

GOD HIMSELF WILL PROVIDE

MAIN POINT.

The testing of our faith will require **sacrifice.**



CHRIST CONNECTION

Abraham believed the Lord would be faithful to His covenant, so he reasoned that God would even raise his son from the dead, if necessary (**Heb. 11:17-19**). Abraham's faith was a resurrection faith. We share in his covenant and faith when we believe in Jesus, God's one and only Son, who was crucified and raised from the dead for our salvation.





SACRIFICE

— A TEST OF FAITH

This week, we're covering the passages and main points below. But we encourage you to read all of the content on the timeline as you prepare to teach.

Genesis 21

Genesis 22

OUR FAITH WILL BE TESTED

GENESIS 22:1-2

1 After these things God tested Abraham and said to him, "Abraham!" And he said, "Here I am." 2 He said, "Take your son, your only son Isaac, whom you love, and go to the land of Moriah, and offer him there as a burnt offering on one of the mountains of which I shall tell you."

OBEDIENCE REQUIRES SACRIFICE

GENESIS 22:3-17

3 So Abraham rose early in the morning, saddled his donkey, and took two of his young men with him, and his son Isaac. And he cut the wood for the burnt offering and arose and went to the place of which God had told him. 4 On the third day Abraham lifted up his eyes and saw the place from afar. 5 Then Abraham said to his young men, "Stay here with the donkey; I and the boy will go over there and worship and come again to you." 6 And Abraham took the wood of the burnt offering and laid it on Isaac his son. And he took in his hand the fire and the knife. So they went both of them together. 7 And Isaac said to his father Abraham, "My father!" And he said, "Here I am, my son." He said, "Behold, the fire and the wood, but where is the lamb for a burnt offering?" 8 Abraham said, "God will provide for himself the lamb for a burnt offering, my son." So they went both of them together. 9 When they came to the place of which God had told him, Abraham built the altar there and laid the wood in order and bound Isaac his son and laid him on the altar, on top of the wood. 10 Then Abraham reached out his hand and took the knife to slaughter his son. 11 But the angel of the LORD called to him from heaven and said, "Abraham, Abraham!" And he said, "Here I am." 12 He said, "Do not lay your hand on the boy or do anything to him, for now I know that you fear God, seeing you have not withheld your son, your only son, from me." 13 And Abraham lifted up his eyes and looked, and behold, behind him was a ram, caught in a thicket by his horns. And Abraham went and took the ram and offered it up as a burnt offering instead of his son. 14 So Abraham called the name of that place, "The LORD will provide"; as it is said to this day, "On the mount of the LORD it shall be provided." 15 And the angel of the LORD called to Abraham a second time from heaven 16 and said, "By myself I have sworn, declares the LORD, because you have done this and have not withheld your son, your only son, 17 I will surely bless you, and I will surely multiply your offspring as the stars of heaven and as the sand that is on the seashore. And your offspring shall possess the gate of his enemies."

BEFORE YOU TEACH

MAIN POINT.

Leaders: Thank you for preparing to teach God's Word. As you do, may He teach you new and wonderful truths (Ps. 119:18).

The testing of our faith will require **sacrifice**.

BIBLICAL COMMENTARY

OUR FAITH WILL BE TESTED

GENESIS 22:1-2

"Enough time has elapsed for Isaac to have grown from a toddler (two to three years old) in 21:8 to an adolescent in chap. 22. Isaac is old enough to endure a climb bearing wood (v. 6) but is still considered a 'boy' (vv. 5,12). Although the author does not concern himself with the extent of Isaac's knowledge and compliance, it is apparent that Isaac must have dutifully conceded to his aged father's wishes."⁹

OBEDIENCE REQUIRES SACRIFICE

GENESIS 22:3

"[Early in the morning] indicates the patriarch's prompt obedience as in the prior divine instruction regarding Ishmael (21:14). The narration's 'took' and 'place God had told him about' (v. 3) correspond to the divine instructions of v. 2, evidencing Abraham's full submission. Unlike his earlier rebuttals to God, substituting Eliezer (15:2) or Ishmael (17:18; 21:11), Abraham is utterly mute; his only words are absolute compliance and a confidence in the Lord's final provision. His testimony to the servants, 'We will come back to you' (v. 5), conveys his reliance on God to make good on his prior promise."¹⁰

