



CORE STUDY #5

God Tested Abraham

Passage: Genesis 22:1-19

Themes: God's testing, Radical faith in action

Summary: Abraham has been given a son in his old age - a son who God has promised would produce a great nation. In this passage we see that God seemingly rescinds on this promise by asking Abraham to offer Isaac as a sacrifice on Mount Moriah. What follows this command is Abraham faithfully being obedient to this command and making the torturous 3-day journey to carry out what God has called him to do. As Abraham is about to finish sacrificing Isaac the Lord intervenes and supplies a ram in place of Isaac to sacrifice. This is a story of radical testing and radical faith in action. God responds to Abraham's faith by making a covenant with him that Abraham's descendants would be as numerous as the stars and that all nations on earth would be blessed by them.

Introduction Question:

- How would you define faith?

Try a dramatic reading of this passage. Ask different members of your Core to read the roles of the narrator, God, Abraham and Isaac. Encourage them to read and think about the passage from their character's perspective.

Discussion Questions (selection to choose from, start with the italic questions):

1. At the start of this chapter we find Jacob on the run. Why?
2. Place yourself in Abraham's shoes. How must he have been feeling when God commanded him to sacrifice his son? What are some of the thoughts and emotions that you would be having?
3. What did Abraham do once he received the command from the Lord? (vv. 3-6)
4. How does Isaac respond to the situation? Do you think he has faith in God or his Father? (note: that Isaac was strong enough to carry the wood for the sacrifice up the mountain so he was likely strong enough to fight off his father. Yet he chose to stay. Why?)
5. *What does God accomplish by this unusual test? **
6. *Discuss why God tests his children - focusing on Abraham's testing as well as passages such as James 1:2-4 and 1 Peter 1:6-7.*
7. *Reflect on Hebrews 11:17-19 in light of this passage. What does it say about Abraham's faith in God. What does it say about the character of the God that Abraham served.*
8. How does God respond to Abraham's faith and obedience?



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9. Our theme has been “Blessed to be a blessing” - How does this passage address our theme of God blessing his people in order that they would be a blessing to the world? (focusing on vv. 15-18)
10. How do faith and obedience play into this?
11. *There are many parallels between Abraham’s sacrifice of Isaac and God’s sacrifice of his own Son. What are some of these parallels? Why do you suppose they are within this passage?*

Response (selection to choose from):

- How much of your faith is based on hopes and expectations of what God can give us instead of focused simply on God himself. (ie. hopes for a relationship, lack of financial stability, etc.) Pray into what arises as a stumbling block in our relationship with God. As well, there may be people who are in a time of testing right now. Pray for them and support each other as God uses these times to bring us into deeper maturity and intimacy with him.
- Are you able to believe God and his promises as Abraham was?
- What are promises that God has given us that we are able to believe and hold on to?
- What are some trials/areas in your life that you need to speak God’s promises into?

*** Additional Commentary:**

Perhaps, “the test seeks to discover the motivating factor in our relationship with God: Is it God himself, or is it the benefits he provides and the hope he offers? ... [T]he test asks whether Abraham’s trust is really in God and not simply in what God has promised.”

(John Walton, NIV Application Commentary)