

3 Ways to Follow God When the Path Isn't Clear

Jennifer Heeren/Crosswalk Contributing Writer

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” (Genesis 12:1).

God didn't give Abram (later to be called Abraham) a detailed map or even show him the exact final destination. He basically said, “Abram, leave your comfort zone and go where I will show you.” However, God also added that he would bless Abram and his descendants if Abram obeyed him. Abram didn't know where he would end up, but he knew and trusted God's character, so he obeyed anyway. Abram's obedience happened one step at a time. With each step, Abram heard a little more from God.

I feel that this is what God requires of me as well. In November, I lost my job. I don't know exactly where God is taking me next but I am trusting that it will be a good place—a place of blessing. Each day since, I have been doing what I know to do within each day. I've been looking, applying, and networking. I've also been taking advantage of the time and learning some new skills. All the while remembering that God is a good God who loves to give good gifts to his children. Each day I feel like I'm a little closer to knowing where he is taking me next and this brings me peace even in the not knowing.

Like Abram, I am learning lessons as I walk through my journey. Three lessons that God is teaching me are:

1. Step Out of My Comfort Zone

God wants me to continually step out of my comfort zone and trust him with the unknowns. I have to leave room for God to guide me. If God were to come show me step-by-step his exact will for my life, it wouldn't require faith for me to follow him. Moreover, if I know exactly where I'm going beforehand, the idea probably isn't from God. It probably came out of my own head and ideals. God likes me to follow him in faith and trust—not in knowing. This frees me from getting stuck in my own ideas, which often can take me away from God's will, because let's face it, my own ideas can be very flawed as well as limited. God sees everything—past, present and future. He is not limited.

When I think back to times when I actually did step out of my comfort zone, it can give me confidence to do it again. A few years ago, I got married and moved many, many miles away from the state that I'd lived in my entire life. I knew it was for a good reason but I didn't know a lot of the details that I would encounter after the move. But I did it anyway.

2. Take One Step at a Time

There's also another reason God doesn't want me to know too much too soon. If I know too quickly, I might get overwhelmed and give up because it seems too hard. I might know where I'll end up but I won't necessarily know how. And, this not knowing how would cause me to have all kinds of anxious and worried thoughts. Nobody can do their best work under stress. God doesn't ask me to take a step that is five miles up the road. Each step of this step-by-step approach is made under the daylight of the present moment. Everyone can take one step at a time.

I once tried a ropes course that was over twenty feet above the ground. My initial thought was that there was no way I could balance myself and walk across those ropes. I wore a safety harness but

my jitters didn't seem to understand that I was completely safe. It was still scary. But...as I took one step at a time, I reached my destination.

3. Action Lessens Worry

I tend to overanalyze everything and overanalyzing causes me to worry and even become paralyzed. Taking action erases a lot of these worries because the act of doing something takes on a life of its own. I concentrate on the task at hand, not the results that will come later. Worry about future results usually happens before I ever take an action to complete something. Taking actions regularly is a way of living in the moment and often deletes some of the fears of the future and regrets of the past.

Also in that ropes course, I realized that most of my worries came before I started each section. Thinking about the possibility of falling happened before my first step. But...when I took the action necessary and started moving, my action really did erase a few fears because I wasn't thinking about them.

Bonus Lesson: God is With Me as I Go

Abram was able to trust God in the not knowing because he believed that God was with him. I also have this assurance because Jesus said, "...be sure of this: I am with you always, even to the end of the age." Even to the end of the age means in every moment of my life. Is God speaking to you about leaving your comfort zone and going without knowing? If he is, spend some time in the Bible and in reflective thought and wait for him to give you your first step, not the whole plan, just the first step.

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).