Between God and Ruin

November 1, 2026

What to Expect on Your Journey with God – Part 5

Like you, Abram was on a journey of learning. He would learn *a lot* in his years of following the Lord.

And Abram, like you, was being transformed into the person that he was born to be. God would use the circumstances of his life to shape his character more and more into the image of His Son, Jesus Christ.

God is working in your life for long-term goals. He is looking beyond your relatively short time here on earth. He has an eternal perspective. He is preparing you to be his traveling companion throughout all eternity. To do that He needs someone who is compatible with Him. That is why He is constantly working through circumstances in your life to shape your character and your will to look more and more like His own. If you are going to walk with God through eternity, you need to be in agreement with Him. Your character has to be in line with His. Your will has to be in agreement with His will.

"Can two walk together, except they be agreed?"—Amos 3:3 (KJV)

Canaanites in the Land

As you journey through life with God, most of the people you encounter will probably not be on the same journey. As Abram made his way through the land, he found that it was mostly populated by Canaanites.

"Now the Canaanites were in the land at that time."—Genesis 12:6 (AMP)

The Canaanites were not following the same God that Abram followed. They had different beliefs, different priorities, and different goals in life.

As you make your way in life, you may also feel that you are surrounded by "Canaanites" who don't believe the way you do, and who don't understand you. They may not approve of your choices. Some of them may even mock you or cause problems for you.

You have to make a daily decision to follow God no matter what opposition or obstacles you may have to deal with.

Abram learned to live peacefully among people who believed differently than he did. At the same time, he may not have approved of their lifestyles, and he did not participate with them in behaviors that violated his conscience.

> "If possible, so far as it depends on you, live in peace with all people."—Romans 12:18 (ISV)

Encouragement at the Right Time

Along your way, you will face many challenges and some discouraging circumstances. God is well aware of this. He sees everything that is ahead of you. At just the right time, God will faithfully send you the encouragement you need to lift your spirits and motivate you to continue on your life's journey.

When Abram needed encouragement, God was there with it.

> "Then the Lord appeared to Abram and said, 'I will give this land to your descendants.' So Abram built an altar there to [honor] the Lord who had appeared to him."—Genesis 12:7 (AMP)

This was a remarkable experience for Abram. This is the first recorded instance of God appearing to anyone since Adam and Eve walked with God in the Garden of Eden! It must have been tremendously encouraging to Abram.

The timing of this was perfect, because God knew something that Abram didn't know. Abram was about to enter into a very difficult time in which his faith would be tested. God gave him this encouraging experience to help Abram get through the very trying times ahead of him.

The same thing happened to Jesus.

On the day He was baptized, the heavens opened, the spirit of God descended on Him, and a voice spoke from Heaven saying, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased" (Matthew 3:17 KJV).

Immediately after that, Jesus was driven into the wilderness to face a very intense time of being tempted by the devil.

What we have to recognize and understand is that God will always give us what we need in every situation. He is always there for us, even when we may not feel His presence. He will send us the encouragement we need to help us get through the

tough times. Often, He sends encouragement *before* we enter the toughest times of our lives.

People often misinterpret this. When tough times come, and God seems to be silent, people feel that God has abandoned them. But that is not true at all! That is exactly why He gave us encouragement *before* the tough times came! Hold onto that encouragement! God gave it to you to help you get through those tough times.

When David's city was burned and his family was taken captive by enemies, along with the families of the soldiers he was leading, he was devastated. But he remembered the times when the Lord had encouraged him, and it got him through that tragedy.

> "David was greatly distressed, for the men spoke of stoning him because the souls of them all were bitterly grieved, each man for his sons and daughters. **But David encouraged and strengthened himself in the Lord his God."**—1 Samuel 30:6 (AMPC)

When you find yourself in discouraging times, one of the best things you can do is to read the Psalms. Many of the Psalms are David's prayers to God during tough times of suffering. You may not have to read very far before you find some passages that can give you comfort and encouragement in difficult and painful times.

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With God's encouragement, Abram continued on his journey.

> "Then he moved on from there to the mountain on the east of Bethel, and pitched his tent, with Bethel on the west and Ai on the east"—Genesis 12:8 (AMP)

Here Abram finds himself between Bethel and Ai. Bethel means "house of God" while Ai means "ruin."

This illustrates the choice that faces each of us. If we choose God's way, then our paths in life will lead us to all of the blessings of the abundant life He has planned for us. On the other hand, if we choose to go our own ways and reject God, then our paths in life will lead to ruin.

> “There is a way that seems right to a man, but its end is the way to death.”—Proverbs 16:25 (ESV)

Nobody said that the best path in life will be easy, but in the end, you will be grateful that you chose to go God’s way instead of your own.

> “Go in through the narrow gate. The gate that leads to destruction is broad and the road wide, so many people enter through it. But the gate that leads to life is narrow and the road difficult, so few people find it.”—Matthew 7:13–14 (CEB)

Abram made his choice. He chose God’s way, even though he didn’t know where it might lead him. He trusted God and followed Him in obedience.

> “. . . there he built an altar to the Lord and called on the name of the Lord [in worship through prayer, praise, and thanksgiving].”—Genesis 12:8 (AMP)

God is setting before you today the same choice that He gave to Abram. You can choose God’s way, or you can choose to go your own way.

> “I’ve set life and death before you today: both blessings and curses. Choose life, that it may be well with you—you and your children.”— Deuteronomy 30:19 (ISV)