

Day 1 – An Invitation to Explore the Trail

After Lot had departed, the Lord said to Abram, "Look from the place where you stand to the north, south, east, and west. I will give all the land that you see to you and your descendants forever. And I will make your descendants like the dust of the earth so that if anyone is able to count the dust of the earth, then your descendants also can be counted. Get up and walk throughout the land, for I will give it to you" (Genesis 13:14- 17 NET).

Reading through Scripture is a lot like hiking through a rugged, but beautiful country. There are exhilarating views and gorgeous vistas, but they aren't as visible from the parking lot or trail head. The really inspiring portions of the country lie deep along the trail. There are portions of the trail where the trees block much of the view, the ground is steep, your backpack gets heavy, and the journey is genuinely difficult. There are portions of the trail where it's easy to slip and hurt yourself if you aren't careful. There are even portions of the trail where it may get difficult to see exactly what lies ahead and you have to rely on other hikers to properly navigate.

There are also places where the river is close and the cool refreshment it can provide is just what you need along the journey. There are stands of trees that provide nourishing fruit, whose taste cannot be adequately described. There are cool spots that provide rest from the heat or break the cold winds. There are peaks and ridges that provide you a perspective of the land that can only be seen by doing the hard work of walking the trail. There are short cuts. You can skip these parts of the trail, but then you miss the reward.

And in that journey, you have many opportunities to understand those things that are worth carrying on the trail, if only for a short time. You have equal opportunities to understand those things that are best to leave behind, if only for a short time. Most people prefer to not even attempt the trail. They can provide you with many opinions of the terrain and its views, how to best attempt the hike, what the fruit is like, and what you should avoid, but they don't KNOW the trail. These people prefer to stick to the roads that allow them to pass by the rugged country in a car and leave it far behind. But as Believers, we are invited to explore the country, to get to know it, to walk about it - every bit as much as Abraham was commissioned to walk a land.