

Personal Devotions

Week 1: Abraham

A Cannonball of Trust

Monday Read Mark 9:33-35

A summer day + a few friends + a diving board = splash contest!

The desire to make the biggest splash leads us to jump higher, lean farther, land harder and perfect the supreme Cannonball. The same desire to make the biggest splash—to “be the greatest”—can happen in our lives. Notice how Jesus responds to the disciples’ discussion. Jesus does not condemn their desire, but redefines what it means to be great. What is your strategy for making an impact in the world? How would you feel talking about your plans with Jesus? Spend a minute in prayer talking with God about how He can use you to pursue true greatness.

[illegible]

Tuesday

The disciples are exactly right, their actions are foolish.

Unless... Cannonball disciples are not called to efficiency, but instead to deep devotion to Jesus. In this simple story we see a picture of the kind of devotion that makes a lasting impact in the world—a devotion that will never be forgotten as long as the gospel is proclaimed. A half-hearted Cannonball doesn't make a very big splash, and half-hearted commitment isn't really commitment. Consider the call to JUMP in. How do you need to make an overflowing commitment to Christ in faith, time, money and possessions? Are you willing to "waste" your life for the cause of Christ even if it looks foolish to the rest of the world?

Wednesday | Read Ephesians 4:11-16

Corks and rocks have very different relationships with the water.

Corks move with the waves; rocks make waves. The same is true for our interaction with the world around us. Sometimes we just bob along, listening to the advice, "Don't make waves." We're corks. But true Christ followers don't have this option. We are called to resist the tide of our culture and transform the world around us. In what part of your life are you just bobbing along with the expectations and habits of your environment? How could you stand against the tide in these areas? Choose one commitment you can make this week to be a rock and not a cork. Tell your plan to a friend who can help you make waves.

Read 2 Timothy 2:1-2

Thursday

The early church planter Paul, created a ripple effect that we're still experiencing today, and he expected other Christians to do the same.

In this letter, Paul challenges Timothy to invest in others so they can share what they have learned with others. When we teach people who can teach others, we are seeing not just the first ripple of impact but looking beyond to see the second ripple. Can you see your second ripple? Can you see how your investment of time, service, and money will create an ongoing pattern of change? Think about a plan to make a second-ripple splash.

Friday | Read Genesis 12:1-5

“Leave everything and go.”

Those were God's instructions to Abraham. That's a Cannonball! But notice, God's call to Cannonball Commitment comes with a promise. If Abraham goes "all in", God will bless him and use him to bless the entire world. We are still blessed by the ripple effect of Abraham's Cannonball. This whole initiative is about going "all in" with the mission of God to make a lasting impact in the world. Abraham did this by leaving everything and moving. Are you ready to do the same? In your prayer today, ask God to give you a vision for how you can take the plunge and make waves of lasting impact.



Week 1

As your group gathers for this lesson it may be your first time together. If it is, be sure to spend some time with intentional introductions. Share your name, a bit about yourself, and the first time you did a Cannonball.

Watch Week 1 LIFE Group Video.
Videos can be found at communitycannonball.com.

Opening Discussion Questions

1. Why is it difficult to trust people? Why do we have so many trust issues?
2. When was a time when you trusted someone, and it turned out for the positive? What does it take in order for true trust to be present?

Further Discussion from Scripture

Read each Scripture passage below and discuss the questions as a group. You may want to have each group member journal their answer first in the lines provided below before discussing together, as a means of encouraging all to participate more deeply.

God Calls Us To Things We Cannot Yet See

Read Genesis 12:1-3

"The Lord had said to Abram, 'Go from your country, your people and your father's household to the land I will show you. I will make you into a great nation, and I will bless you; I will make your name great, and you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and whoever curses you I will curse; and all peoples on earth will be blessed through you.'"

1. God called Abraham (Abram at the time) to a life he could not yet see—to a path that was unknown. Can you remember a time you trusted God even when you couldn't see the outcome?

2. Do you allow God to do with your life what He wishes to do? Or do you seek to “stay in the safe zone” instead of jumping in to where He wants you to go?

3. To what do you look in order to ensure that tomorrow will be ok? Family? Friends? Money? Your career? Your talents and abilities? In what lies your security for the present and for the future?

