



ABRAHAM

A MAN OF FAITH

a six-week study in Genesis 11-25

“Father Abraham had many sons; many sons had Father Abraham...” Sunday school children today sing about the biblical character Abraham to whom God promised “descendants as numerous as the stars in the sky and as the sand on the seashore” (Genesis 22:17). Yet God’s promise of many sons was a long time in coming. Abraham was one hundred years old when his wife Sarah gave birth to the promised son, Isaac. His life leading up to this point and then following Isaac’s birth can be characterized as a walk of faith.

In this study we will look at six snapshots from the life of Abraham: his call by God (Genesis 12), God’s covenant with him (Genesis 15), the covenant of circumcision (Genesis 17), his encounter with Abimelech (Genesis 20), the birth of Isaac (Genesis 18 and 21), and his testing (Genesis 22). Because we won’t be able to cover his entire story, it will be helpful to review a general chronology of his life as recorded in Genesis 11 – 25. Abram was born in Ur of the Chaldeans in the twenty-second century BC. He married Sarai but they had no children. They set out for Canaan with his father Terah but they stopped in Haran and settled there.

Genesis 12

After Terah’s death, the Lord called Abram to leave Haran and go to the land God would show him. Abram set out with his wife, his nephew Lot, and all his possessions for the land of Canaan. A severe famine swept the land so Abram went down to Egypt. In Egypt, Abram lied to the Egyptians that Sarai was his sister. Pharaoh took her into his palace but the Lord inflicted diseases on Pharaoh and his household until he returned Sarai to Abram and they returned to the Negev and then to Bethel.

Genesis 13–14

Abram had become very wealthy and soon the land could not support both Abram and Lot with all their flocks and herds and tents. The two decided to part company: Lot chose the plain of the Jordan to the east near Sodom so Abram chose the land of Canaan and went to live in Hebron. After they had separated, Lot and his possessions were carried off by kings battling against Sodom and Gomorrah. Abram rescued Lot and

his possessions and defeated the warring kings but he refused to keep the goods offered to him by the king of Sodom.

Genesis 15–16

Then God made a covenant with Abram promising offspring and Abram believed God. Time passed, however, and Sarai remained childless so she gave her maidservant Hagar to Abram and Hagar conceived. Sarai then mistreated Hagar so Hagar ran away but was brought back by the command of an angel of the Lord. She bore Abram a son and named him Ishmael.

Genesis 17

When Abram was ninety-nine years old God gave him the new name Abraham, meaning “father of many,” and gave him the covenant of circumcision as a mark of the everlasting covenant between God and His people. God also gave Sarai a new name, Sarah, and promised that Abraham would have a son by her. Abraham was circumcised along with every male in his household.

Genesis 18–19

Three visitors appeared to Abraham and promised him that a year later his wife Sarah would have a son at age ninety; she laughed. Then the Lord revealed to Abraham his plan to destroy the wicked cities of Sodom and Gomorrah. Abraham pleaded with God to spare the cities if fifty righteous people were found in Sodom. He eventually dropped the count to ten people but because not even ten were found righteous there, God destroyed the cities and only Lot and his daughters made it out alive. Lot’s daughters gave birth to sons by their father; these sons later became the fathers of the Moabites and the Ammonites.

Genesis 20–21:21

Abraham moved on into Gerar where he again lied about Sarah being his sister, this time to the king, Abimelech, who took her for his harem. God revealed the truth to Abimelech in a dream and Abimelech rebuked Abraham for his behavior, returning Sarah to him. Soon Sarah conceived and gave birth to Isaac. Shortly thereafter Abraham sent Hagar and Ishmael away. The Lord provided for Hagar and Ishmael in the desert where they were still living when Hagar got a wife for Ishmael from Egypt.

Genesis 21:22 –22:19

During this time, Abraham made a treaty with Abimelech at Beersheba and stayed in the land of the Philistines for a long time. When Isaac was a boy, God called Abraham to sacrifice his only son on Mount Moriah. Abraham responded in obedience and, just before Abraham was going to kill Isaac, God provided a ram in the thicket to be sacrificed instead. Abraham returned to Beersheba.

