\_\_\_ Lay all these things at His feet... quiet your mind... trust Him... **Ask Him to let you see His activity and recognize His movement.** As you reflect on this story, listen to it from God's perspective. Listen as if He is right there telling you the story face-to-face and listen as if you are hearing it for the very first time. **Please read Genesis 12:1-5.**

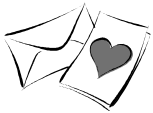


Now, focus only on verses 1-3. Abram's life unfolded the same way yours does: one day at a time. **Think about Abram's encounter with God. How might Abram describe this encounter?**

"One day...." \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

What challenges did he face? What feelings would you would have faced if you were him?



From God's point of view: **Considering God's perspective, how might this event have impacted Him and what He desired?**

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As you consider this story as a significant moment in God's own life, what captures your heart?



Now consider your own life. **Are you facing any of the same challenges or feelings you recognized in the participants?**

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God first gave a command and then followed it with a promise. God made specific promises to Abram:

"I will make you \_\_\_\_\_, and I will \_\_\_\_\_."

"I will make your \_\_\_\_\_, and you will be \_\_\_\_\_."

"I will \_\_\_\_\_ those who \_\_\_\_\_ you, and whoever \_\_\_\_\_ you I will \_\_\_\_\_."

"And all \_\_\_\_\_ will be \_\_\_\_\_."

Two of these statements describe how Abram's life would affect others; the other statements reveal God's promises of blessing for Abram. These statements didn't give Abram an assignment (something to do); instead, God told Abram what he would become. **As a result of what GOD would do, Abram would BE a blessing and others would be blessed THROUGH him.** What was Abram's part? Abram was simply asked to... **Go. "Go... and you will be..." all because of what God would do.**

The same is true for us today. Do we have the same calling Abram had? Let's see.... **"Go... to the place I will show you."** Yes! While you may have no idea where God is taking you, each and every day you are called to go. Take one step today, and another step tomorrow, and then one more step the next day. Go... but realize; only God knows where He is taking you while you are here on earth. **"I will make you...and I will bless you."** Nothing releases God's demonstrative power and love in our lives more than when we say, "YES!" and

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follow Him. There are many ways that God desires to bless us, but we will only receive those blessings when we follow Him.

**"I will make you... and you will be a blessing."** Yes, our God is most definitely in the construction and restoration business. Sin damages your heart, soul and mind. This includes your own choices to sin, as well as, the effects of sin done against you that has not yet been healed. The more sin has control in your life, the less you will be filled with the Holy Spirit. You cannot gain more of the Spirit's life within your heart without losing more of the world's hold of sin and self over your being. If we will cooperate with God in our construction process, we will increasingly become a blessing to those around us without even trying! (We will explore this and much more in our teaching session together.)

Let's wrap up with one more look at verse 5: **"He took his wife Sarai, his nephew Lot, all the possessions they had accumulated and the people they had acquired in Haran, and they set out for the land of Canaan, and they arrived there."** (NLT) **And they arrived there.** They set out for Canaan and they arrived there.

I truly believe this verse is worded to be a strong comparison to what was said about Terah settling. Review Genesis 11:31: **"Terah took his son Abram, his grandson Lot, son of Haran, and his daughter-in-law Sarai, the wife of his son Abram, and together they set out from Ur of the Chaldeans to go to Canaan. But when they came to Haran, they settled there."** (NIV) Both took... both set out for Canaan... only one arrived... **the other one settled.**

For every victory God will have for you, there will be a choice you must make. Will you be willing to take the path God sets before you? Will you follow it all the way to its final destination? This week's lesson has shown us one man who stopped short and one man who went all the way. **Which will you be? In what area is God drawing you forward onto a new path with Himself?**

God determines your destination. Your choice to follow God will lead to His blessing and abundance in your life. Every path that God appoints is a pathway to greater blessing. No matter how God chooses to demonstrate His blessings, following God is one of the greatest blessings and comforts. Imagine going it alone! **Will you now commit to God with a renewed trust in His desire and ability to lead you? Will you make a resolute commitment to stay the course no matter where HE takes you?**

**Stretch your heart just a little now. How do you need to respond to and cooperate with God?**

**With what new hope or insight do you close today's study? Write it here as God's special gift to you and keep this thought before you.**



**God's Special Gift to Me:** \_\_\_\_\_

**This week's theme:** "\_\_\_\_\_."



**Take Away: As I follow my God, He will make me a blessing to others.**

## Discovering the Father's Heart

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# Invited to Go the Distance

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## Day Five: What He's Singing Over Me

Make your whole self available to God. Rest quietly now, reflectively. *As you reflect on yesterday's events, what made an impact on you? Name here any thoughts, questions, or feelings that linger.*



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*Ask God where He may be moving in these things and include that reflection here.*

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*What does your heart desire for God to do for you in these unfinished situations?*

*Lay all these things at His feet... quiet your mind... trust Him... Ask Him to let you see His activity and recognize His movement. Open your Bible and read Psalm 5 slowly. Stop anywhere you find yourself struck by something you've read. Record your thoughts here:*



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Now read it in this translation (NIV unless otherwise noted) and **insert your name** into the blanks. Spend time with it; listen to what is going on inside of you.

