

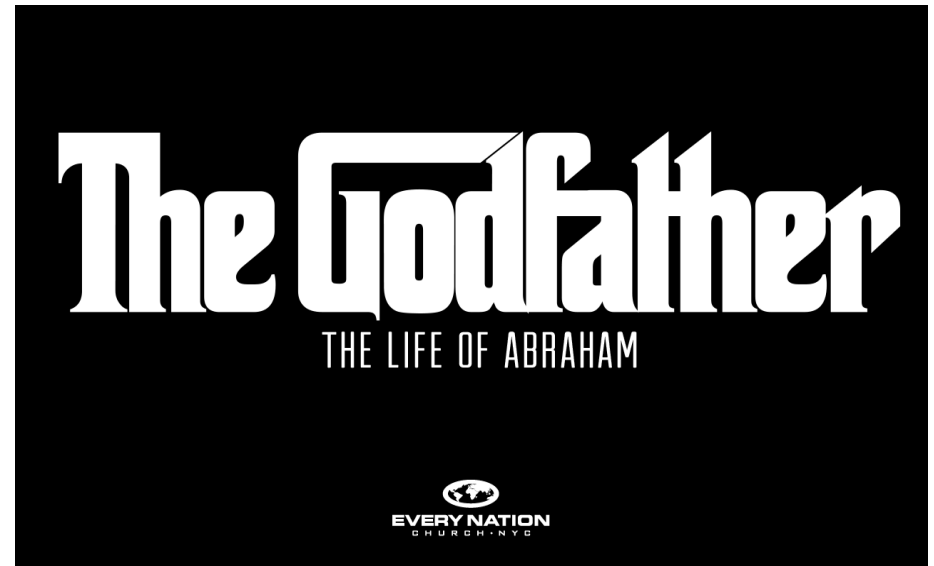
PERSONAL APPLICATION

- Are there any sacrifices you might need to make this week in order for your relationship with God to move forward?
- Is there any area in your life right in which God is asking you to trust Him? What can you do this week to build your trust in God?
- Is there anything that you think God may be asking you to do, but you have been hesitating? What step of obedience can you take this week?

PRAYER

- Praise God for making the ultimate sacrifice when he sent his son, Jesus, to die on the cross because of his unconditional love for us.
- Pray to trust God like Abraham, a man of God whose life represents a continual strengthening and growth in faith.
- Pray for courage and strength to take action to let go of certain things that are getting in the way of your spiritual journey with God.
- Ask God to show you steps of obedience he would want you to take in order to become a man or woman of faith like Abraham, the Father of our Faith and the Friend of God.

NOTES



Lessons from the Life of Abraham – Sacrifice

There are 3 key

CONNECT

- What would be the hardest thing in your life to give up right now? A relationship? Career? Future Plans? Family?
- Do you view tests as a something to avoid at all costs, a chance to prove yourself, or a necessary evil?
- What's the most absurd thing you've ever been asked to do?

THOUGHT

Every worthwhile achievement requires sacrifice. As we continue to discuss Abraham's life, we are going to look at an incredibly challenging sacrifice that God asked of Abraham, one that tested his faith like never before. Genesis 22 reveals the story of Abraham being called by God to sacrifice his son, Isaac. This was not necessarily a test to *produce* his faith, but it was a test to *reveal* his faith. God built Abraham slowly, piece by piece, year by year, into a man of faith. Abraham's experience can teach us how God provides for those who honor him with faith, trust, and obedience. Without challenges, it's impossible to grow, and it's the **tests** in our lives that become a part of our **testimonies**. Let's look at Abraham's testimony.

WORD

"By faith Abraham, when he was tested, offered up Isaac, and he who had received the promises offered up his only begotten son, of whom it was said, "In Isaac your seed shall be called."

Hebrews 11:17-19

1. SACRIFICE

Abraham faced the ultimate sacrifice when he was asked to give up his son, but in the end, his willingness to obey was more vital to the Lord than the sacrifice itself. God's intention was never for Isaac to die, which we see when an angel appeared and stopped him. This might be a good place to introduce the gospel by pointing out that God himself chose to sacrifice his only son whom he love, Jesus, for our sakes.

"Take now 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...So Abraham took the wood of the burnt offering and laid it on Isaac his son; and he took the fire in his hand, and a knife, and the two of them went together."

Genesis 22:1

Sacrifice means giving up something that may be a prominent part of your life—an act that can only come from believing the motivation behind the action is worth the risk. Accomplishing any endeavor requires sacrifice. After waiting 25 years, Abraham and Sarah finally had the son God had promised, their only son Isaac whom they loved, as God pointedly stated. Now God was asking them to sacrifice that son. What do you think Abraham was thinking when God asked him to sacrifice his son? Why do you think Abraham didn't object when asked to make this huge sacrifice?

2. TRUST

Abraham had to trust without reason and learn the difference between trusting the promise and trusting the Promiser. He was walking by faith, not by feelings. God tests us, not to punish or humiliate us, but to reveal flaws that might later destroy our lives. Tests reveal the weakness of the lies we've believed.

But Isaac spoke to Abraham his father and said, "My father!" And he said, "Here I am, my son." Then he said, "Look, the fire and the wood, but where is the lamb for a burnt offering?" And Abraham said, "My son, God will provide for Himself the lamb for a burnt offering."

Genesis 22:3

God fulfilled his promise to Abraham and Sarah after they had waited patiently for so many years. He did what seemed to be impossible by providing a son, Isaac, when Abraham was 100 years old and Sarah was 90. Now God was asking Abraham to offer his son as a burnt offering, which seemed to contradict the promise God has made to him. Why do you think God tested Abraham this way? Why do you think Abraham was able to trust God?

3. ACTION

Obediently acting on something that God has asked of you is usually the hardest part, something that causes short-term doubt, but long-term satisfaction and fulfillment in Him.

"So Abraham rose early in the morning and saddled his donkey, and took two of his young men with him, and Isaac his son; and he split the wood for the burnt offering, and arose and went to the place of which God had told him."

Genesis 22: 2 (NIV)

Abraham rose early in the morning, seemingly without hesitation, to do what God had called him to do. At the end of the story, God said to Abraham "Because you have done this thing, and have not withheld your son, your only son; blessing I will bless you, and multiplying I will multiply your descendants as the stars of the heaven and as the sand which is on the seashore..." Clearly in Abraham's life we see a blessing on his immediate and decisive obedience to God, despite the difficulty of God's command to sacrifice Isaac. When you know you have to do something difficult or unpleasant, do you tend to act quickly or procrastinate? What might help you respond to God more quickly?