

Devoted to Loving God Above All Else

Lesson 01 in the series, "Devoted"

1. Abraham was so devoted to God that he went wherever God told him to go.

"Devoted" = loyal, loving, committed, true.

"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. I will make you into a great nation. I will bless you and make you famous, and you will be a blessing to others. I will bless those who bless you and curse those who treat you with contempt. All the families on earth will be blessed through you.' So Abram departed as the LORD had instructed, and Lot went with him. Abram was seventy-five years old when he left Haran."

Genesis 12:1-4 (NLT)

"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." Hebrews 11:8 (NLT)

Life Application: God wants me to be so devoted to Him that I will go wherever He calls me to go.

"But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth." Acts 1:8 (NIV)

"...your ears will hear a voice behind you, saying, 'This is the way; walk in it.'" Isaiah 30:21 (NIV)

"The LORD says, 'I will guide you along the best pathway for your life. I will advise you and watch over you. Do not be like a senseless horse or mule that needs a bit and bridle to keep it under control.'"

Psalms 32:8-9 (NLT)

2. Abraham once tried to run ahead of God, but the consequences were disastrous.

"Now Sarai, Abram's wife, had not been able to bear children for him. But she had an Egyptian servant named Hagar. So Sarai said to Abram, 'The LORD has prevented me from having children. Go and sleep with my servant. Perhaps I can have children through her.' And Abram agreed with Sarai's proposal. So Sarai, Abram's wife, took Hagar the Egyptian servant and gave her to Abram as a wife. (This happened ten years after Abram had settled in the land of Canaan.) So Abram had sexual relations with Hagar, and she became pregnant." Genesis 16:1-4 (NLT)

"This son of yours will be a wild man, as untamed as a wild donkey! He will raise his fist against everyone, and everyone will be against him. Yes, he will live in open hostility against all his relatives.' ... So Hagar gave Abram a son, and Abram named him Ishmael." Genesis 16:11-12,15 (NLT)

"Abraham said to God, 'May Ishmael live under your special blessing!' But God replied, 'No—Sarah, your wife, will give birth to a son for you. You will name him Isaac, and I will confirm my covenant with him and his descendants as an everlasting covenant. As for Ishmael, I will bless him also, just as you have asked. I will make him extremely fruitful and multiply his descendants. He will become the father of twelve princes, and I will make him a great nation. But my covenant will be confirmed with Isaac, who will be born to you and Sarah about this time next year.'" Genesis 17:15-21 (NLT)

Note: God's plans are always better than ours. "My thoughts are nothing like your thoughts," says the LORD. "And my ways are far beyond anything you could imagine. For just as the heavens are higher than the earth, so my ways are higher than your ways and my thoughts higher than your thoughts."

Isaiah 55:8-9 (NLT)

Life Application: Being devoted to God means seeking His plans and His timing.

"Trust in the LORD with all your heart; do not depend on your own understanding. Seek his will in all you do, and he will show you which path to take. Don't be impressed with your own wisdom. Instead, fear the LORD and turn away from evil. Then you will have healing for your body and strength for your bones."

Proverbs 3:5-8 (NLT)

"If you need wisdom, ask our generous God, and he will give it to you. He will not rebuke you for asking."

James 1:5 (NLT)

3. Abraham was so devoted to God that he surrendered whatever the Lord told him to surrender.

"Some time later, God tested Abraham's faith. 'Abraham!' God called. 'Yes,' he replied. 'Here I am.' 'Take your son, your only son—yes, Isaac, whom you love so much—and go to the land of Moriah. Go and sacrifice him as a burnt offering on one of the mountains, which I will show you.' The next morning Abraham

got up early. He saddled his donkey and took two of his servants with him, along with his son, Isaac. Then he chopped wood for a fire for a burnt offering and set out for the place God had told him about. On the third day of their journey, Abraham looked up and saw the place in the distance. 'Stay here with the donkey,' Abraham told the servants. 'The boy and I will travel a little farther. We will worship there, and then we will come right back.' So Abraham placed the wood for the burnt offering on Isaac's shoulders, while he himself carried the fire and the knife. As the two of them walked on together, Isaac turned to Abraham and said, 'Father?' 'Yes, my son?' Abraham replied. 'We have the fire and the wood,' the boy said, 'but where is the sheep for the burnt offering?' 'God will provide a sheep for the burnt offering, my son,' Abraham answered. And they both walked on together. When they arrived at the place where God had told him to go, Abraham built an altar and arranged the wood on it. Then he tied his son, Isaac, and laid him on the altar on top of the wood. And Abraham picked up the knife to kill his son as a sacrifice. At that moment the angel of the LORD called to him from heaven, 'Abraham! Abraham!' 'Yes,' Abraham replied. 'Here I am!' 'Don't lay a hand on the boy!' the angel said. 'Do not hurt him in any way, for now I know that you truly fear God. You have not withheld from me even your son, your only son.' Then Abraham looked up and saw a ram caught by its horns in a thicket. So he took the ram and sacrificed it as a burnt offering in place of his son... Then the angel of the LORD called again to Abraham from heaven. 'This is what the LORD says: Because you have obeyed me and have not withheld even your son, your only son, I swear by my own name that I will certainly bless you. I will multiply your descendants beyond number, like the stars in the sky and the sand on the seashore. Your descendants will conquer the cities of their enemies. And through your descendants all the nations of the earth will be blessed—all because you have obeyed me.'" Genesis 22:1-18 (NLT)

Note: Being devoted to God means trusting God enough to surrender whatever He asks us to surrender.

"It was by faith that Abraham offered Isaac as a sacrifice when God was testing him. Abraham, who had received God's promises, was ready to sacrifice his only son, Isaac, even though God had told him, 'Isaac is the son through whom your descendants will be counted.' Abraham reasoned that if Isaac died, God was able to bring him back to life again." Hebrews 11:17-19 (NLT)

Life Application: God wants me to be devoted to Him above all else.

"You must love the LORD your God with all your heart, all your soul, and all your mind.' This is the first and greatest commandment." Matthew 22:37-38 (NLT)

"Whoever has my commands and obeys them, he is the one who loves me. He who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I too will love him and show myself to him." John 14:21 (NIV)

Note: God was devoted to us first.

"But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us."

Romans 5:8 (NIV)

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Connect Group Questions

1. What does the word “devoted” mean to you?
2. What would Centerpoint look like if everyone involved became fully devoted to God?
3. Read Genesis 16:1-4. In these verses, Abraham tried to help God out. Can you share a time when you attempted to do things your own way instead of waiting on God to provide?
4. Read Isaiah 55:8-9 & Proverbs 3:5-8. What’s the hardest part of fully trusting God’s processes and timing?
5. Read Hebrews 11:17-19. Why do you believe Abraham was able to trust God enough to offer such a costly sacrifice?
6. Ask yourself the following four questions and then discuss them as a group:
 - Am I devoted to seeking God’s direction in every area of my life?
 - Am I devoted to reading God’s Word every day?
 - Am I devoted to praying every day to ensure I am aligned with God’s will?
 - Am I devoted to walking by faith in the direction God is leading me?

Which of these questions challenges you the most? Why?

7. Read Romans 5:8. How does it make you feel to know that God was devoted to us long before we were devoted to Him?