

CHOSEN

destination unknown

day 1: abraham

READ & THINK ABOUT: GENESIS 12:1-7

Leave and go. These were God's first commands to Abram (whose name God changed to Abraham). God was pretty specific about what he was to leave: his country, his people, and his father's household. Things got a little more vague after that: "Go to the land I will show you." That's all God told Abraham about his destination. He called him to leave everything and start out on a journey of faith. Only God knew where he was heading.

God's commands were followed up with a promise: God had chosen to make Abraham and his descendants into a great nation. Eventually all the world would be blessed through them. God's promise probably helped Abraham obey God's call, but it also probably brought a little confusion. Abraham's wife Sarai (whose name God changed to Sarah) was unable to have children. The likelihood of a great nation coming through this couple wasn't very great; not by human standards anyway. But the journey God was taking Abraham on would help him see, step-by-step, that he could trust God.

"So Abram left as the Lord had told him." Abraham did it. Even though his destination was unclear, and the promise seemed impossible, he went. The journey included some extreme highs and lows but God was faithful to his promises. Abraham and Sarah gave birth to their son, Isaac, long after they'd qualified for senior citizen's benefits. God led Abraham and his family to the land he had promised. Your faith in God today is a testimony to the fact that God blessed the nations through Abraham's descendants. Sometimes we just have to leave and go.

Respond:

- What "things" is God calling you to leave behind as you seek to follow him more fully? Anything specific for this mission trip?
- Why do you think God so often chooses to lay out his plans for people step-by-step, rather than all at once?
- Ask God to bring to mind any Scriptures with promises that you'll need to cling to as you follow him where he leads.

**HAVE I NOT
COMMANDED YOU?
BE STRONG AND
COURAGEOUS DO NOT
BE TERRIFIED;
DO NOT BE
DISCOURAGED.
FOR THE LORD YOUR
GOD WILL BE WITH
YOU WHEREVER
YOU GO.
JOSHUA 1:9**

GO AND MAKE
DISCIPLES OF ALL
NATIONS, BAPTIZING
THEM IN THE NAME
OF THE FATHER
AND OF THE SON
AND OF THE
HOLY SPIRIT,
MATTHEW 28:19

end of the day

Debrief:

- What was the weather like today?
- What was the highlight of your day?
- What was hardest about your day?
- How did you see God at work today?
- What did God teach you today?
- Who did you appreciate most today? Why?
- What made you laugh or cry today?
- What's something new or different you experienced today?
- Did anyone say anything "quoteworthy" today?

CHOSEN Today

in the central african republic...

Dr. Tim Wester's life looks quite a bit different than other medical doctors. He doesn't have a big house with a pool or a BMW, and he doesn't spend his Saturdays teeing off at the club. Tim has spent most of his medical career in Africa, working as a missionary doctor. If his patients can't pay him in cash, they pay him in chickens, and his four-wheeler takes him places a BMW never could.

Tim grew up as the son of missionaries in the Democratic Republic of Congo. At seven months, he contracted polio, leaving his leg muscles weakened. For his entire life, Tim has used crutches to stand or walk, including during surgeries he performs, which can last for hours.

In college, Tim felt God calling him to a life of missions as an adult. After several years of medical training, Tim headed back to Africa. Now in his 50s, Tim is able to see the fruit of many years of ministry. He's been the director for several mission hospitals and overseen remote medical clinics in the Congo and the Central African Republic. He's trained and disciplined many African nurses, challenging them to live courageous lives and minister to others.

Tim and his family have experienced many of the



difficulties life in Africa can include. Roads are rough and dangerous, and thieves are common. Several times as a child, and also as an adult, Tim's family has had to be evacuated because of war or unrest around them. Twice they've lost everything when their home was looted. Tim says, "Life has its hassles and difficulties, but...the Lord is in control. We need to be flexible and serve him wherever we are."

Countless lives have been changed and saved because of what God is doing through Tim. There are a million other things he could have done with his life, but Tim says, "Life is short and it's so easy to become self-centered, but we need to think of others."

» **Three in ten children in C.A.P. will die before age 5.**

» **There are 30,000 refugees from C.A.P. living in Chad due to fighting and unrest in parts of the country.**

» **In C.A.P. two thirds of the population lives on less than \$1 a day.**

(statistics taken from www.unicef.org)

CHOSEN

When things seem impossible

day 2: mary

READ & THINK ABOUT: LUKE 1:26-28

She was just barely a young woman when the angel came to her with the news: she had been chosen to give birth to Jesus, the promised Messiah her people had yearned to see for centuries. It was a huge honor, with a pretty huge price tag attached. She was not yet married but suddenly she was pregnant. Who would ever believe that this baby was from God? Her fiancé, Joseph, would have every right to break off their engagement, make her a cast-off from society, and even have her put to death. And if, by some miracle, he chose to marry her anyway, their reputation would forever be in question. Her mind must have been swimming with questions:

*Lord, did I hear you right?
Isn't there another way?
Shouldn't we think this through a little bit more?*

Somehow, in the midst of the impossibility of it all, Mary made the choice to trust. She submitted herself to the plans and purposes of the God she knew would never fail her. She had to have known it wasn't going to be an easy road. She probably knew there was a chance things would get worse before they got better. But she trusted. She submitted. And God used her as a major player in his amazing plan to bring a savior into the world.