Genesis 23–25:10

Sarah died in Hebron when she was one hundred and twenty-seven years old; Abraham buried her in a cave there. Being old himself, Abraham sent one of his servants to find a wife for Isaac from his own country and not from among the Canaanites. The servant returned with Rebekah who married Isaac. Abraham took another wife, Keturah, who bore him more sons, but he left everything he owned to Isaac. He was one hundred and seventy-five when he died; his sons Isaac and Ishmael buried him in the same cave with his wife Sarah.

This study will expand our knowledge of who God is and how He relates with His people. It will increase our understanding of what it means to walk by faith. In the process, may we desire to grow closer to the Lord in love and worship and to live lives of faith that reflect our dependence on God.

WEEK ONE ~ The Call of Abram: Genesis 12:1-9

¹ *The Lord had said to Abram, “Leave your country, your people and your father’s household and go to the land I will show you.*

² *“I will make you into a great nation
and I will bless you;
I will make your name great,
and you will be a blessing.*

³ *I will bless those who bless you,
and whoever curses you I will curse;
and all peoples on earth
will be blessed through you.”*

⁴ *So Abram left, as the Lord had told him; and Lot went with him. Abram was seventy-five years old when he set out from Haran. ⁵ He took his wife Sarai, his nephew Lot, all the possessions they had accumulated and the people they had acquired in Haran, and they set out for the land of Canaan, and they arrived there.*

⁶ *Abram traveled through the land as far as the site of the great tree of Moreh at Shechem. At that time the Canaanites were in the land. ⁷ The Lord appeared to Abram and said, “To your offspring I will give this land.” So he built an altar there to the Lord, who had appeared to him.*

⁸ *From there he went on toward the hills east of Bethel and pitched his tent, with Bethel on the west and Ai on the east. There he built an altar to the Lord and called on the name of the Lord. ⁹ Then Abram set out and continued toward the Negev.*

1. What four things did God call Abram to do (v. 1)?

2. What seven things did the Lord promise Abram (vv. 2-3)?

3. The first and seventh elements in the set are the most significant. What is so significant about the last part of God’s promise? Galatians 3:6-9 provides insight into the importance of these promises:
“Consider Abraham: “He believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness.” ⁷Understand, then, that those who believe are children of Abraham. ⁸The Scripture foresaw that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, and announced the gospel in advance to Abraham: “All nations will be blessed through you.” ⁹So those who have faith are blessed along with Abraham, the man of faith.

4. What does v. 4 tell us about Abram’s faith in God?

5. How does the description in v. 5 add to our understanding of Abram's faith? Have you ever faced a similar step of faith that affected much more than just yourself?

6. What does Abram do twice in vv. 7-8? Why is this noteworthy?

7. Abram "called on the name of the Lord" (v. 8). This Hebrew verb for "called on" can also mean "to proclaim" or "to preach." How does this rendering improve our understanding of the verse? How does it relate back to God's command to be a blessing (v. 2)?

8. In what ways can you build an altar and call on the Lord in your own life? In what ways can you be a blessing?

9. Read Hebrews 11:8-10.

⁸By faith Abraham, when called to go to a place he would later receive as his inheritance, obeyed and went, even though he did not know where he was going. ⁹By faith he made his home in the promised land like a stranger in a foreign country; he lived in tents, as did Isaac and Jacob, who were heirs with him of the same promise. ¹⁰For he was looking forward to the city with foundations, whose architect and builder is God.
What did Abram do by faith? Why did he act by faith (v. 10)?

10. Think of a specific time in your life when you acted in faith. What was the situation and the result? What did you learn about yourself and the Lord through the experience?

11. In what ways might the Lord be asking you to take a step of faith right now? How well have you been responding in faith and obedience?

