

GENERATE CAMP: Make it Matter

Session 4: The Will of God

What We Want Students to Learn: That a life of real impact is found through living out God's will for us.

Scripture: Genesis 12:1-9

Supporting Scripture: Romans 12:1–2 and Proverbs 3:5-6

Session Snapshot: When we understand that God is working around and in us, we gain insight into what God's will for our lives is. We will look at Abraham and God's unique calling to go. Abraham isn't given a where, but he simply goes. Abraham's trust allowed him to be a part of something so amazing. Our trust empowers God's plan for our life. There is a world we are called to move towards beyond this experience, and we will use our lives to make it matter!

Bible Background

The Bible Background is a focused, brief overview of some of the background info for the main passage you will be teaching.

Teacher Prep Video

Each Small Group Leader's Guide comes with a *Teacher Prep Video*. These are simply short videos designed to help you grasp the main point of the lesson as you prepare to teach.

Your teacher prep videos are located in your download, under Small Group Lesson Plans. There is a sub-folder titled "Teacher Prep Videos" that will have a document for you. On the document, you should be able to click the link designated for the lesson you are currently on.

The Details

Genesis

- **Author:** While there's no specific author named within the text, Moses is the accepted author of Genesis.
- **Timeframe:** It's difficult to establish with any certainty a date for the writing of Genesis. The uncertainty depends on the date of the Exodus (which is also not known for sure), placing the date for the writing of Genesis sometime in the 1400s or the 1200s BC
- **Purpose:** Genesis is a part of the Pentateuch, the group of five books (including Exodus, Numbers, and Leviticus) that are viewed as a unit. Genesis details the earliest history of our world, including creation and Adam and Eves' fall. It also focuses on the emergence of Israel, not only as God's people, but as the group, God would work through to bring redemption to the world.

Romans

- **Author:** Paul is the author of Romans.
- **Timeframe:** Romans was probably written from Corinth in the winter of 56-57 AD.
- **Purpose:** Since the church in Rome had not received comprehensive theological teaching on salvation and other implications of following Christ, Paul wrote Romans to ensure a good understanding of such

things. In addition, since many Jewish Christians were rejecting some of the new Gentile converts, it was essential that a 'level playing field' be given to all Believers. This is what Paul was advocating for in Romans.

Proverbs

- **Author:** Proverbs initially is attributed to Solomon in its earliest chapters; however, chapter 22 reveals that some of the sayings of the book were articulated by a circle of other wise men, referred to as "the sayings of the wise." (24:23) Chapters 30 and 31 were inspired through Agur son of Jakeh and King Lemuel, respectively.
- **Timeframe:** The bulk of the book of Proverbs stems from Solomon's era during the Tenth Century BC when Israel was united as a kingdom. Some chapters, such as references to Hezekiah's men, indicate additional compilation took place between 715 BC to 686 BC, or perhaps that this was when the complete book of Proverbs was retroactively tied together.
- **Purpose:** The primary purpose of a proverb is to offer a short, compact truth that leads to wisdom, godly life, and a fuller understanding of choices and consequences. They are predominantly observational as if written out of one's own experiences or insight from the Lord.

The Main Point

God has a will for your life, and this plan is going to be far greater than anything this world could offer. We are called to follow God even when there aren't specific instructions. God is bigger than anyone we are going to encounter in this life, and our faith in Him will provide the hope we need in order to pursue and live out a life that truly matters.

The Takeaway

If I want to live a life that truly matters, then I must pursue God and His will for my life above all else.

Lesson Plan

The **Lesson Plan** contains three elements: an introductory activity called *Getting Started*; the Bible study section called *Digging In*; and an application-focused segment called *Wrapping Up*.

Getting Started

- **Student Book Pages**
 - This lesson will utilize pages 32-36 in the *Make it Matter* Student Book.
 - This activity will use pages 32-33.
- **Additional Instructions**
 - None

FIRST, explain to students that they're going to participate in an activity that has them thinking about the concept of "purpose" and why it's so important to get it right. To begin, have your group look at the page in the book. They'll notice five blank spaces on the page. Begin by asking students to name off random objects. As they do so, "pick" five objects you want them to write down in their books. Have them write the objects down you choose.

THEN, once they have done this, instruct them to get into groups and pick one of the objects. For each object, their goal is to come up with as many uses for this item that are NOT it's original purpose. For example, if a group chose a flashlight, they may brainstorm uses for the flashlight that included, a hammer, a weight, a fidget cube, etc. Explain that you are going to have each group share when the time is up. Allow students to divide up and give them 60 seconds to choose their object and come up with their different purposes.

