

The beginning of my story starts with only a few verses at the beginning of your Bible in Genesis:

Terah was the father of Abram (that's me), Nahor, and Haran (my two brothers); and my brother Haran was the father of Lot. My brother Haran died before my father Terah in the land of his birth, in Ur (that's the land you call Iraq today). My other brother and I married; the name of my wife was Sarai, but she was barren; she had no child.

My dad took me, his grandson Lot (my nephew), and my wife Sarai and we went out together from Ur of the Chaldeans to go into the land of Canaan; but when we came to Haran, we settled there. The days of Terah were two hundred five years; and Terah died in Haran.

There we were in that strange land, and I had no idea why my dad moved us there. He said something about feeling led there, as though he heard this mysterious voice within him suggesting he needed to go, and then he died, leaving me with my wife and my nephew and no clue what to do next.

Like my father, I later had this stirring within me to venture off to another land. I'll never forget that day when it felt as though I was having a conversation with God:

*God (voice offstage): Hey, Abram. You got a minute?*

*Abram: Who me?*

*God: Yeah, you, Abram. I've got a deal for you. You interested?*

*Abram: Well, I don't know. What do you have to offer? And who are you, anyway?*

*God: This is God. I'm going to bless you.*

*Abram: Bless me? What does that mean?*

*God: I'm going to make you a great nation. Lots of people will know your name, though we'll have to change your name to Abraham. Sounds a little classier, don't you think?*

*Abram: I don't know. I'm really not into fame and glory.*

*God: You'll have a big family, so big you won't be able to keep track of them all.*

*Abram: I'm 75 years old! I think that's a bit old to be having lots of kids.*

*God: Don't worry about your age. You see those stars in the sky? Can't count them, can you? That's the way it will be with your descendants. Too many to count. Someday people will write about you, and your story will be the beginning of the history of this great nation of people.*

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*Abram: You're starting to make this sound interesting. What do I have to do?*

*God: You'll have to move to a new location. I've got big plans for you, but they can't happen where you're living. You've got to travel to a land I will show you.*

*Abram: I'm not sure if my wife will go for that idea. It was hard enough to move here years ago when my dad suggested the idea. What again did you say was the point of all this?*

*God: I will bless you, so that through you all the families of the earth will be blessed.*

*Abram: Blessed for what? Just what does it mean for me to be a blessing to the entire earth?*

*God: You will be like a light to all people, helping them see and know me. Through you people will discover health, live longer, get along with one another, follow my commandments, feel better. It's like throwing a stone in a pond and watching the ripple in the water continue to move outward. I bless you, you bless others, and the blessing continues to grow.*

*Abram: Sounds interesting.*

*God: So what do you say, can you let go and follow me?*

I'm guessing you know what I decided to do. I let go and followed God, though it wasn't always easy. Sometimes I wondered if I had made the right decision. Have you ever felt inspired to try something new and challenging and then wondered if you made a mistake when plans didn't go the way you anticipated? I had many sleepless nights as we settled in the new land that God suggested.

I often wondered why God chose me. What did I do to earn God's invitation? And I often felt overwhelmed, for a lot was at stake—the whole earth could become blessed through me, but what if I messed up? I did make a mess numerous times, but somehow God continued to work with me, giving me another chance to try again.

It's amazing how many people of faith have grown from God's invitation of blessing—Jews and Christians trace their faith to my son Isaac through my wife Sarah, Muslims to my son Ishmael through their mother Hagar. When Sarah died, I married

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Katurah, and through our children the Bahai' faith claim us as their ancestors of faith. That's lot of people! Let's see, in your world today that's 15 million Jews, over 2 billion Christians, about 2 billion Muslims, and 8 million Bahai's. Wow. That's a lot of people!

I've heard that you say a prayer Jesus taught his disciples and you. I especially like the phrase, "Your kingdom come." Bringing God's kingdom into the world happens as we follow God's invitation to let go and trust in God's guidance. "Your kingdom come" is not just about getting people to heaven, but also about nurturing the growth of God's ways right here on earth—bringing blessings and a piece of heaven to earth here and now. I didn't realize it at the time, but following God brought blessings to many people, even after I was long gone.

I also like the phrase, "Your will be done," but many people get confused by this phrase, thinking God has a plan and we don't have any say about it.

God's will is not coercive or violent, for God invites us through gentle persuasion, always leaving the option open for us to ignore the invitation. God may not always know what we will choose to do, for sometimes we make bad choices and disappoint God. Somehow, God always offers us another chance, helping us get back on track. Rather than "your will be done," maybe a better way to express the idea could be "your vision and hopes get accomplished through humanity's partnership with God," though that doesn't flow quite as well in the prayer.

However you pray it, it's about letting go. Trusting God. Following. If billions of people have been blessed by my move to a new land and following God's ways, just imagine how many people could find blessings through what you do. so, let go. Trust. And bless the world now and for generations to come.