WEEK TWO ~ God's Covenant with Abram: Genesis 15:1-21

¹ After this, the word of the Lord came to Abram in a vision:

“Do not be afraid, Abram.

I am your shield,

your very great reward.”

² But Abram said, “O Sovereign Lord, what can you give me since I remain childless and the one who will inherit my estate is Eliezer of Damascus?” ³ And Abram said, “You have given me no children; so a servant in my household will be my heir.”

⁴ Then the word of the Lord came to him: “This man will not be your heir, but a son coming from your own body will be your heir.” ⁵ He took him outside and said, “Look up at the heavens and count the stars—if indeed you can count them.” Then he said to him, “So shall your offspring be.”

⁶ Abram believed the Lord, and he credited it to him as righteousness.

⁷ He also said to him, “I am the Lord, who brought you out of Ur of the Chaldeans to give you this land to take possession of it.”

⁸ But Abram said, “O Sovereign Lord, how can I know that I will gain possession of it?”

⁹ So the Lord said to him, “Bring me a heifer, a goat and a ram, each three years old, along with a dove and a young pigeon.”

¹⁰ Abram brought all these to him, cut them in two and arranged the halves opposite each other; the birds, however, he did not cut in half. ¹¹ Then birds of prey came down on the carcasses, but Abram drove them away.

¹² As the sun was setting, Abram fell into a deep sleep, and a thick and dreadful darkness came over him. ¹³ Then the Lord said to him, “Know for certain that your descendants will be strangers in a country not their own, and they will be enslaved and mistreated four hundred years. ¹⁴ But I will punish the nation they serve as slaves, and afterward they will come out with great possessions. ¹⁵ You, however, will go to your fathers in peace and be buried at a good old age. ¹⁶ In the fourth generation your descendants will come back here, for the sin of the Amorites has not yet reached its full measure.”

¹⁷ When the sun had set and darkness had fallen, a smoking firepot with a blazing torch appeared and passed between the pieces. ¹⁸ On that day the Lord made a covenant with Abram and said, “To your descendants I give this land, from the river of Egypt to the great river, the Euphrates— ¹⁹ the land of the Kenites, Kenizzites, Kadmonites, ²⁰ Hittites, Perizzites, Rephaites, ²¹ Amorites, Canaanites, Girgashites and Jebusites.”

12. How would you paraphrase v. 1?

13. What attitude do you detect in Abram's response to God (v. 2-3)? How does it reflect a natural human response?

14. Why did the Lord consider Abram righteous (v. 6)? Read John 6:28-29, 20:31.

²⁸*Then they asked him, "What must we do to do the works God requires?"*

²⁹*Jesus answered, "The work of God is this: to believe in the one he has sent."*

³¹*But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.*

15. How does the Lord describe Himself in v. 7? What does this statement remind Abram about God's nature?

16. What are the two questions Abram asks of the Lord (vv. 2, 8)? What might be the general meanings behind these questions? When have you asked the Lord similar questions?

17. Consider vv. 12 and 17. How do these setting descriptions affect our understanding of God?

18. In an agreement between equals both parties would pass between the slain animals. With this in mind what is the significance of v. 17?

19. Read Genesis 13:14-17.

¹⁴ *The Lord said to Abram after Lot had parted from him, "Lift up your eyes from where you are and look north and south, east and west. ¹⁵ All the land that you see I will give to you and your offspring forever. ¹⁶ I will make your offspring like the dust of the earth, so that if anyone could count the dust, then your offspring could be counted. ¹⁷ Go, walk through the length and breadth of the land, for I am giving it to you."*

The Lord formalizes this promise with a covenant (15:18). What makes a covenant different from a promise?

WEEK THREE ~ The Covenant of Circumcision: Genesis 17:1-17

¹ When Abram was ninety-nine years old, the Lord appeared to him and said, “I am God Almighty; walk before me and be blameless. ² I will confirm my covenant between me and you and will greatly increase your numbers.”