GENESIS 22:14

"Although Abraham showed no awareness of it at the time (1 Pet. 1:19–20), God surely had in mind what he would one day carry out through his beloved Son, Jesus Christ. The world would one day better understand the heart of God when they saw him allowing the sacrifice of his own Son. What God would not let an earthly father do, he would do himself."¹¹



CONTEXT

Genesis 22 is difficult when viewed through our Western lens. But we must understand that Abraham lived in a pagan culture of the Ancient Eastern world, where the gods demanded child sacrifice for good crops, good weather, and blessings. But this test would prove that **Yahweh was unlike all other gods** because God would stop Abraham's hand at the last moment, revealing that He Himself would provide the sacrifice. **This test wasn't cruel but rather showed Abraham God's unwavering faithfulness.** A test of faith always reveals more of God's character. So, God never intended for Abraham to kill Isaac. He strictly forbids this practice throughout the Old Testament. It's also important to note that many scholars believe Isaac was in his teens or early twenties. This means Isaac followed his father's faith and complied with his request: he carried the heavy wood up the mountain and willingly laid down on the altar and allowed his father—who was well over one hundred years old—to bind him.¹²

THEOLOGY CONNECTION

faith

Biblical faith is the resting, or **trusting**, in Christ alone for salvation (John 3:16-21). More than being simply a mental agreement of historical facts, genuine faith begins with recognition and confession of the truth of the gospel (1 John 4:13-16), followed by receiving of Christ as Lord and Savior of one's life (John 1:10-13). **Biblical faith is not blind faith**, for it rests on the historical life, death, and resurrection of Christ.

LEADER'S PRAYER

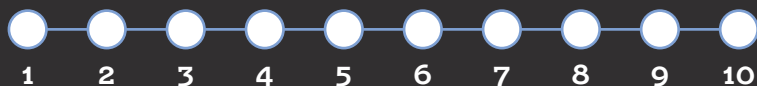
GOD, HELP US TO TRUST YOU SO DEEPLY
THAT WE'LL WILLINGLY SACRIFICE ALL
THINGS TO YOU.



KICK STARTER

RATE IT!

On a scale of 1-10, how willing are you to give up your phone for a week? Explain.



These optional activities are designed to help your students interact. You'll find a Discussion Activity and a Cultural Connection, which touches on a relevant topic in today's teen culture. Each group is different, so adapt these activities to fit your group's needs. The goal is for students to connect more to the lesson as they connect to the topic and to one another.

1

GIVE IT AWAY

SUPPLIES LIST: NONE

Ask the following questions, allowing time for students to share responses.

- **WHAT IS THE MOST PRECIOUS ITEM YOU OWN?**
- **WHAT IS SOMETHING YOU FEEL LIKE YOU JUST COULDN'T LIVE WITHOUT?**
- **HOW WOULD YOU FEEL IF YOU HAD TO GIVE UP THESE THINGS?**

Maybe your most precious item is a pair of the latest Jordans. Maybe it's your car. Or maybe it's something sentimental passed down from a relative. For a lot of us, it may even be our phones. Could we live without these things? Would we be willing to give them up? Many of us would say no. While these might be silly examples, sometimes God does ask us to make sacrifices. Today, we'll read about Abraham's willingness to sacrifice what was most precious to him—his beloved son.

2

CULTURAL CONNECTION

Do you have common sense? Do you know someone who doesn't? What even is it? Well, common sense is sort of like having a good read on a situation. Maybe it's even having a gut instinct and just knowing what to do in certain circumstances. In other words, it's having good judgment. Do common sense and faith go hand in hand? Sometimes, but not always. This is where we tend to make mistakes in our decisions. A situation comes into our lives that just doesn't make sense: our parents divorce; we lose a loved one; we grow up in difficult circumstances. In these situations, common sense may tell us God isn't with us. Logic may even lead us to make a decision that makes sense according to all worldly standards, but faith sometimes doesn't make sense. Sometimes God asks us to do something that actually makes zero sense or seems impossible. And that is when we must have faith: belief that God is good and trustworthy against all odds.

DISCUSSION

MAIN POINT.

The testing of our faith will require **sacrifice**.

OUR FAITH WILL BE TESTED

READ GENESIS 22:1-2

WHEN HAVE YOU HAD TO DO SOMETHING YOU DIDN'T WANT TO DO? HOW DID IT FEEL?

