

# Going Vertical

Life Group Lesson • Week of September 18

Abram (Abraham) appears in Scripture toward the end of Genesis, chapter eleven. Interestingly, this chapter begins: “At one time all the people of the world spoke the same language and used the same words... they said, ‘Come let’s build a great city for ourselves with a tower that reaches into the sky. This will make us famous and keep us from being scattered all over the world’” (Genesis 11:1, 4). But because the people were attempting to go vertical in their own strength, elevating man not God, the Lord confused their languages causing their speech to sound like “babel” to one another. God did scatter the people and brought down their mission in defeat.

God’s way of going vertical is not man’s way of going vertical. Significance is not accomplished in our strength but through faith in God. In Genesis 11:26 – 12:1, a man is introduced who does honor the Lord and through faith becomes a friend of God (James 2:23). When God told Abram, “Leave your native country... and go to the land that I will show you...” (Genesis 12:1) Abram set out. “He took his wife, Sarai, his nephew Lot, and all his wealth—his livestock and all the people he had taken into his household at Haran—and headed for the land of Canaan” (Genesis 12:5).

Before long Abram and Lot parted ways because the land could not support their wealth of herds and flocks. Abram generously allowed Lot to choose any section of land to settle his family. Abram, the one to whom the land of Canaan had been promised by God, gave Lot first choice (see Genesis 13:5-18). Lot looked out toward the Jordan Valley and chose the fertile plains toward the east, thus parting ways with his uncle who had taken him in. But the people of the area where Lot moved “were extremely wicked and constantly sinned against the LORD” (Genesis 13:13).

Within a few years trouble arose in the region where Lot had moved. Five kings in the plains planned a rebellion against four kings from the east, Kedorlaomer of Elam and his Mesopotamian allies, causing war to break out. Kedorlaomer had ruled the area of Sodom, Gomorrah, Admah, Zeboiim, and Bela (Zoar) for 12 years. In the thirteenth year, because the people of the plains had refused to pay tribute, the four kings from the east re-entered the region to regain control of the land. In the midst of this invasion, Lot and his household were captured (see Genesis 14:1-12).

## Read Genesis 14:13-16

When Abram learned that his nephew Lot had been captured he immediately went into action. Abram could have had the attitude: “That boy made his bed now he’s going to have to lie in it.” But instead, this old man and his allies formed a small army and chased after these powerful kings of the east traveling some 250 miles from their home in Hebron all the way to Hobah, a city 60 miles north of Damascus!

1. Going after Lot was no small feat. Abram strategized a courageous mission to rescue his nephew. What does this great sacrifice tell you about Abram?

## Read Genesis 14:17-24

Upon returning from the victorious rescue mission, Abram is greeted by Melchizedek, king of Salem and priest of God Most High. Melchizedek approaches Abram in the King’s Valley (most likely the Kidron Valley east of Mount Moriah and the ancient Jebusite city now known as Jerusalem) and brings bread and wine. Later, authors would liken Melchizedek to the Lord Jesus Christ who would sacrifice His body (bread) and His blood (wine) when He died on the cross for us (Psalm 110:4, Hebrews 7:1-3). Truly, sacrifice is a prerequisite for victory.

2. Because Abram was willing to do the right thing and go after Lot, God gave Abram the victory. Melchizedek recognizes this and pronounces a blessing over Abram. What is the blessing spoken over Abram, and what is Abram’s response according in vv19-20?

By giving this godly Jebusite priest a tenth of the goods, Abram acknowledges that God alone caused his rescue mission to be successful. Perhaps there has been a time you had to fight for someone, and though faced with opposition, you chose to do the right thing and God gave you victory. What did you learn from that experience and how did you respond to the Lord’s faithfulness?

The only way to truly go vertical is God’s way—faith, obedience, sacrifice and surrender. Abram, later called Abraham (see Genesis 17:5), was not a perfect man and yet “God counted him as righteous because of his faith” (Romans 4:3). When we attempt to go vertical in our own strength as the people in Babel did, exalting man, we may find God bringing down our mission in defeat. But when we selflessly sacrifice ourselves for others (with a rescue in mind!) the Lord will move heaven and earth to make our mission successful.

In closing reflect on how Christ came to this earth with a rescue mission in mind. He came down, so you could go up. Hopefully, this weekend's message and Life Group Lesson has spoken to you. We go vertical when we bless the heart of God – reading His Word, spending time in prayer, trusting Him with our “goods” by tithing like Abram did, and loving and serving others in Christ's name.

3. In the space below, write down at least two ways you will put the Lord first in the next two weeks. It does not have to be difficult. Simple is fine. Share your commitment with a friend for accountability.

*And so it happened just as the Scriptures say: “Abraham believed God, and God counted him as righteous because of his faith.” He was even called the friend of God.*  
*James 2:23*

# Going VERTICAL

Text: Genesis 14: 17-24

## The Plain Truth

\_\_\_\_\_ is essential for victory and  
\_\_\_\_\_ is essential for transformation.

- 1) Victory in \_\_\_\_\_ requires sacrifice.
- 2) Victory in \_\_\_\_\_ requires sacrifice.
- 3) Victory in Christ requires \_\_\_\_\_.

### **One Year Bible Readings**

Sept. 18: Isaiah 28:14-30:11, Galatians 3:23-4:31, Psalm 62:1-12, Proverbs 23:19-21  
Sept. 19: Isaiah 30:12-33:9, Galatians 5:1-12, Psalm 63:1-11, Proverbs 23:22  
Sept. 20: Isaiah 33:10-36:22, Galatians 5:13-26, Psalm 64:1-10, Proverbs 23:23  
Sept. 21: Isaiah 37:1-38:22, Galatians 6:1-18, Psalm 65:1-13, Proverbs 23:24  
Sept. 22: Isaiah 39:1-41:16, Ephesians 1:1-23, Psalm 66:1-20, Proverbs 23:25-28  
Sept. 23: Isaiah 41:17-43:13, Ephesians 2:1-22, Psalm 67:1-7, Proverbs 23:29-35  
Sept. 24: Isaiah 43:14-45:10, Ephesians 3:1-21, Psalm 68:1-18, Proverbs 24:1-2