Respond:

- Read Luke 1:37 over a few times and meditate on it a bit. How would your life be different if you really believed that?
- God used Mary to bring Jesus into the world. Now he wants to use you to bring him to the world. What do you think about being part of such an awesome task?
- What part of this mission trip do you think is going to be most out of your comfort zone? How does God want you to respond to something that may seem hard or impossible?

**FOR NOTHING
IS IMPOSSIBLE
WITH GOD.
LUKE 1:37**

end of the day**Debrief:**

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CHOSEN

giving up your kingdom

day 3: jonathan

READ & THINK ABOUT: 1 SAMUEL 18:1-9; 20:1-16

His father was King Saul, so Jonathan was next in line for the throne. Until David showed up. David showed great courage as he fought the Philistine giant. His music soothed even the most tormented soul. He became a great warrior in battle. As David's fame in the kingdom grew, so did Saul's jealousy and hatred toward him.

It would have been easy for Jonathan to join right in with his father and fight for his place on the throne. Instead, Jonathan pursues a friendship with David. In a day and age when kings and kingdoms were constantly removed and overthrown, everyone probably expected Jonathan to get rid of the young man who seemed to have his sights set on the throne. For Jonathan not to do so, was probably seen as unusual. For him to become a loyal friend of David's was probably hard to even comprehend.

Jonathan again and again comes to the aid of his friend David, saving his life from the crazed plans of his father, the king. In doing so, Jonathan puts his own life in danger, and finds himself also dodging the spears of his father.

It was an unlikely friendship, marked by Jonathan's selflessness, as he laid down his rights and helped get God's man his place on the throne.

Respond:

- Time after time Jonathan gave up his rights. Is God asking you to surrender any rights in order to be used by him this week?
- Many in Jonathan's position would have been consumed with jealousy. Jealousy can even creep into ministry. Are there any ways you've been struggling with jealousy this week? How does God want you to respond to that?
- Jonathan thought his life was heading toward the throne, but God had other plans. Spend some time praying and surrendering your plans to the Lord, asking him to keep you open and ready for whatever He might have for you.

**yet not
what i will,
but what
you will.
mark 14:36**

FOR the
mighty one has
done great
things for me.
holy is his name.

Luke 1:49

end of the day

Debrief:

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CHOSEN Today

in albania, eastern europe...

Albania is a small country in Eastern Europe. Once part of the former Soviet Union, the country now struggles with outdated education and health care systems. Children in Albania are at risk for neglect, forced labor, and commercial sexual exploitation. Albania is one of the poorest countries in Europe. Rural areas are hit especially hard by poverty and a lack of resources.

Beth Smith is from Scotland, but was raised as a missionary kid in Africa. She grew up hearing stories of brave believers in communist countries who risked their lives to live out their faith in the midst of persecution. From the time she was young, Beth knew that she wanted to use her life to help people who were suffering in the world.

For a while, she grew distant from the Lord, but God eventually brought her back to the call He'd placed on her life years before. When Beth was 21, she had the chance to minister in Albania for nine months. In the process, God gave her a heart for vulnerable and at-risk children there. While attending seminary in the U.S., Beth had another chance to return to Albania, and God confirmed her call to the small country. Beth says, "I knew my heart was committed to Albania...I



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knew I wanted to give my life to children that are in danger and unloved."

Now, at 30, Beth is living as a full-time missionary in Albania. She is learning the language, the culture, and how to minister to hurting children, as she volunteers at a local orphanage. It's not easy but God is faithful. Beth says, "I am being challenged daily in my dependency upon God to bear fruit in my life as a stranger in a strange land! I am incredibly ordinary and incredibly in need of character-forming, but God can and is using my life-as He can and will use yours."

In Scotland, Africa, America, and now Albania, God continues to show Beth step-by-step the amazing journey he has prepared for her.

»albania is one of the poorest countries in all of europe.

»Children in albania are at risk for Trafficking, forced labor, and commercial sexual exploitation.

(statistics taken from www.unicef.org)

CHOSEN

god's battle plan

day 4: Jehoshephat

READ & THINK ABOUT: 2 CHRONICLES 20:1-24

Three armies were coming after them. Instead of gathering his men together to strategize and pore over battle plans, Jehoshephat gathers all the people together to fast and pray. Those in the crowd who leaned more toward an "act-now-think-later" attitude must have been going crazy.

The situation looked pretty hopeless, but King Jehoshephat helped lead his people to a great victory. It wasn't his knowledge of weapons or battle formations that gained them the victory. Jehoshephat knew where to turn when the enemy was in pursuit: God Almighty.

He says it perfectly in verse 12: "We have no power to face this vast army that is attacking us. We do not know what to do, but our eyes are upon you." We are clueless Lord! Help us! The people fast, pray, and call out to God. They are desperate to hear from him. God responds by laying out a battle plan for them that's far from ordinary, but leaves plenty of room for God to show his power, which, of course, he does in an amazing way. The next morning the people set out for battle. By the time they reach the enemy, God has already been victorious.

Respond:

- How can you follow Jehoshaphat's example while you are on your mission trip?
- In what areas do you want to see the Lord give you victory this week? Ask him to reveal his battle plan to you.
- Meditate a bit more on verses 15 and 17. What is God saying to you?

**DO NOT BE AFRAID
OR DISCOURAGED
BECAUSE OF THIS
VAST ARMY.
FOR THE BATTLE
IS NOT YOURS,
BUT GOD'S.
2 CHRONICLES 20:15**