³ Abram fell facedown, and God said to him, ⁴ “As for me, this is my covenant with you: You will be the father of many nations. ⁵ No longer will you be called Abram; your name will be Abraham, for I have made you a father of many nations. ⁶ I will make you very fruitful; I will make nations of you, and kings will come from you. ⁷ I will establish my covenant as an everlasting covenant between me and you and your descendants after you for the generations to come, to be your God and the God of your descendants after you. ⁸ The whole land of Canaan, where you are now an alien, I will give as an everlasting possession to you and your descendants after you; and I will be their God.”

⁹ Then God said to Abraham, “As for you, you must keep my covenant, you and your descendants after you for the generations to come. ¹⁰ This is my covenant with you and your descendants after you, the covenant you are to keep: Every male among you shall be circumcised. ¹¹ You are to undergo circumcision, and it will be the sign of the covenant between me and you. ¹² For the generations to come every male among you who is eight days old must be circumcised, including those born in your household or bought with money from a foreigner—those who are not your offspring. ¹³ Whether born in your household or bought with your money, they must be circumcised. My covenant in your flesh is to be an everlasting covenant. ¹⁴ Any uncircumcised male, who has not been circumcised in the flesh, will be cut off from his people; he has broken my covenant.”

¹⁵ God also said to Abraham, “As for Sarai your wife, you are no longer to call her Sarai; her name will be Sarah. ¹⁶ I will bless her and will surely give you a son by her. I will bless her so that she will be the mother of nations; kings of peoples will come from her.”

¹⁷ Abraham fell facedown; he laughed and said to himself, “Will a son be born to a man a hundred years old? Will Sarah bear a child at the age of ninety?”

20. Look back to Abram’s response to God’s call in 12:4. What is significant about the detail in v. 1?

21. Read Deuteronomy 18:9-13.

⁹ When you enter the land the Lord your God is giving you, do not learn to imitate the detestable ways of the nations there. ¹⁰ Let no one be found among you who sacrifices his son or daughter in the fire, who practices divination or sorcery, interprets omens, engages in witchcraft, ¹¹ or casts spells, or who is a medium or spiritist or who consults the dead. ¹² Anyone who does these things is detestable to the Lord, and because of these detestable practices the Lord your God will drive out those nations before you. ¹³ You must be blameless before the Lord your God.

What was so important about the Israelites walking blamelessly?

22. What parallel can we draw to our own lives today, specifically in the workplace?

23. What evidence of God's grace do we see in v. 2? How has God offered confirmation in your own life?

24. How did Abram respond to God in v. 3? What does this say about his relationship with God?

25. Reread vv. 6-8. What does God say He will do? What does this remind us about who God is and what He does?

26. Read Romans 4:1-13.

¹What then shall we say that Abraham, our forefather, discovered in this matter? ²If, in fact, Abraham was justified by works, he had something to boast about—but not before God. ³What does the Scripture say? "Abraham believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness."

⁴Now when a man works, his wages are not credited to him as a gift, but as an obligation. ⁵However, to the man who does not work but trusts God who justifies the wicked, his faith is credited as righteousness. ⁶David says the same thing when he speaks of the blessedness of the man to whom God credits righteousness apart from works:

*⁷"Blessed are they
whose transgressions are forgiven,
whose sins are covered.*

*⁸Blessed is the man
whose sin the Lord will never count against him."*

⁹Is this blessedness only for the circumcised, or also for the uncircumcised? We have been saying that Abraham's faith was credited to him as righteousness. ¹⁰Under what circumstances was it credited? Was it after he was circumcised, or before? It was not after, but before! ¹¹And he received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness that he had by faith while he was still uncircumcised. So then, he is the father of all who believe but have not been circumcised, in order that righteousness might be credited to them. ¹²And he is also the father of the circumcised who not only are circumcised but who also walk in the footsteps of the faith that our father Abraham had before he was circumcised.

¹³It was not through law that Abraham and his offspring received the promise that he would be heir of the world, but through the righteousness that comes by faith.

