

Spiritual Practices for Thriving Life

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Free To Roam

What parts of your past hold you back from roaming freely?

What is central to your vision of your life?

In what specific way can you be a blessing in a particular person's life today?

Genesis 12:1-3 – ¹Now the Lord said to Abram, “Go from your country and your kindred and your father’s house to the land that I will show you. ²I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you, and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing. ³I will bless those who bless you, and the one who curses you I will curse; and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.”

1) Free To Be Different...

God exiled us from the Garden because we separated ourselves from Him. We chose to trust another more than Him in a fantasy we could become more like Him and not rely on Him. Ever since He has been inviting us to choose Him and break free of slavery to sin. He calls us to freedom at the miraculous moment our heart and mind are open to His voice. In inviting us to choose Him while in exile, He calls us to be different. Many of us are immediately attracted to the idea. Then we realize the cost of being different. We must leave our past—ways, relationships, values, expectations. This kind of freedom can feel like a freefall. That’s precisely what God wants. The ultimate form of worship is a chosen desperate reliance on His love.

♦ **Make room...**: The problem with our past is how little room it affords newness. Old ways consume every available moment. Those around pressure us with their established expectations. Failing expectations is violating the values of our people. Choosing freedom is to choose

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to **be** an exile rather than assimilate. An exilic way of life requires resisting—or removing if present already—foreign ways. “Go from your country and your kindred and your father’s house... (Gen 12:1)” God’s invitation to enter His presence is also a request to empty our heart. Whatever we keep is room He cannot fill.

♦ **...for a new vision:** God knows our hearts. He sent us away because we could not bear the shame of our disobedience. Immediately, He enacted His plan of salvation to rescue us from the folly we could be our own gods and live peacefully. To allow us to discover the façade that is a vision for life filled with titles, wealth, and family. None of these addresses our shame of being inferior to God while pretending to be god. God invites us “to the land that I will show you (v1).” Central to this vision is God acting as God. He will lead us, He will show us, He will give us, He will be with us.

II) Free To Be Significant...

God created us as significant. We were His likeness, His image, the manifestation of His being in the universe. All the earth was to know who He is through us. We choose instead to deny His likeness and present ourselves as our own. We thought being our own was more significant than being His treasured child. Absurdity. Now we chase signifiers we are greater than one another to avoid the shame of just being who we are. God invites us to reclaim our original significance.

♦ **Leave a legacy:** God put in our heart a desire for legacy. That we would be remembered for creating great things—in His name. Our decision to live for our own glory is a distortion to build things in our name. Just like that moment in the Garden, we discover the shame that nothing we create in our own names is blameless, eternal, perfectly good. We continue covering the naked truth and excusing failures. Then God offers to redeem our desire for legacy, saying “I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you... (v2)” If we allow Him, He will again make us significant. Our significance will be in our manifestation of Him, not that which we create. He is Creator.

♦ **Make a name:** The drive to be known was created in us. God created us with a sense of pride in who we are. Pride in being expressions of His goodness. We corrupt this godly pride into something unholy as we attempt to make our name stand on its own and when we try to make His name stand for us. God wills that we would again seek to be known as one of His. He will bless us with His presence to “make your name great, so that you will be a blessing (v2).” We are tempted to be distracted by the notoriety, possessions,

and influence that come from being known as one of God’s people that we can overlook the purpose in those relations with the world. God makes us attractive that we will make Him attractive and save our community. *If God loves Abram enough to free and bless Him, He might love me that much, too.* We are free to signify God’s love to all creation.

III) Free To Change Our World...

In the Garden, our significance as God’s manifestation was the perpetuation of His good creation. We were to maintain “everything that he had made, and indeed, it was very good (Gen 1:31).” In exile, our purpose as His people is to restore His goodness. We are His agents of change. He calls us to change who we are, to become one who others desire to be like, to be eager to reveal the source of our goodness. Breathing life into the image of God makes evident the deceit of life lived to self.

♦ **God for us:** God wisely lets us experience our impotence to create. Even harvesting His creation now takes effort— “By the sweat of your face you shall eat bread (Gen 3:19).” Those striving to be their own gods, to be glorified above their neighbors, must compete for whatever we are able to sow and reap. Glory is for those with more. The ways of this foreign land are to curse those who appear blessed and pity the cursed. God uses this impoverished mentality to attract others to His people. He promises to “bless those who bless you, and the one who curses you I will curse (Gen 12:3).” Another act of God revealing His goodness in those who follow Him. He creates victory for those who follow and represent Him, blessing those who favor His people and cursing those against. An unseen yet undeniable force is working for those who choose to be different. Quite the attraction for those who feel the entire world is against them.

♦ **Be the blessing:** We can be the blessing. We were always meant to be. God blesses through the embodiment of His likeness. We became the curse by rejecting the blessing that we were, deceiving creation about the nature of God. When we respond to God’s call to freedom, to **be** an exile, allowing Him to restore His likeness within, we inhabit the blessing. Lives of exceptional faith impact with extraordinary power. Of Abram, God said, “in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed (v3).” Be warned – Abram’s life was filled with doubts and terrors, missteps and miracles. Roaming is dangerous. Danger that builds our faith and shapes us into blessing. Will you roam freely and be the blessing?