

# GOD PROVIDES™

A FILM LEARNING EXPERIENCE  
FROM CROWN FINANCIAL MINISTRIES®



## GOD PROVIDES™ SERMON OUTLINE

# ABRAM'S REWARD

These sermon outlines are provided as part of your Large Group Viewing License\*. In addition to showing the films in conjunction with a sermon, consider the other ways you can share the *God Provides*™ message with others.

## LARGE GROUP VIEWING IDEAS

- Show one or all of these films in the *God Provides*™ Film Learning Experience to your entire congregation.
- Rent a movie theater and sponsor a local movie night in your community.
- Share the films in conjunction with local mission work.
- Host a “Lunch and Learn Movie Experience” with your coworkers or employees.

## LARGE GROUP LICENSE - PACKAGE FEATURES

Don't forget to use all of the materials available with your Large Group Viewing License. Go to [Crown.org/GodProvides](http://Crown.org/GodProvides), click on “Group Licensing,” enter your unique License Code, and download the following materials:

- **Six Downloadable Trailers** for each short film.
- **Sermon Outlines** provide pastors with a message based on each short film.
- **Promotional Materials** such as posters, bulletin inserts, tickets and more are provided in digital format to promote the learning experience.
- **License Certificate** enables unlimited viewings for groups larger than 100.

For additional help or questions, please call 1-800-249-6320 or visit us online at [Crown.org/GodProvides](http://Crown.org/GodProvides).

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# BEFORE AND AFTER THIS SERMON

- 1** Before using this sermon, contact your local Crown Consultative Servant who can assist you in developing a financial ministry plan to provide ongoing guidance for your church members after the sermons are delivered in your church. Go to [Crown.org](http://Crown.org) and click “In My Area” to find a local servant.
  
- 2** While using this sermon, become familiar with the *God Provides™* Web site. It offers solid biblical insight that can help your church members. In particular, encourage your congregation to do any of the following:
  - a. Purchase a copy of the *God Provides™ Companion Guide*, and continue a personal study of each short film.
  - b. Listen or Podcast Crown’s radio programs for daily wisdom and encouragement.
  - c. Sign up for free e-communication to get monthly articles and advice on a variety of financial topics. Go to [Crown.org/SignUp](http://Crown.org/SignUp) to register.
  
- 3** After using this sermon, take your church members to the next level in their journey by encouraging them to do some of the following:
  - a. **Start Some *God Provides™* Small Groups** – encourage your church members to go deeper in studying the principles in these films. Small groups can view the films as part of an effective learning experience using the available *God Provides™ Companion Guide*.
  - b. **Encourage Next Step Resources** – encourage your church members to apply the biblical principles they’ve learned in practical ways. **Next Step Resources** from Crown can help them. See the last page of this document for details.

\*A large group is defined as showing a short film to more than 100 people at one time. For 100 people or fewer, a large group viewing license is not required. A *God Provides™* Companion Guide is recommended for each participant. Additional Companion Guides are sold separately.



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## “MAKING MAJOR LIFE CHOICES”

(referencing the film, *Abram's Reward*, adapted from Genesis 12–15:6)

[Note to Pastors: We prayerfully offer this resource material to you, believing that God will use it to guide and bless individuals and families within your congregation and the church body as a whole. Obviously you know your congregation's specific needs and interests, so feel free to adapt any of this material. This sermon addresses just a facet of the complete *God Provides™ Film Learning Experience*.]

### Ice Breaker and Introduction of Suggested Film Clip

Imagine how Abram, a 75-year-old nomadic herdsman living in the region of Haran—an important city in what is now southeastern Turkey—felt when God said to him, “Leave your country, your people and your father’s house and go to the land I will show you.”

- How would you respond if God said something like this to you today?
- What emotions would you feel? Hope? Joy? Confusion? Surprise? Doubt? Excitement?
- What thoughts would flood your mind? *How can I leave my friends? Or my family? Or sell what I can't take with me quickly? Or explain to people that I don't even know what my destination will be? Or would you think, What a great adventure; I can't wait to get started?*

“So Abram left, as the LORD had told him.” He took his wife, Sarai; his nephew, Lot; all their possessions; and traveled many miles to the land of Canaan.

Abram continued to put God first and act selflessly toward Lot, whom he apparently loved like a son.

After stopping various times, and living in Egypt for a while to escape a severe famine, Abram and his household returned to the desert.