How are faith, righteousness, and the sign of the covenant (circumcision) related? How are Christians today the offspring of Abraham?

27. Abraham fell facedown again (v. 17) when God promised him that Sarah would give birth to a son. Why might he have responded this way? Has anything in your life caused you to "fall facedown" before God either literally or figuratively?

WEEK FOUR ~ Abraham and Abimelech: Genesis 20:1-18

¹ Now Abraham moved on from there into the region of the Negev and lived between Kadesh and Shur. For a while he stayed in Gerar, ² and there Abraham said of his wife Sarah, "She is my sister." Then Abimelech king of Gerar sent for Sarah and took her.

³ But God came to Abimelech in a dream one night and said to him, "You are as good as dead because of the woman you have taken; she is a married woman."

⁴ Now Abimelech had not gone near her, so he said, "Lord, will you destroy an innocent nation? ⁵ Did he not say to me, 'She is my sister,' and didn't she also say, 'He is my brother'? I have done this with a clear conscience and clean hands."

⁶ Then God said to him in the dream, "Yes, I know you did this with a clear conscience, and so I have kept you from sinning against me. That is why I did not let you touch her. ⁷ Now return the man's wife, for he is a prophet, and he will pray for you and you will live. But if you do not return her, you may be sure that you and all yours will die."

⁸ Early the next morning Abimelech summoned all his officials, and when he told them all that had happened, they were very much afraid. ⁹ Then Abimelech called Abraham in and said, "What have you done to us? How have I wronged you that you have brought such great guilt upon me and my kingdom? You have done things to me that should not be done." ¹⁰ And Abimelech asked Abraham, "What was your reason for doing this?"

¹¹ Abraham replied, "I said to myself, 'There is surely no fear of God in this place, and they will kill me because of my wife.' ¹² Besides, she really is my sister, the daughter of my father though not of my mother; and she became my wife. ¹³ And when God had me wander from my father's household, I said to her, 'This is how you can show your love to me: Everywhere we go, say of me, "He is my brother." ' "

¹⁴ Then Abimelech brought sheep and cattle and male and female slaves and gave them to Abraham, and he returned Sarah his wife to him. ¹⁵ And Abimelech said, "My land is before you; live wherever you like."

¹⁶ To Sarah he said, "I am giving your brother a thousand shekels of silver. This is to cover the offense against you before all who are with you; you are completely vindicated."

¹⁷ Then Abraham prayed to God, and God healed Abimelech, his wife and his slave girls so they could have children again, ¹⁸ for the Lord had closed up every womb in Abimelech's household because of Abraham's wife Sarah.

28. Why does Abraham call Sarah his sister (see vv. 2 and 11)? What does this response say about Abraham's faith during this time?

29. Abimelech was probably a pagan king yet God appears to him in a dream (v. 3). What do we learn about God from this verse?

30. How does Abimelech defend himself (vv. 4-5)? How does God extend mercy to him (vv. 6-7)? What does the response of Abimelech and his officials (v. 8) tell us about their understanding of God?

31. In v. 10 Abimelech essentially asked Abraham, “What were you thinking?!” Can you think of a time in your own life when you allowed your own initiative to overshadow your faith and obedience to God? What happened? How did God show grace to you?

32. Abraham’s lack of faith resulted in him lying before Abimelech. Are there ever circumstances in our lives that make it acceptable to lie?

33. What does Abraham do in v. 17? What does his action say about the state of his heart?

34. What is ironic about v. 18? How might it serve as preparation for what is to come?

35. How does this encounter instruct or encourage you in your own walk of faith?

WEEK FIVE ~ The Birth of Isaac: Genesis 18:10-14, 21:1-7

¹⁰ Then the Lord said, "I will surely return to you about this time next year, and Sarah your wife will have a son."

