

ALTARS

Title: ALTARS

Date: January 21, 2024

Leader's Notes:

1. Start and end the life group on time.
2. Facilitate discussions with your group and **give all attendees opportunities to share their thoughts**. Encourage participation.

Life Group Discussion Proper

WORSHIP: (15 mins)

Option 1: In person - Home gatherings

Suggestions: Assign someone to lead worship or play two praise & worship songs from You Tube.

Option 2: In person gatherings at a public place (park, school, café) or Online home gathering (via Zoom). *Suggestions: Ask people to share testimonies of answered prayers or ask the question: Ask the group, "What are you thankful to God about this past week?"*

Main Text: Read Genesis 12:1-9 NLT

Key Verses: "Then the Lord appeared to Abram and said, "I will give this land to your descendants." And Abram **built an altar** there and dedicated it to the Lord, who had appeared to him. 8 After that, Abram travelled south and set up camp in the hill country, with Bethel to the west and Ai to the east. There he **built another altar** and dedicated it to the Lord, and he worshiped the Lord." Genesis 12:7-8NLT

Intro: Abraham was a figure revered by the three great religions—Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. The Bible says Abraham was called by God to leave his country and his people and journey to an undesignated land, where he became the founder of a new nation. There he built altars that have very significant meanings.

WELCOME:(15 mins): IWC - Introduce yourself. Welcome guests/first-time visitors. Cheerfully call someone to do the same.

Ice-breaker: Ask the group and give time for participation.

Q: When you were young and your parents asked you to do something, how many times did they have to tell you before you respond?

WORD (30–45 mins)

What were these altars for?

1. The primary purpose of Abraham's first altar was to reveal, at that specific moment, was for Abraham to acknowledge God as His God! – He didn't just leave his country and relatives, he left his gods too. Previous to Abraham's first encounter with the Lord, he was a worshipper of idols. **Read Joshua 24:1-2 NLT**

Discussion Questions:

Q: When it comes to following the Lord's instructions or commands, on a scale of 1-10, (10 being most responsive) how responsive are you to obey God's Word?

The first altar he made was the proof that he is now a worshipper of Yahweh who called him from Ur! "**And there he built an altar to the LORD**" - The altar was important to Abram because it was a place to meet with God, to offer sacrifice for sin, to show submission to God, and to worship God.

We can't worship and serve on the altar of Christ if we still have idols in our hearts. Before we turn to Christ, we need to surrender our idols. Idols aren't just objects made of stone, wood, or precious jewels; they are things, people, or even ourselves that we value more than God.

Continuation:

2. THE SUCCEEDING ALTARS (Abraham built) WERE MADE TO DEEPEN HIS RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD—The farther he was from the Ur of the Chaldeans, the closer he developed his relationship with God. On altars, he needed to sacrifice something that belonged to him or was entrusted to him by God. The more he sacrificed on the altar, the deeper his walk with the Lord became.

Read Genesis 22:1-4, 9-12 NLT

But the most difficult thing to surrender was not the idols he left behind but the idol that was in his household—the greatest threat to God’s throne in the heart of Abraham: was the promised son, Isaac. It was on the altar on Mount Moriah that he was willing to offer Isaac as a testament to his true devotion to God. The greatest hindrances in our walk with the Lord is our “Isaac’s of Prosperity.” We need to allow the Holy Spirit to pin point the idols in our hearts. We need to surrender these Isaac’s on the altar before the Lord.

Discussion Questions:

Q: Are you willing to sacrifice and surrender our "Isaac's" on God's altar today?

Q: What if God asks you to do something like: admit a mistake, ask someone for forgiveness, approach someone and forgive a person then be reconciled with that person, surrender a bad habit or an addiction, commit yourself to fully serve God, how easy or difficult would it be for you to do so?

Conclusion:

And it was after his willingness to surrender the biggest threat to God’s place in Abraham’s heart that God confirmed with an oath His promise to Abraham and his descendants. We want God’s blessings and favour but most of the time we are not willing to surrender them to God. We value the blessings more than God the blesser. In this condition, we are not trustworthy. May we follow the example of Abraham and pursue the blesser instead of the blessings so we will see the real blessing that His presence brings. When you have the blesser you have the blessings! Period!

WHAT IS YOUR BIGGEST TAKE-AWAY FROM THE LESSON?

Tell your group to partner with someone and ask this question to their partner.

Q: What impacted you the most from this lesson?

WORK: The Challenge & Closing prayer (15 mins.)

1. Memorize a verse from your devotions this week and be prepared to share it on our next gathering.
2. Please take time in your smaller groups to pray for one another. If there are specific needs, take time to lift them up to God in prayer as well. Ask each other, **“what can I pray for you?”**

Leader’s Notes:

1. Please remind your group of your next gathering and ask them to invite a friend.
2. Please encourage the group to remember to pray for one another during the week.
3. Assign someone to share from his/her devotion to the group next week. *(min. of 5mins.)*