



Groups

Thanks for checking out our sermon-based Study Guides!

If you've never used our Study Guides before, you'll find some basic instructions towards the end of the document.

- ☐ These study guides will be written by thoughtful and experienced Life Group Leaders.
- ☐ Use these guides as a head-start in your own preparation as the needs and culture is different from each group.

NEW THIS YEAR:

As we enter this new season at Grace Chapel in search for the next Senior Pastor, we invite you to consider the significance of this moment and to incorporate a time of prayer for the search.

Outline

- I. Introduction and Main Scripture Readings
- II. Group Discussion Questions
- III. Prayer for Senior Pastor Search
- IV. The Journey Resources
- V. Support for the Leader

How to Use These Study Guides:

1. **Before the meeting:** Consider sending out the Scripture passage to your group members ahead of time.
2. **Check In:** Begin each meeting with a short time checking in with one another.
3. **Read Scripture:** You may want to begin the discussion by reading the Scripture passage together out loud, or by summarizing the passage if everyone has read it ahead of time.
4. **Ask Questions:** Don't feel like you need to discuss every question included in the Study Guide. Pick one or two to start with and see how the conversation flows.
5. **End with Prayer:** Be sure to set aside time for sharing prayer requests and praying together.

If your group meets over Zoom:

- ☐ Expect to do more overt facilitating over Zoom than you would in person. Feel free to call on people to invite them to share.
- ☐ Be sensitive to attention spans over zoom. Keep meetings shorter than they would be in person.

Group Leader Support:

- ☐ Please reach out to your Campus Pastor if you have any questions about leading your group or concerns about your group dynamic.
- ☐ If you have questions about or feedback on the Study Guides, please reach out to Pastor [Tim Ghali](#) or [Grace Lee](#) from the Group Life team.

LIFE GROUP STUDY GUIDE

for Sermon given on October 8, 2023
by Pastor Edward Stetzer

THE BEGINNING OF THE MISSION – Genesis 12:1-9; John 20:19-21**I. Introduction**

This fall we're exploring our roots as human beings and people of faith by revisiting the early chapters of Genesis, the book of beginnings. From *The Beginning of Everything*, we've learned that when God does a new thing, it's always purposeful, personal, and progressive. From *The Beginning of Humankind* we learned that we will never know who we truly are until we know the One who made us, loves, us, and calls us his child. Last week from *The Beginning of Sin, Death and Grace*, we learned that in every new beginning, we have the opportunity to choose life instead of death, good instead of evil, and trust instead of fear.

Continuing our theme, today we will hear about *The Beginning of Mission*. Special thanks to visiting Pastor Ed Stetzer, Dean of the Talbot School of Theology at Biola University in Southern California.

Questions: What does mission have to do with the Bible? And what does it have to do with me?

Bottom Line: God is on a mission, sending Abram, Jesus, and ultimately you – blessed to be a blessing.

Let's begin in prayer before we begin reading and discussing our text.

Main Scripture Readings:Genesis 12:1-9

12 The 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.

9 Then Abram set out and continued toward the Negev.

John 20:19-21

19 On the evening of that first day of the week, when the disciples were together, with the doors locked for fear of the Jewish leaders, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "**Peace** be with you!" **20** After he said this, he showed them his hands and side. The disciples were overjoyed when they saw the Lord.

21 Again Jesus said, "**Peace** be with you! **As the Father has sent me, I am sending you."**

Philippians 4:7

7 And the **peace** of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

John 14:27

27 **Peace** I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid.

Romans 14:8

⁸If we live, we live for the Lord; and if we die, we die for the Lord. So, whether we live or die, we belong to the Lord.

Isaiah 6:8

⁸Then I heard the voice of the Lord saying, “Whom shall I send? And who will go for us?” And I said, “Here am I. Send me!”

II. **Group Discussion Questions:**

1. Abraham is obedient to God because of his unwavering, unquestioning faith. After reading through Genesis 12:1-9, discuss what Abraham had to sacrifice to uproot his family to follow God’s call.
 - Who do you know that has exemplified faith like Abraham, who has radically obeyed God and followed His call with great sacrifice?
 - When was the last time you felt God telling you to leave something familiar and to take a step of faith?
 - In what ways is God calling you to follow His call?
2. Pastor Stetzer said, the following:

“We are not living in normal times. It’s a unique time of turbulence and tumult. It’s a complicated time. It’s a challenging time. And there is no better time to go back to the gospel – in one of the gospels – to see what the Lord has done for us when it comes to how he sends us.”