Now Sarah was listening at the entrance to the tent, which was behind him. ¹¹ Abraham and Sarah were already old and well advanced in years, and Sarah was past the age of childbearing. ¹² So Sarah laughed to herself as she thought, "After I am worn out and my master is old, will I now have this pleasure?"

¹³ Then the Lord said to Abraham, "Why did Sarah laugh and say, 'Will I really have a child, now that I am old?' ¹⁴ Is anything too hard for the Lord? I will return to you at the appointed time next year and Sarah will have a son."

¹ Now the Lord was gracious to Sarah as he had said, and the Lord did for Sarah what he had promised. ² Sarah became pregnant and bore a son to Abraham in his old age, at the very time God had promised him. ³ Abraham gave the name Isaac to the son Sarah bore him. ⁴ When his son Isaac was eight days old, Abraham circumcised him, as God commanded him. ⁵ Abraham was a hundred years old when his son Isaac was born to him.

⁶ Sarah said, "God has brought me laughter, and everyone who hears about this will laugh with me." ⁷ And she added, "Who would have said to Abraham that Sarah would nurse children? Yet I have borne him a son in his old age."

36. What was the significance of identifying Sarah as the one who would give birth?

37. Read Genesis 16:1-4.

¹ Now Sarai, Abram's wife, had borne him no children. But she had an Egyptian maidservant named Hagar; ² so she said to Abram, "The Lord has kept me from having children. Go, sleep with my maidservant; perhaps I can build a family through her."

Abram agreed to what Sarai said. ³ So after Abram had been living in Canaan ten years, Sarai his wife took her Egyptian maidservant Hagar and gave her to her husband to be his wife. ⁴ He slept with Hagar, and she conceived.

How might God be responding to the couple's attempt to fulfill God's promise in their own way?

38. What was the reason behind Sarah's laughing?

39. When have you witnessed God overcoming physical limitations to accomplish His purposes?

40. Read Luke 1:26-38.

²⁶*In the sixth month, God sent the angel Gabriel to Nazareth, a town in Galilee, ²⁷to a virgin pledged to be married to a man named Joseph, a descendant of David. The virgin's name was Mary. ²⁸The angel went to her and said, "Greetings, you who are highly favored! The Lord is with you."*

²⁹*Mary was greatly troubled at his words and wondered what kind of greeting this might be. ³⁰But the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, you have found favor with God. ³¹You will be with child and give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus. ³²He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of his father David, ³³and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever; his kingdom will never end."*

³⁴ "How will this be," Mary asked the angel, "since I am a virgin?"

³⁵ *The angel answered, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. So the holy one to be born will be called the Son of God. ³⁶Even Elizabeth your relative is going to have a child in her old age, and she who was said to be barren is in her sixth month. ³⁷For nothing is impossible with God."*

³⁸ *"I am the Lord's servant," Mary answered. "May it be to me as you have said."* Then the angel left her. How are Sarah and Mary's stories similar? What is the relationship between Isaac and Jesus? How does the birth of Isaac remind us of God's redemptive plan?

41. Read Romans 4:18-25.

¹⁸*Against all hope, Abraham in hope believed and so became the father of many nations, just as it had been said to him, "So shall your offspring be." ¹⁹Without weakening in his faith, he faced the fact that his body was as good as dead—since he was about a hundred years old—and that Sarah's womb was also dead. ²⁰Yet he did not waver through unbelief regarding the promise of God, but was strengthened in his faith and gave glory to God, ²¹being fully persuaded that God had power to do what he had promised. ²²This is why "it was credited to him as righteousness." ²³The words "it was credited to him" were written not for him alone, ²⁴but also for us, to whom God will credit righteousness—for us who believe in him who raised Jesus our Lord from the dead. ²⁵He was delivered over to death for our sins and was raised to life for our justification.* How does Paul parallel Abraham and Sarah's "dead" bodies with our spiritual death? How did this the fulfillment of God's promise of a son relate to our spiritual life?

42. What is the attitude expressed by Abraham and Sarah in 21:1-7? Do you have a similar attitude regarding your spiritual birth? If not, why not?

