

**Abraham & Isaac: “When God Asks Too Much”**  
Genesis 22  
**Small Group Guide**

**Opening Icebreaker**

- *Do you remember the first time that you felt that there was someone or something you just couldn't live without? Please explain.*

**Optional Background Reading:**

We're in the middle of a series called “The Big Story.” Today we're looking at this event in Abraham's life when God asked him to literally give up the most precious thing in his life, his son Isaac. It's one of the most gripping stories in ancient literature, and one of the most famous stories in the Old Testament, revered by Christians, Jews, and Muslims. And if we look at it in the context of the Big Story of the Bible, we'll see that it offers amazing insight into how we handle what we most treasure.

**Take turns READING Genesis 22:1-18.<sup>1</sup>**

1. In verses 1-3, what do you discover about Abraham's character even before his test took place?
2. On a scale from 1-10, with 10 being high/good, how responsive and submissive do you think you would be if God were to address you?
3. God's test was to ask Abraham to sacrifice Abraham's only son Isaac. Based on our study last week, what is significant about Isaac that might make this sacrifice doubly hard?<sup>2</sup>
4. You may be experiencing tests, troubles, defeats, or wounds right now. What do we do when God's demands seem to conflict with his promises? Can you think of an example of how you have experienced this?
5. What is the reason for God's test of Abraham? (Hint: consider the words of the angel in vv. 15-18).
6. Pastor Josh's youth leader said to him, “God will not allow you to have anything in your life that is more precious to your heart than he is.”
  - a. Before answering the next question, what are some signs that something is competing with God as your greatest treasure or first priority? Discuss.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> During the week, we encourage you to read all of Genesis 22-27.

<sup>2</sup> A) God's demand conflicted with God's promise. Isaac was the promised child through whom Abraham and Sarah would be blessed and by whom they would bless all the nations of the world. B) Abraham and Sarah were childless and had to wait 25 years until they were 100 and 90 before this promised child came true. They weren't likely to have another child.

<sup>3</sup> Some signs might be time spent on it, emotional reaction to possibly losing it, degree to which we talk about it and take pride in it, degree to which it becomes our identity, and reality that it interferes with higher priorities.

- b. Is there anything in your life right now that might be competing with God for first place in your heart?
7. What positive hint does God give Abraham when he says, “Take your son... to the region of **Moriah**...”? (v. 2).
8. Is there a relationship between a readiness to listen to God, and being able to perceive His hints of provision in your tests? Discuss.
9. What evidences do you find of Abraham’s faith before the final test is required (before Abraham raised the knife to his son)?
10. Based on last week’s study of “God’s Promise” (Gen 12 and 15), what might have helped Abraham to have this radical faith?
11. Let’s practice remembering: What one significant way God has come through for you in a difficult situation in your past? Describe.
12. Once Abraham passed the test, how was he affirmed? Why is this important?
13. God can seem cruel in testing our false priorities out of us. However, what if God knew that we would only be truly happy if he were first in our hearts? How could we live out this reality?
14. Look again at this passage and find all the ways it foreshadows Jesus’ death and resurrection for our sins. Pastor Josh stated, “It was only in the cross that the conflict could be resolved, between the God of promise and the God of the demand. Only here can we see how God could be both holy and gracious.” What is your emotional response to hearing this?
15. In the context of the Big Story, is it legitimate to imagine Abraham—or ourselves—standing at the cross of Jesus, and saying the words of Genesis 22:12... “Now I know!?” In other words, how does this story help us to understand what God has done for us in Christ?
  - a. How does it change our emotional attachment to our other “treasures?”
  - b. Josh said that when we see God treasuring us enough to sacrifice his only son for us, it enables us to treasure him in a way that we are now able to hold loosely the things which we treasure. Josh also said that when we offer these things up, treasuring God above all, God sometimes gives us back those things in a healthier way than we ever had them before? What does this mean, and how does it work out in life?
16. Prayer: Among our usual prayer requests, let’s pray that we would identify what competes with God for priority in our hearts, and that we would relinquish it before God has to “test” it out of us!