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When they reached a place named Bethel, a problem arose. Abram and Lot had so many flocks and herds of animals that there was not enough water and pasture.

Something had to be done—and quickly.

That is where the film clip we'll see today begins.

As you watch it, notice Abram's faithfulness to God and his loving and generous attitude and actions toward Lot. And think about why Lot made the choice he did—and the kinds of people he began to associate with.



Play Film Clip of *Abram's Reward* (approx. 3 mins. 32 secs. long)

- Start: (47 seconds) into the film, when narrator says, "The Lord said to Abram, "Go from your country . . . ."
- End: Abram and Lot part company, and narrator says, "So Lot chose for himself the whole plain of Jordan . . ." and ends with, "So Abram moved his tents and went to live near the great trees of Mamre at Hebron, where he built an altar to the LORD." (4 mins. 19 secs. into the film)

## Key Message

During our individual life journeys, we will see and think about many things we'd like to possess, such as: a nice piece of "well-watered" property, money, car, status in our community . . . . And these aren't necessarily wrong in and of themselves. But it's easy to rationalize and become so involved in pursuing possessions like these that we hurt our relationship with God and other people. No doubt Lot's way of choosing which land to possess hurt Abram—who knew what was really at stake.

Ultimately, misdirected passion for such possessions can replace our passion for Christ and lead us into a self-centered lifestyle of debt, financial bondage, . . . and sin rather than toward the God who loves us and desires to provide all that we need.

Our challenge is to treat other people, and manage what God has entrusted to us, according to his timeless principles that are found in the Bible. We can learn valuable lessons from Abram's wise choices and Lot's foolish choices.

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## 1 God honors our *selflessness* toward other people.

Despite the terrible economic consequences that could have happened to him, Abram sacrificially allowed Lot to choose the best land. Abram *loved people and God rather than things*. Immediately after Lot left, God gave Abram—and his offspring—all the land he could see (Genesis 13:14-17).

### Additional Supporting Scriptures

[These are provided for your convenience. Feel free to select from them or utilize others at your discretion.]

### Key Verses:

*A generous man will prosper; he who refreshes others will himself be refreshed.*  
—Proverbs 11:25

*Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than yourselves. Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others.*—Philippians 2:3-4

### Additional Verses:

*Where you have envy and selfish ambition, there you find disorder and every evil practice. But the wisdom that comes from heaven is first of all pure; then peace-loving, considerate, submissive, full of mercy and good fruit, impartial and sincere. Peacemakers who sow in peace raise a harvest of righteousness.*—James 3:16-18

*If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone.*  
—Romans 12:18

*Even in darkness light dawns for the upright, for the gracious and compassionate and righteous man.* —Psalm 112:4

*Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled.  
Blessed are the merciful, for they will be shown mercy.  
Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God.  
Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called sons of God.* —Matthew 5:6-9

*Good will come to him who is generous and lends freely, who conducts his affairs with justice. Surely he will never be shaken; a righteous man will be remembered forever.* —Psalm 112:5-6

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## 2 God honors our *generosity* and *faithfulness* to Him.

When we are faithful to God and seek righteousness—desiring to experience the richness of living according to His principles and wisdom and acknowledging that everything we have comes from Him—God will bless us.

God blessed Abram greatly. Why? Abram chose to obediently serve God and live a godly lifestyle. For example, he not only left his home country as God requested, he moved away from evil Sodom and honored God by building an altar at his new location (Exodus 13:18). And not long after Abram and Lot split up, Abram also generously gave the priest of God, Melchizedek, a tenth of the spoils of battle after a great victory over kings who captured Sodom and its inhabitants—including Lot.

- Consider some of the blessings God gave Abram:

God enabled Abram’s small army to rescue Lot and his family, as well as the Sodomites, from the much larger armies of the invading kings.

God declared, “I am your shield, your very great reward” (Genesis 15:1). Imagine having such an intimate relationship with the Creator God!

God promised a miracle: Abram’s elderly wife, who was too old to have a child, would give birth to a son named Isaac (Genesis 15:1-6), from whom God’s chosen people the Israelites—and eventually, Jesus the Messiah—would descend.

God established a special agreement—a *covenant*—with Abram (Genesis 17) and promised to give Abram many descendants and the entire land of Canaan (later named *Israel*) if Abram and his descendants remained obedient to God and kept the covenant.