WEEK SIX ~ Abraham Tested: Genesis 22:1-18

¹ Some time later God tested Abraham. He said to him, "Abraham!"

"Here I am," he replied.

² Then God said, "Take your son, your only son, Isaac, whom you love, and go to the region of Moriah. Sacrifice him there as a burnt offering on one of the mountains I will tell you about."

³ Early the next morning Abraham got up and saddled his donkey. He took with him two of his servants and his son Isaac. When he had cut enough wood for the burnt offering, he set out for the place God had told him about. ⁴ On the third day Abraham looked up and saw the place in the distance. ⁵ He said to his servants, "Stay here with the donkey while I and the boy go over there. We will worship and then we will come back to you."

⁶ Abraham took the wood for the burnt offering and placed it on his son Isaac, and he himself carried the fire and the knife. As the two of them went on together, ⁷ Isaac spoke up and said to his father Abraham, "Father?"

"Yes, my son?" Abraham replied.

"The fire and wood are here," Isaac said, "but where is the lamb for the burnt offering?"

⁸ Abraham answered, "God himself will provide the lamb for the burnt offering, my son." And the two of them went on together.

⁹ When they reached the place God had told him about, Abraham built an altar there and arranged the wood on it. He bound his son Isaac and laid him on the altar, on top of the wood. ¹⁰ Then he reached out his hand and took the knife to slay his son. ¹¹ But the angel of the Lord called out to him from heaven, "Abraham! Abraham!"

"Here I am," he replied.

¹² "Do not lay a hand on the boy," he said. "Do not do anything to him. Now I know that you fear God, because you have not withheld from me your son, your only son."

¹³ Abraham looked up and there in a thicket he saw a ram caught by its horns. He went over and took the ram and sacrificed it as a burnt offering instead of his son. ¹⁴ So Abraham called that place The Lord Will Provide. And to this day it is said, "On the mountain of the Lord it will be provided."

¹⁵ The angel of the Lord called to Abraham from heaven a second time ¹⁶ and said, "I swear by myself, declares the Lord, that because you have done this and have not withheld your son, your only son, ¹⁷ I will surely bless you and make your descendants as numerous as the stars in the sky and as the sand on the seashore. Your descendants will take possession of the cities of their enemies, ¹⁸ and through your offspring all nations on earth will be blessed, because you have obeyed me."

43. Read James 1:12-15.

¹²Blessed is the man who perseveres under trial, because when he has stood the test, he will receive the crown of life that God has promised to those who love him.

¹³When tempted, no one should say, "God is tempting me." For God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does he tempt anyone; ¹⁴but each one is tempted when, by his own evil desire, he is dragged away and enticed. ¹⁵Then, after desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, gives birth to death.

What is the difference between testing and temptation?

44. Have you ever experienced a situation in which a personal relationship was tested? If so, what was the outcome? Have you ever experienced a situation in which your relationship with God was tested? If so, what was the outcome?

45. Read vv. 2-3 again. How do they strike you? If you were Abraham how might you have responded?

46. What is the greatest sacrifice God could ask of you today?

47. Read Hebrews 11:17-19.

“By faith Abraham, when God tested him, offered Isaac as a sacrifice. He who had received the promises was about to sacrifice his one and only son, ¹⁸even though God had said to him, “It is through Isaac that your offspring will be reckoned.” ¹⁹Abraham reasoned that God could raise the dead, and figuratively speaking, he did receive Isaac back from death.

How do these verses interpret Abraham’s confidence in God? How does 22:5 speak to this confidence?

48. What does v. 8 tell us about Abraham’s relationships with his God and with his son?

49. God knows everything so He knew that Abraham feared Him (v. 12) even before the testing. What purpose, then, did the testing serve?

50. In what ways do you acknowledge the Lord as your Provider? How have you forgotten to acknowledge His provision in your life?

51. How does recognizing that God provides strengthen you in your walk of faith?

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