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## OPENING COMMENT

The temptation in our passage today is to get hung up on the command of God to sacrifice Isaac. We can needlessly spend time considering how God could possibly ask Abraham to do something he clearly forbids in other portions of scripture and miss the larger picture. It is important to understand that God does not ask his people to sin on his behalf, and no sin occurs in this passage. Instead, God is rooting out the genuineness of Abraham's faith. The primary question Abraham must face is whether his faith is in the God who promises, or the promises themselves. God's test looks to root out Abraham's ultimate allegiance.

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## READ THE TEXT: Genesis 22

After these things God tested Abraham and said to him, "Abraham!" And he said, "Here I am." <sup>2</sup> 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." <sup>3</sup> 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. <sup>4</sup> On the third day Abraham lifted up his eyes and saw the place from afar. <sup>5</sup> 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." <sup>6</sup> 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. <sup>7</sup> 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?" <sup>8</sup> Abraham said, "God will provide for himself the lamb for a burnt offering, my son." So they went both of them together.



<sup>9</sup>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. <sup>10</sup>Then Abraham reached out his hand and took the knife to slaughter his son. <sup>11</sup>But the angel of the Lord called to him from heaven and said, "Abraham, Abraham!" And he said, "Here I am." <sup>12</sup>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." <sup>13</sup>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. <sup>14</sup>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."

<sup>15</sup>And the angel of the Lord called to Abraham a second time from heaven <sup>16</sup>and said, "By myself I have sworn, declares the Lord, because you have done this and have not withheld your son, your only son, <sup>17</sup>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, <sup>18</sup>and in your offspring shall all the nations of the earth be blessed, because you have obeyed my voice." <sup>19</sup>So Abraham returned to his young men, and they arose and went together to Beersheba. And Abraham lived at Beersheba.

<sup>20</sup>Now after these things it was told to Abraham, "Behold, Milcah also has borne children to your brother Nahor: <sup>21</sup>Uz his firstborn, Buz his brother, Kemuel the father of Aram, <sup>22</sup>Chesed, Hazo, Pildash, Jidlaph, and Bethuel." <sup>23</sup>(Bethuel fathered Rebekah.) These eight Milcah bore to Nahor, Abraham's brother. <sup>24</sup>Moreover, his concubine, whose name was Reumah, bore Tebah, Gaham, Tahash, and Maacah.

## UNDERSTANDING THE TEXT

1. What was Abraham's response to God's audacious command? (vs. 3)
2. How does Abraham think this journey will end? (vs. 8)
3. How does the pacing change from vs. 1-8 to vs. 9-10?
4. In verse 15-18 God indicates what has secured the promise for Abraham and his descendants. What is it that accomplished it?
5. What does the genealogy tell us about the working of God?
6. How does the genealogy confirm the omniscience of God? How then might it help us understand the testing?



## APPLYING THE TEXT

1. Abraham displayed the correlation between faith in God and obedience to God's command. Where are you dragging your feet in being obedient to God's call in your life? Where are you currently finding success in obedience?
2. What habits should we put in place to help us when we do not know where the road ahead leads, but are called to obedience anyway?
3. Reflect on God's past provision in your life and consider where He is currently providing for you. How ought this aid in our future obedience?
4. Although the Abraham and Isaac story is unique (God does not ask us to actually sacrifice our children), what areas in life are you holding too tightly to? In other words, where do you find your anxious thoughts fixating throughout the day?
5. How might we begin to take steps of faith and loosen our grip on those areas we hold sinfully tightly to?

## BIBLICAL THREAD

1. Genesis 12 – God's call echo's Gods command found in Genesis 22.
2. Exodus 13:11-16 – consecration of the oldest to God.
3. Deuteronomy 13:1-3 – a clear picture of God's testing the Israelites.
4. Philippians 2:1-11 – Christ's voluntary participation in the plan of God.
5. Hebrews 11:17-19 – Abrahams faith understood more clearly.
6. James 1:2-4 – trial/testing used to refine those who follow Christ.
7. James 2:18-23 – the correlation of faith and works from Abrahams experience.
8. Revelation 5 – Christ exalted as the slain lamb who took our place and is worthy to control the outworking of history.

## CONCLUSION

In a miraculous way God reveals his character through the testing of Abraham, which should be our experience as well. As we wrestle through the trials and challenges of life we will be confronted with the same question Abraham faced, is my trust in God or something other? As we wrestle through that reality we will discover, as Abraham did, the richness found in the person of God and his plan of salvation. God will provide a way, He will strengthen our faith, he will save us from ourselves, and he will sanctify use into the image of His Son.



## SHARE & PRAY

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### LIFE GROUP VISION:

The goal to meeting together around the word of God is three fold. First, we want to more clearly understand what God is saying to us through his Word and apply it to our own hearts and minds. Secondly, we want to build a loving community with each other to disciple one another toward maturity in Christ. Thirdly, we desire each of us, as ambassadors of Christ, to look outwards to our community and ask how we can bring the truth of the gospel to bear on those whom God has placed in our lives.