THEN, go around and chat with the different groups having them share which object they chose and some of the purposes they brainstormed. Once people have shared, consider having the entire group answer the following questions or similar ones:

- **What was the absolute dumbest use of an object?**
- **What was the most creative new purpose?**
- **Which one was likely to get you in the most trouble?**
- **Was there one that, after thinking about it, actually seemed like a better use of the object than its original purpose?**

FINALLY, when everyone has shared, say something like this:

- **These are all incredibly creative, and it's a fun job to try and reinvent the purpose of something. Some of you did an incredible job coming up with new ideas, and I may not view some of these objects the same! In today's lesson, we're going to talk about God's will for our lives. There is a multitude of directions we could take our lives, and sometimes God has a specific calling for us. This calling doesn't always come with a printed out step-by-step instruction manual. Creativity feels needed at times, and today we'll see an example of that. The passage we are looking at today features a man who received a big call with minimal details. Let's jump right in.**

Digging In

- **Student Book Pages**
 - This activity will utilize pages 34-35 in the *Make it Matter* Student Book.
- **Additional Instructions**
 - You'll want to make sure students have something to write with, and a Bible or Bible app.

FIRST, explain to students that similar to what they've done in previous sessions, you're going to be looking at one narrative passage that will set up a discussion for other verses. Instruct students to turn to page 34 in their student books and to Genesis 12 in their Bibles or Bible apps. Consider using the Bible Background section to explain the context of Genesis. Explain to students that you're going to focus on how God called Abraham, who was still called Abram in this passage, to a life of real impact.

NEXT, give students a moment to read and maybe re-read the passage. Instruct them to use the space provided on page 34 to write down any observations from the passage, anything that stands out to them as important or significant, or anything they have a question about. When they have had time to read and write down their observations, ask something like this:

- **What details or important points jumped out at you?**
 - Allow students to share. Engage in a discussion as you go, asking students, "Why do you think that is important?" or "Why did that stand out?" or offering your thoughts or observations as

you go. (Continue with the rest of the questions below, omitting any that you've already covered based on your students' responses.)

- **Where was the land that Abraham was called to go? Why is this instruction left vague?**
 - *Answer:* God didn't tell him. God just said, "go." Sometimes, obeying God's will isn't a simple thing. We like to operate in the world of guarantees and constants, but that world requires little faith. God is asking us to demonstrate faith as we search for and follow His will.
- **Look back at Genesis 12:4. Why do you think the author takes time to point out Abraham's age?**
 - *Answer:* First, it spoke to the miracle God was going to do. Second, the author is trying to demonstrate that age is not a determining factor for God's will. Abraham had lived a full life. He could have decided to not obey the call he received because he had already done enough. But he obeyed.
- **What limits does the world put on you because of your age?**
 - *Answer:* Answers will vary, but be sure to remember and highlight some of these reasons. Remind students that God chose Abraham to live a life that mattered in spite of an age that, to anyone watching, would have disqualified him. You may think that you aren't ready or that there are too many reasons for God not to use you. Abraham could have felt the same way. But he didn't.
- **Abraham and his family traveled through quite a few lands on their journey towards the land they had been promised. What was Abraham's reaction when God spoke to him while they were in Canaan?**
 - *Answer:* He stopped and built an altar. In fact, Abraham built multiple altars as he journeyed through the lands.
- **Why do you think Abraham built altars in all of those places?**
 - *Answer:* The altar was used as a way to remember the Lord moving and speaking. Altars serve the purpose of a physical memory throughout Scripture. Abraham wanted to remember that as he journeyed, he was following a God of purpose.
- **Do you remember any of the rest of Abraham's story? Do you think the road to becoming a great nation was easy or hard? Why is this important to understand?**
 - *Answer:* He didn't have a simple or easy journey to becoming the father of the nation of Israel. We know from the rest of his story that there were multiple moments he thought he would die. There was even a moment where he thought he was going to have to offer his own son as a sacrifice! We know the road wasn't smooth, and this matters because we aren't promised a smooth journey when following God's will.
- **What is the promise given to Abraham about those he would encounter while following God's promise and will for Abraham's life?**
 - *Answer:* "I will bless those who bless you, and him who dishonors you, I will curse." God promises that we will encounter different types of people along the way, but we are walking the journey with God Himself. We have God on our side, and this is the relationship that matters most!

