

Hebrews 11: Abraham and the American Dream

Faith makes us look at everything differently. It changes our priorities. It changes the purpose of our lives, and it even affects the things we dream to achieve. Faith causes us to re-evaluate what matters most in life, and leads us to live according to God's plans for us.

Summary

We see how faith works this way in the life of Abraham. Let's look at the first of several statements about Abraham in [Hebrews 11](#).

★ **Hebrews 11:8** *It was by faith that Abraham obeyed when God called him to leave home and go to another land that God would give him as his inheritance. He went without knowing where he was going.*

★ Faith leads us into the unknown

This verse takes us back to the beginning of Abraham's story. Abraham is an important person in the Bible. He was the father of the Israelite nation and, through his example of faith, is a patriarch for Christians too. Before all this happened, however, he was just a regular guy. That is, until God showed up in Abraham's life.

★ **Genesis 12:1** *The Lord had said to Abram, "Leave your native country, your relatives, and your father's family, and go to the land that I will show you."*

This is God's introduction to Abraham, who was named Abram at the time. God told Abraham to move away from home and move to an unknown land. Now, God had promised Abraham that he would bless him in some significant ways, but he first had to leave everything he knew. What was Abraham's response?

★ **Genesis 12:4** *So Abram departed as the Lord had instructed, and Lot went with him. Abram was seventy-five years old when he left Haran.*

This verse illustrates why Abraham is a good paradigm for a faithful life. He didn't know where he was going, but he was willing to follow God. For us, a life of faith will mean trusting God to lead us down unknown paths. And this is rarely easy.

Many of us are chasing some version of the American dream in our lives. We want to have a family, a great career, and accomplish our goals for life. I am sure that Abraham had goals for his life too, but God interrupted them. And God will do the same for us.

As Christians, we trust God with our future. This means that we must trust in God as he directs the major events of our lives. We might not always have everything that we want when we want it, but we must learn to trust God.

★ Faith forces us to change our priorities

Within this calling to Abraham by God is the truth that God will change our priorities. Perhaps before becoming a

Christian your priorities were money, security, influence, or power. All of these things make up, to varying degrees, the American dream. But when God gets hold of us he calls us to change our priorities. Abraham had to leave the security of his birth family.

Jesus commanded his followers to seek what matters to God, even if it is not what we would naturally seek for ourselves.

★ **Matthew 6:33** *Seek the Kingdom of God above all else, and live righteously, and he will give you everything you need.*

As Christians, our priorities aren't to secure a bigger house, better vacations, or even to indulge all the desires of our kids. Our priority is God. Our dream is to see the people in our lives know God and have a relationship with him.

★ Faith focuses on the eternal

Abraham left and went where God told him to go. But that wasn't the end of the story.

★ **Hebrews 11:9-10** *9 And even when he reached the land God promised him, he lived there by faith—for he was like a foreigner, living in tents. And so did Isaac and Jacob, who inherited the same promise. Abraham was confidently looking forward to a city with eternal foundations, a city designed and built by God.*

Yes, Abraham experienced a good life. He was wealthy and respected in his new land. But as it says in Hebrews, Abraham didn't build a city. He lived in tents as did his son and grandson. Hebrews interprets this life for us. They were seeking the eternal. This was their ultimate hope.

Why should we give up the American dream? The American dream only focuses on the here and now. It focuses on the temporary. It is investing in things that will pass away. God invites us to invest in eternity. We need faith in order to do this. This is the faith that Abraham displays for us.

Discussion Questions

1. **Set Up:** Watch the video together or invite someone to [summarize the topic](#).
2. What was your dream job when you were a kid?
3. What is "the American Dream"? Make a short list. Do most people achieve it in their lifetime? Explain.
4. On a scale of 1 to 10, how willing are you to trust God with your future? Explain your answer.
5. Make a list of the top 5 priorities of your neighbors or co-workers.
6. Next, make a list of the top 5 priorities that Christians should have. What do you have that is similar and dissimilar from the previous list?
7. Read [Matthew 6:33](#). What does this look like practically for your life?
8. **Takeaway:** Write a [personal action step](#) based on this conversation.