God changed Abram’s name to *Abraham*, which means “father of many”—a reference to the nations and kings who would come from Abram’s lineage. God would bless the entire world through Abram!

### Additional Supporting Scriptures

[These are provided for your convenience. Feel free to select from them or utilize others at your discretion.]

### Key Verses:

*The fear of the LORD is pure, enduring forever. The ordinances of the LORD are sure and altogether righteous. They are more precious than gold, than much pure gold; they are sweeter than honey, than honey from the comb. By them is your servant warned; in keeping them there is great reward. —Psalm 19:9-11*

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*For the LORD gives wisdom, and from his mouth come knowledge and understanding. He holds victory in store for the upright, he is a shield to those whose walk is blameless, for he guards the course of the just and protects the way of his faithful ones. Then you will understand what is right and just and fair—every good path. For wisdom will enter your heart, and knowledge will be pleasant to your soul. —Proverbs 2:6-10*

### **Additional Verses:**

*Blessed is the man who does not walk in the counsel of the wicked or stand in the way of sinners or sit in the seat of mockers. But his delight is in the law of the LORD, and on his law he meditates day and night. He is like a tree planted by streams of water, which yields its fruit in season and whose leaf does not wither. Whatever he does prospers. —Psalm 1:1-3*

*Taste and see that the LORD is good; blessed is the man who takes refuge in him. —Psalm 34:8*

*For the LORD God is a sun and shield; the LORD bestows favor and honor; no good thing does he withhold from those whose walk is blameless. O LORD Almighty, blessed is the man who trusts in you. —Psalm 84:11-12*

*Listen to me, you who pursue righteousness and who seek the LORD: Look to the rock from which you were cut and to the quarry from which you were hewn; look to Abraham, your father, and to Sarah, who gave you birth. When I called him he was but one, and I blessed him and made him many. —Isaiah 51:1-2*

*The wicked man earns deceptive wages, but he who sows righteousness reaps a sure reward. The truly righteous man attains life, but he who pursues evil goes to his death. The LORD detests men of perverse heart but he delights in those whose ways are blameless. Be sure of this: The wicked will not go unpunished, but those who are righteous will go free. —Proverbs 11:18-21*

### **Related Story from the Bible**

*“He [Jesus] told them this parable: ‘The ground of a certain rich man produced a good crop. He thought to himself, ‘What shall I do? I have no place to store my crops.’ Then he said, ‘This is what I’ll do. I will tear down my barns and build bigger ones, and there I will store all my grain and my goods. And I’ll say to myself, ‘You have plenty of good things laid up for many years. Take life easy; eat, drink and be merry.’ But God said to him, ‘You fool! This very night your life will be demanded from you. Then who will get what you have prepared for yourself?’ This is how it will be with anyone who stores up things for himself but is not rich toward God.’” —Luke 12:16-21*

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### 3 We should avoid the *trappings of this world* and set our hearts on God and what He calls us to do.

Lot made poor choices. He greedily valued worldly possessions and status more than the richness of living in faithful, obedient relationship with God and other people. He and his family even moved into sinful Sodom, where he became quite influential. And he suffered bad consequences.

- Lot, his family, and all his possessions were captured by those four kings whose combined armies captured Sodom and carried away its riches and its people. Abram and his allies overtook those kings, routed them, and recovered everything—including Lot and his family. But imagine how Lot felt as he contemplated becoming a slave—or dying!
- Because the wicked people of Sodom were causing other people to suffer and cry out to God for help, he sent angels to Sodom to see how bad things really were (Exodus 18:20-21; 19:1). Because of the angels' intervention, Lot and his family escaped Sodom in a hurry, quite likely with only the clothing on their backs. Then God destroyed the city—and another evil city nearby named Gomorrah.

#### Additional Supporting Scriptures

[These are provided for your convenience. Feel free to select from them or utilize others at your discretion.]