THEN, explain that Abraham got to experience a life of amazing impact, a life we're still reading about today because he obediently followed God's will. Say something like:

- **God isn't some distant, hands-off deity. God is actively working in the world around us. He chooses to work in and through us to impact the world around us. He has a plan, and His plan for YOU is part of His big-picture plan for all of humanity. Abraham got this. Let's look at a few more passages from Scripture that help drive this concept home.**

NEXT, direct students' attention to page 35 and instruct students to turn in their Bibles or bible apps to Romans 12. If you want, give some context for the passage using the Bible Background. Then, either have a student read Romans 12:1-2 or read it yourself. When you're finished, lead students in a brief discussion. Ask:

- **When Paul says that we are to present our bodies as a sacrifice to God, do you know what he means?**
 - *Answer:* Just like in the Old Testament, when a sacrifice was made to God, we are to give our lives to Him. Holding nothing back. It means going all in!
- **Verse 2 has a very interesting challenge. What does it mean to conform to something?**
 - *Answer:* It means to become like something, to be molded into the same shape as something.
- **What are we to be conformed to: The world? Or God?**
 - *Answer:* God. That's what Paul is insinuating here. We will all be shaped like something. The call on us as Believers is to live a life shaped like God.
- **What does Paul say happens when we surrender our lives to God and desire to live like Him?**
 - *Answer:* We are in the perfect place to know and experience God's will for our lives.

Say something like:

- **When our lives are ordered the right way, when we don't desire to be like the world around us and instead seek to be like God, we put ourselves in a spot to be led by God. We open ourselves up to experience His plans for us. It's as if we're telling God, "I am yours. Use me as you will. I can't wait to see what you have for me." And we can take this attitude because God is uniquely trustworthy. We see that in our next set of verses.**

THEN, read or have a student read Proverbs 3:5–6. When you've finished, consider asking the following questions:

- **What role does trust play in living out God's will for us?**
 - *Answer:* We have to trust that God's will is good. We have to trust that God is in control and has His glory and our best interest in mind.
- **Can you think of a time when you "leaned on your own understanding," and not God's? How did that work out?**
 - Answers will vary.
- **When Proverbs 6 says that God will "make straight your paths," it doesn't mean that things will always be easy. What DOES it mean?**
 - *Answer:* It means that even though we will still experience tough times, God is ultimately in control. He is directing our lives. He will lead us in the right direction, according to His will.

FINALLY, wrap up what you have learned into a final takeaway. Say something like this:

- **Did Abraham have all the answers when God called him to go? No. He didn't. But he obeyed. And in doing so, his life had a tremendous impact. God worked through him to do a mighty thing. Abraham heard God's call and said yes. We are called to do the same, to live our lives as sacrifices, offering them willingly to God. And we can trust God to direct our lives in such a way that He will be glorified, and we will experience an awesome existence with Him. It's the only way to live a life that TRULY matters.**

Explain to students that you're going to head into the *Wrapping Up* section, where you'll look at some basic questions to help us gauge when and how to find God's will for our lives.

If there are no more questions, turn the page to the *Wrapping Up* portion of your lesson on page 36 and spend a few minutes looking at how this fleshes itself out in their lives.

Wrapping Up

- **Student Book Pages**
 - This activity will utilize page 36 in the *Make it Matter* Student Book.
- **Additional Instructions**
 - Make sure students have something to write with.

FIRST, decide how you'll facilitate this activity. As it is the last activity of the last session, you may choose to process it as a group, or you may choose to send students away with it as a follow-up activity to focus on after your event is over.

- If you choose to have students work through the activity on their own after the event is over, instruct them to commit to following up with this page once they are home. You may want to set a reminder to text or call them a few days after your event to remind them to spend some time thinking through their responses.
- If you choose to process the activity as a group, instruct students to take a few moments and work through the questions, being intentional about writing down their responses. When they have finished, you may want to ask students if anyone wants to share their responses to the second and third questions.

The questions are located on page 36 for them to process and use today and for days to come.

Regardless of how you choose to facilitate the activity, make sure you encourage students to give some serious consideration as to HOW they are living out a life of impact. Remind them that if we're not intentional about making change, change often doesn't happen. Remind them that if they have been saved by faith in Christ, they have the Holy Spirit living in them, empowering them to live out their faith; they are not alone. Encourage students to write out these questions after this event, and to post them somewhere they will see beyond this event.

As time allows, spend some time in prayer for your students, especially as it pertains to them living out their purpose in their daily lives.

FINALLY, ask students if they have any questions or additional comments. Inform students of the *Encounters* devotions located on pages 38-45 in their Student Books. Provide them with a schedule or some structure as to when you would like for them to work through them. (The first devotion is on page 38.)