 - What are some challenges we (the Church) are facing currently?
 - Pastor Stetzer reminds us “the moment we are in does not pause the mission we are on.” How/Why might these challenges give you pause to be a blessing to others? How do we engage the cultural moment?
3. A major theme of today’s message, mentioned in several of the Bible verses, is “the peace of God”.
 - Explain what this means to you. If you have ever experienced it, share the story with your group.
 - Have someone read aloud John 20:19-21. How does the words and peace of Christ give assurance and comfort during turbulent times?
4. Pastor Stetzer preached on four main points.
 - 1) God is on a mission. Mission is rooted in the identity of God himself.
 - 2) God sends Abram first.
 - 3) God sends Jesus in fullness.

4) Jesus sends us on mission.

- Sent in faith
 - Sent in peace
 - Sent in joy
 - Sent and Blessed to be a Blessing
- Take a moment to share with your group which point you would like to reflect on deeper for the next week.
 - Spend a few minutes prayerfully thinking about who the Lord might put on your heart to bless this week. Consider your workplace, neighborhood, family, friends and church community. Share with your group who you think God is calling you to touch and why.

Take Home Message:

Even though we are living in a time of turbulence and tumult, the moment we are in does not pause the mission we are on. Open your hearts and minds to the new thing that God is doing in your life. *When you sense the prompting of the Holy Spirit to bless someone, respond as Isaiah did to the Lord's calling, "Here am I. Send me."*

Let's Pray**III. Prayer for Senior Pastor Search**

During this next ministry year as we navigate transitions, we invite you to secure time during your life group to pray over the search process. Click [here](#) to access the full resource of the prayer guide.

Prayers for Preparation of the heart

- ☐ Pray for God to reveal to you the condition of your soul or the work of God's Spirit within you, as you consider your feelings about the Senior Pastor search process.
- ☐ Prayer is not just an opportunity to make requests from God, but to listen to what God might want for us during this season of transition. Pause and listen for any invitation from God that he is asking you to enter into.

Prayers for the Purposes of God

- ☐ Pray that God will use the people of Grace Chapel in the fulfilling of his mission to further the Gospel message and for us to be people of peace and healing in a broken world.

Prayers for the People of Grace

- ☐ Pray that Grace Chapel will to seek the Lord as we continue our vision to be a vibrant, growing, multicultural community of seekers and believers, discovering life with God for

the good of the world. Pray that we will continue with our mission to make and mobilize more disciples for Jesus Christ in Greater Boston and beyond.

Prayers for the Person God's calling

- ☐ Pray that they will have a passion to continue the work the Lord is doing at Grace Chapel and that they will be excited about the opportunities here.
- ☐ Pray that the new pastor will have a clear vision for how to minister to the people of Grace Chapel and the surrounding community.

Prayers for Discernment

- ☐ Pray for God's clear direction in how resumes are examined and interviews conducted.
- ☐ Ask God to bring the right person to the attention of the committee.
- ☐ Pray for the Search Committee to have God's wisdom in all the questions and information they share with the prospective pastor.

IV. The Journey



We're all on a journey. Where is yours taking you?

The beauty of the way of Jesus is that it's not just good for us, it is good for the world around us. But that kind of beautiful life doesn't come from just hearing the words of Jesus. It comes from putting them into practice.

Three kinds of practice, actually:

- ☐ The **with-God life** of our personal habits and routines;
- ☐ The **with-others life** of our genuine and life-changing relationships; and
- ☐ The **for-the-world life** that makes an impact beyond our immediate homes and families, into our communities and beyond.

Growing as disciples of Jesus will make a Kingdom difference in our world and a transformative difference in our lives as believers and as a group. And these resources are helpful in identifying the next steps for our journeys.

Launching by the end of September: The newly, revised Discipleship Planning Tool

We invite your group to [take the assessment](#) and to spend a session to share about the practice and perspective you chose to focus on for the next three months.

V. Support for the Leader

These Teaching Points are provided to help the group leader make connections from the message to their group with both insights from the Biblical text and opportunities in the life of our church.

Teaching Points:

- ☐ God is on a mission
- ☐ God sends Abram first
- ☐ God sends Jesus in fullness
- ☐ Jesus is the embodiment of that mission. It's through Jesus that all the nations of the earth are blessed – fulfilling the promise to Abraham.
- ☐ Jesus sends us on mission
- ☐ Each of us is blessed to be a blessing to others
- ☐ We are sent in faith, peace, and joy
- ☐ Even though we are living in a time of turbulence, tumult and chaos, the moment we are in does not pause the mission we are on.
- ☐ Jesus sends us not in the absence of problems, but in the presence of His peace.
- ☐ No matter what happens, we can trust Jesus. Jesus is still here.