You might have a responsibility to do something you really don't enjoy. Chores, working when your friends don't have to, or giving up your free weekend can all feel like a burden or a sacrifice. **Making a sacrifice is difficult; it requires us to lay down our own desires.** Our culture feeds us the idea that we should live for ourselves—that we shouldn't do anything we don't feel like doing. But sometimes sacrifice is the better way.

WHY IS IT IMPORTANT FOR US TO KNOW THIS WAS A TEST?

Knowing this was a test frames how we understand this gut-wrenching event. It helps us see that God never intended for Isaac to die at the hands of his father. **It helps us see that this command was more about revealing what was in Abraham's heart—his complete faith in God to do what He said He would do.** If we misunderstand this event, then we could walk away with a false idea that God is cruel or inhumane, and both of these ideas are untrue.

WHY DOES GOD TEST OUR FAITH? WHEN HAS YOUR FAITH BEEN TESTED?

Our faith will be tested so that we can grow spiritually and learn how to endure (James 1:2-4). Peter reminds us that faith, like gold, is refined in fire (1 Pet. 1:7). **All of the impurities, our imperfections, rise to the surface, purifying our hearts in a way that can't happen without trials. Testing produces a genuine faith in us that won't be rattled by our circumstances.** **How? By showing us that God is faithful.** We get to see that when we hinge our lives on God's promises and trust in Him for salvation, He won't fail us. The testing can feel cruel. It can feel like God is demanding too much of us, but this is only because we're viewing the situation through a limited, worldly lens. When we view sacrifice with a kingdom perspective, our eyes open to the bigger purpose: God is refining us and making us more dependent on Him. When God tests our faith, we can trust Him. He is good, and His purpose is always for our good.

OBEDIENCE REQUIRES SACRIFICE

READ GENESIS 22:3-17a



WHAT ENABLED ABRAHAM TO OBEY GOD? WHAT DO VERSES 5-8 REVEAL THAT ABRAHAM BELIEVED?

Abraham rose early the next morning to leave for the journey to sacrifice his son. His obedience was immediate. He didn't linger; he didn't discuss it with friends; he didn't sit and doubt what God said. He went. **These verses show us that Abraham had complete faith God would fulfill His promise for Isaac.** Abraham could obey because he trusted God would provide the sacrifice; he reasoned God could raise Isaac from death if that's what it took (Heb. 11:19).

WHAT DOES THIS STORY TEACH US ABOUT SURRENDERING EVEN WHEN IT'S PAINFUL?

Surrender is difficult because we fear that God won't come through if we give Him the thing that means so much to us. **Our hesitancy to sacrifice is an unbelief in God to be enough for us and that He is better than anything else.** But the Lord will provide. He wants all of you, even when it's difficult. Only when you give Him all of your heart and life will you finally see that He is all you need.



HOW DOES THIS STORY FORESHADOW WHAT GOD WOULD LATER DO FOR US WITH HIS OWN SON?

Share context about Isaac's age. Isaac is a type of Christ-figure. Abraham was willing to give his son; the son willingly carried the wood and laid himself on the altar. **What God stopped from happening on that day is what He allowed on the cross.** God the Father permitted His Son, Jesus, to die in our place as our sacrifice. And Jesus submitted to His Father's will and surrendered His own life so that we could have eternal life. God did indeed provide a Lamb for us, and in this, Mount Moriah foreshadowed Calvary.

WRAP-UP

HOW IS IT LOVING OF GOD TO TEST OUR FAITH? HOW CAN YOU GROW CLOSER TO HIM IN THE TESTING?

*Share context about Abraham's pagan culture and what this test taught him about God. God tests us because He loves us and wants to reveal more of His character to us. He wants our faith to be authentic, not robotic. He doesn't want you to simply have the faith that was handed down to you by your parents. Why? Because when your faith is tested, it's proven to be your own. And when you possess your own deep faith in God, then you'll be equipped to stand against all kinds of storms that may come into your life. **God tests you because He wants you to be able to stand. He wants you to be able to face sickness, death, heartache, persecution, and loss with full assurance of His faithfulness.** And that type of trust is built in the testing. Trials help to reinforce God's character and remind us that He alone is constant. He will test you to strengthen your faith in Him.*