(vs. 1-3) "Give ear to my words, O Lord, consider my sighing. Listen to my cry for help, [for You are] [\_\_\_\_\_]’s King and [\_\_\_\_\_]’s God, for to You I pray. In the morning, O Lord, You hear my voice; in the morning I lay my requests before you and wait in expectation."

*What do you see as the theme of this verse?* \_\_\_\_\_

*Is there a room in your heart that needs this? In what way?* \_\_\_\_\_

*What are the heaviest burdens in your heart?* \_\_\_\_\_

*Are you convinced that He is listening to you and paying close attention to your pleas?* \_\_\_\_\_

When you first return from dreamland each morning and your foggy mind is just waking up, your Father God is right there with you, anticipating the day the two of you will share. As you wash your face and get ready, He is there. In fact, He is so intimately acquainted with you that, "Even the very hairs of your head are all numbered." (Matthew 10:30) He knows how many hairs were left behind in your hairbrush this morning. He is waiting expectantly for you each morning. **What are your thoughts as you consider this?**

[vs. 4] "You are not a God who takes pleasure in evil; with You the wicked cannot dwell. The arrogant cannot stand in Your presence..."

*What do you see as the theme of this verse?* \_\_\_\_\_

# Discovering the Father's Heart

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*In what way does your heart need this?* \_\_\_\_\_

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We are invited into a life of joyful intimacy with God **when we are willing to come to Him on His terms**. Salvation secures the **opportunity** to walk in fellowship with Him. Our refusal to live life on our Father's terms prevents us from knowing the sweetness of His presence. **What are your thoughts?**

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[vs. 7] "But I, by Your great mercy, will come into Your house; in reverence will I bow down toward Your holy temple." **What do you see as the theme of this verse?** \_\_\_\_\_

*In what way does your heart need this?* \_\_\_\_\_

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It is only because of God's great mercy and His boundless gift of grace to us that we are able to come into His presence. We will never be good enough to stand in His presence based on our own merit or progress. We could never deserve an audience with God. Yet because of what Christ Jesus did for us through His death on the cross, He has forever removed the barriers of sin and death that separate us from our Heavenly Father. The things that prohibited the Old Testament children of God from an intimate fellowship with God no longer prohibit us. All believers have an equal opportunity to live a life of intimacy with God because of Jesus' death on the cross.

***"Because of Christ and our faith in Him, we can now come fearlessly into God's presence, assured of His glad welcome." (Ephesians 3:12 NLT)***

***Our own attitudes and actions either position us more closely in fellowship with God or more distantly from Him.*** While your God is always near to you in every way, the awareness of His closeness depends on your own choices. ***Your choice to walk in submission to God invites the Holy Spirit to reveal Himself more clearly to you.*** Your choice to resist submitting to God's will certainly cloud your ability to hear Him and to see Him. ***What are your thoughts about this?***

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[vs. 8] "Lead me in the right path, O Lord, or my enemies will conquer me. Tell me clearly what to do, and show me which way to turn." (NLT)

***What do you see as the theme of this verse?*** \_\_\_\_\_

*In what way does your heart need this?* \_\_\_\_\_

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We can begin to discern the Spirit's leading in all manner of areas in our life when we purpose in our hearts to follow Him wherever He leads. If we only follow Him when He leads where we already want to go, our heart is not really responding in obedience. This response is self-centered and convenient. When we get serious about following God in every way that He directs, then He will increasingly reveal His will and heart for us. ***Is God asking you to submit to His leadership in any area of your life? Name it here.***

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***How have you been responding to God in regards to this area?***

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[vs. 11] "But let all who take refuge in You be glad; let them ever sing for joy. Spread Your protection over them, that those who love Your name may rejoice in You." (NIV)

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“Protect them, so all who love Your name may be filled with joy.” (11b, NLT)

**What are your thoughts as you read this?** \_\_\_\_\_

[vs. 12] “For surely, O Lord, You bless the righteous; You surround them with Your favor as with a shield.” (NIV)

“For You bless the godly, O Lord, surrounding them with Your shield of love.” (NLT)

**What are your thoughts as you read this?** \_\_\_\_\_

In week one, day three of our Bible study, we defined a godly person as a person who is “God-centered” or “God-focused.” This doesn’t mean that you never think of anything other than God. This means that you continually return to thoughts about God. It means that over time you learn to consider everything through the filter of God’s active involvement in your life. As with anything else, this is a process that takes time. You don’t need to compare yourself with anyone else, just look up at your God and when you remember again, look up again. The more you do this the more you will see God’s activity and fingerprints in your life. The more you see His activity, the more you will look for it.

**How do you need to respond to and cooperate with Him?**

**With what new hope or insight do you close today’s study? Write it here as God’s special gift to you and keep this thought before you.**

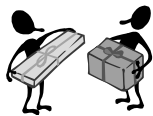


**God’s special gift to me:** \_\_\_\_\_

**This week’s theme:** \_\_\_\_\_



**Take Away: My Father blesses me as I become more focused on Him. He surrounds me with His shield of love.**



Gathering together with other believers and sharing with one another is vital for a flourishing relationship with God. Even in our study of Adam and Eve we see the dynamic that humans need other humans. **Spend a few minutes looking back over your week’s entries. As you think back on all that has happened in this last week, where do you recognize God’s fingerprints, whispers, or guidance?**

**What is your most significant “take-away” this week? Prayerfully consider how you can share this with someone this week.**