



Focus Like Abraham, we can build altars of thanksgiving to God from the rocks and hard places of our lives.

Open When you think of things you're thankful for, what tops your list?

Read Our thankfulness is a reflection of our level of awareness of how much we've been forgiven. Thankfulness is always the fruit of love.

When I love God for *my* sake, I understand there are many benefits of loving Him, but my relationship with Him is still all about me. When I love God for *God's* sake, I've come to understand that God does everything He does, including caring for me, for the sake of His great name.

We will never be deeply thankful or loving people when we're stuck loving God for our own sakes because our dominant thoughts are on ourselves; all we can see is what God has *not* done for us. *The primary way we mature in our love for God is by being thankful.*

Abraham displayed his thankfulness to God by building altars, described in Genesis 12–13. An altar is a statement of your values, which extends into your future and bends your life around God. When Abraham received a promise from God, he made room in his life to receive it and built an altar of promise to represent that God had done a work that changed his life.

Abraham built an altar of provision, calling on the name (character) of the Lord, prophetically thanking God for His provision before He acted. When Abraham stepped away from God's promise and God brought him back, Abraham built an altar of redemption. Abraham's altar of trust demonstrated his belief that God would make a way for him when all seemed lost.

When we build altars from our earthly hard things, we will see the greatness of God at work in our lives—for the sake of His great name.

Talk

1. How is it possible to “love God for our own sakes”?
2. Read Psalm 79:9 and Psalm 23:1–3. According to these passages, why does God do what He does? How does this truth change your perspective of your circumstances?
3. “An altar is a statement of values which extends into your future and bends your life around God” (Pastor Marcus Brecheen). In your own words, describe or define what an altar is and what it represents.
4. There is a difference between *hearing* a promise from God and *receiving* it. To receive a promise is to make room in your life for it to take root and grow. How can you “make room” in your life for a promise to take root and grow?
5. Human failure cannot deter God from fulfilling His promises in our lives. How does your heart respond to God when you consider His faithfulness?
6. When Abraham built an altar, he “called upon the name of the Lord” (publicly stated the character of God). In what area of your life do you need to “call upon the name of the Lord”? What will you declare about His character over your life?

Live

1. “If God never did anything for us again, He is still worthy to receive our worship” (Pastor Marcus Brecheen). What has God already done for you? Why is He *already* worthy of your worship?
2. What earthly, hard “rocks” do you need to set before the Lord—to build an altar with?

Pray

Declare the faithfulness and goodness of the Lord. Ask Him to open your eyes so you see Him as He is and love Him for His name’s sake. Bring the “hard places” of your life to Him and build an altar before Him. Ask Him to redeem every hard place and make something beautiful out of the messiness. Thank Him for all that He is.