

CONNECT GROUP DISCUSSION: January 10, 2016

BE ONE | MAKE ONE: WHY BOTHER?

Genesis 12:1-3, "God's Design"

OPENING

Read carefully Genesis 12:1-3. Draw a circle around the different expressions of purpose or outcome beyond Abraham's life. Underline the command(s). Double underline the different parts, which are explicitly a promise to Abraham.

GOING DEEPER

What do we learn about God's purpose when we consider the Fall, the Flood and the Tower of Babel?

Leader's Guide:

- 1. The Fall - God's purpose in the fall of man is to bring back a desire for people to live in harmony with Him. God does so as He prepares a way for the Redeemer to come through His promise to Eve (Genesis 3:15).*
- 2. The Flood – The flood came as a result of man's judgment of sin. In the midst of this judgment God gives an olive branch, a promise that seeks to turn people back to himself (Genesis 9:14-15).*
- 3. The Tower of Babel – God was on a mission, to restore humanity back to Himself. This is seen through the promise, a covenant, with Abraham, a covenant that is seen woven through all the pages of Scripture (Genesis 12:1-3).*

What three aspects of God's purpose surround the covenant He made with Abraham?

Leader's Guide:

- The covenant God made with Abraham, known as the Abrahamic Covenant, is found in Genesis 12:1-3. This covenant is an unconditional covenant, a promise God made to Abraham that required nothing of Abraham, for God was to fulfill the covenant Himself (cf. Genesis 15).*

- *There are three aspects of God's purpose that surround the covenant:*
 1. *Toward God – He desires that we should know Him and enjoy Him forever.*
 - *Everything that God does He is going to initiate (5x's He says, "I will bless")*
 2. *For the People – He wanted Abraham to know Him and to be blessed, so that Abraham might be a blessing to the people of the earth.*
 - *God's desires is that this blessing will continue from generation to generation so that many may be blessed by Abraham's descendents.*
 - *This promise is continued in the church, as God's people in Christ are to be a blessing to those around them (Galatians 3:8; Romans 4:13, 17).*
 3. *Against Evil – God's kingdom is going to reign as God's people interact with the world and others learn of God's power.*
 - *In Christ people will live in harmony with Him as they learn of the power in Christ to overcome sin, their flesh and the devil.*

How does God's promise to Abraham provide believers today a mandate to follow in the steps of Abraham?

Leader's Guide:

1. *God works with and through His people and they become co-workers with God.*
 - *Through His people He has an influence of change and transformation around the world.*
 - *That is why Paul tells believer in Galatians that, "If you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs [successors, inheritors] according to the promise" (Galatians 3:29). This promise is received through Christ.*
2. *We are blessed in order to be a blessing to others.*
 - *Christians are recipients of God's blessings in Christ, the "seed" of the Abrahamic Covenant.*
 - *This blessing that believers receive from God should overflow in blessings to others (Matthew 5:13-16; 28:18-20). As others*

experience this blessing of God through God's people, these individuals can turn and bless God.

- *Simply put, we are blessed so that we may be a blessing!*

CHALLENGE

“It’s important to note that in many parts of the world blessing is commonly thought of as a magical force or a mystical power by which someone can obtain desired benefits. In this mentality, blessing is not much more than luck or fortune that can sometimes be manipulated with procedures or by people believed to have special powers. Advocates of the so-called “prosperity gospel” may have more in common with this worldview which reduces blessing to a method of obtaining wealth from God.”¹ **How does God’s stated purpose to “bless others” confront a “prosperity gospel” mentality?**