God Asks Us To Trust Him So That We Put Our Faith In Him, Not In Our Own Abilities

Read Genesis 22:2-18

“Then God said, ‘Take your son, your only son, whom you love—Isaac—and go to the region of Moriah. Sacrifice him there as a burnt offering on a mountain I will show you.’ Early the next morning Abraham got up and loaded his donkey. He took with him two of his servants and his son Isaac. When he had cut enough wood for the burnt offering, he set out for the place God had told him about. On the third day Abraham looked up and saw the place in the distance. He said to his servants, ‘Stay here with the donkey while I and the boy go over there. We will worship and then we will come back to you.’ Abraham took the wood for the burnt offering and placed it on his son Isaac, and he himself carried the fire and the knife. As the two of them went on together, Isaac spoke up and said to his father Abraham, ‘Father?’ ‘Yes, my son?’ Abraham replied. ‘The fire and wood are here,’ Isaac said, ‘but where is the lamb for the burnt offering?’ Abraham answered, ‘God himself will provide the lamb for the burnt offering, my son.’ And the two of them went on together. When they reached the place God had told him about, Abraham built an altar there and arranged the wood on it. He bound his son Isaac and laid him on the altar, on top of the wood.

Then he reached out his hand and took the knife to slay his son. But the angel of the Lord called out to him from heaven, 'Abraham! Abraham!' 'Here I am,' he replied. 'Do not lay a hand on the boy,' he said. 'Do not do anything to him. Now I know that you fear God, because you have not withheld from me your son, your only son.' Abraham looked up and there in a thicket he saw a ram caught by its horns. He went over and took the ram and sacrificed it as a burnt offering instead of his son. So Abraham called that place The Lord Will Provide. And to this day it is said, 'On the mountain of the Lord it will be provided.' The angel of the Lord called to Abraham from heaven a second time and said, 'I swear by myself, declares the Lord, that because you have done this and have not withheld your son, your only son, I will surely bless you and make your descendants as numerous as the stars in the sky and as the sand on the seashore. Your descendants will take possession of the cities of their enemies, and through your offspring all nations on earth will be blessed, because you have obeyed me.'"

4. Abraham had faith in God, not because of what Abraham could do (because any grown man with any type of love for his son could not do this humanly on his own) but because of what he knew to be true about God. He knew and trusted in the fact that God would provide. What is preventing you from trusting in God and in His plan for your life? What is preventing you from being fully committed to Him and trusting Him with something He is asking you to do?

Stop Setting Your Mind On The Things Of Earth

Read Colossians 3:1-4

"Since, then, you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things. For you died, and your life is now hidden with Christ in God. When Christ, who is your life, appears, then you also will appear with Him in glory."

Look at verse 3: *“For you died, and your life is now hidden with Christ in God.”*

5. Are you truly living in light of this truth? Are you truly living in Him, with a God perspective and not a human perspective? How is this evidenced in your life, either for the positive or for the negative?

God Does Not Want Generosity From Us. He Wants It For Us.

Read Colossians 1:3-14

“We always thank God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, when we pray for you, because we have heard of your faith in Christ Jesus and of the love you have for all God’s people—the faith and love that spring from the hope stored up for you in heaven and about which you have already heard in the true message of the gospel that has come to you. In the same way, the gospel is bearing fruit and growing throughout the whole world—just as it has been doing among you since the day you heard it and truly understood God’s grace. You learned it from Epaphras, our dear fellow servant, who is a faithful minister of Christ on our behalf, and who also told us of your love in the Spirit. For this reason, since the day we heard about you, we have not stopped praying for you. We continually ask God to fill you with the knowledge of his will through all the wisdom and understanding that the Spirit gives, so that you may live a life worthy of the Lord and please Him in every way: bearing fruit in every good work, growing in the knowledge of God, being strengthened with all power according to His glorious might so that you may have great endurance and patience, and giving joyful thanks to the Father, who has qualified you to share in the inheritance of His holy people in the kingdom of light. For He has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the Son He loves, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.”

This step of faith for Community is the largest thing we have ever done as a church. It is literally going to change our church, and it is a risk we are willing to take in light of God's word and God's leading.

6. What would it mean for your generosity if you had a full view in mind of what it looks like to truly trust in God?

7. What would it look like for your generosity to create a story that honors and draws more people to God during this Cannonball season?