#### Key Verses:

*How much better to get wisdom than gold, to choose understanding rather than silver! The highway of the upright avoids evil; he who guards his way guards his life.*  
—Proverbs 16:16-17

*People who want to get rich fall into temptation and a trap and into many foolish and harmful desires that plunge men into ruin and destruction. For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil. Some people, eager for money, have wandered from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs.* —1 Timothy 6:9-10

#### Additional Verses:

*Whoever trusts in his riches will fall, but the righteous will thrive like a green leaf.*  
—Proverbs 11:28

*Wisdom will save you from the ways of wicked men, from men whose words are perverse, who leave the straight paths to walk in dark ways, who delight in doing wrong and rejoice in the perverseness of evil, whose paths are crooked and who are devising in their ways.* —Proverbs 2:12-15

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*Cast but a glance at riches, and they are gone, for they will surely sprout wings and fly off to the sky like an eagle. —Proverbs 23:5*

*Do not love the world or anything in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For everything in the world--the cravings of sinful man, the lust of his eyes and the boasting of what he has and does—comes not from the Father but from the world. The world and its desires pass away, but the man who does the will of God lives forever. —1 John 2:15-17*

*But you, man of God, . . . pursue righteousness godliness, faith, love, endurance and gentleness. Fight the good fight of the faith. Take hold of the eternal life to which you were called when you made your good confession in the presence of many witnesses. —1 Timothy 6:11-12*

*Be careful how you walk, not as unwise men, but as wise, making the most of your time, because the days are evil. —Ephesians 5:15-16, NASB*

*Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where moth and rust do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also. The eye is the lamp of the body. If your eyes are good, your whole body will be full of light. But if your eyes are bad, your whole body will be full of darkness. If then the light within you is darkness, how great is that darkness! No one can serve two masters. Either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and Money. —Matthew 6:19-24*

## **4 We must choose whom we will serve.**

Abram chose to serve the Lord. Lot chose the things of this sinful world.

### **Related Story from the Bible**

Think about these words from Joshua, the man who led Israel after Moses' death, much later after Abram's time:

*Then you [Israel] crossed the Jordan and came to Jericho. The citizens of Jericho fought against you, as did also the Amorites, Perizzites, Canaanites, Hittites, Girgashites, Hivites and Jebusites, but I gave them into your hands. I sent the hornet ahead of you, which drove them out before you--also the two Amorite kings. You did not do it with your own sword and bow. So I gave you a land on which you did not toil and cities you did not build; and you live in them and eat from vineyards and olive groves that you did not plant. Now fear the LORD*

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*and serve him with all faithfulness. Throw away the gods your forefathers worshiped beyond the River and in Egypt, and serve the LORD. But if serving the LORD seems undesirable to you, then choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve, whether the gods your forefathers served beyond the River, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land you are living. But as for me and my household, we will serve the LORD.* —Joshua 24:11-15

## Pastoral Challenge

Which of Abram's characteristics would you like to demonstrate more often? Selflessness? Humility? Generosity? Faithfulness to God and family? Caring for other people?

If you would change your relationship with your family and with God to reflect more of Abram's values, which changes would you make?

## Wrap Up and Close

[We recommend bringing in a short, modern-day illustration to close. For example:

- The Pilgrims, who left the prosperous (yet greed-driven) economy of Holland to pursue following God in the New World.
- Eric Liddell, missionary to China (of *Chariots of Fire* fame), who chose to stand up for his convictions rather than compromise in the face of worldly success.

Or, someone in the congregation might share a short, illustrative testimony—live or via video.]

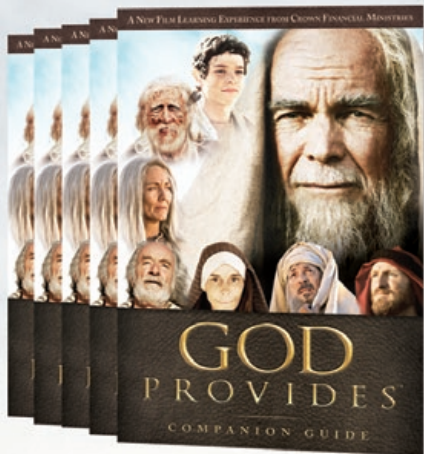
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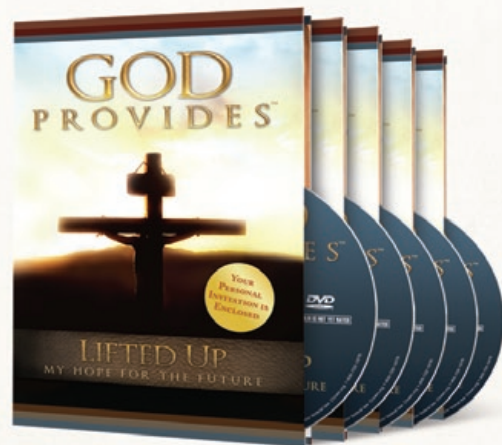


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