

DO YOU LOVE GOD?

APRIL 21, 2024

WORSHIP

NO OTHER LIKE JESUS,
LORD OF ALL CREATION,
WHAT HE'S DONE, BECAUSE
OF WHO YOU ARE, JESUS
SON OF GOD, TRUST AND
OBEY

WELCOME

What has been the greatest
sacrifice that your parents
have made for your sake or
benefit?

WORD

GENESIS 22:1-4

(READ UP TO V.18)

Now it came about after these things, that God tested Abraham, and said to him, "Abraham!" And he said, "Here I am." ² He said, "Take now your son, your only son, whom you love, Isaac, and go to the land of Moriah, and offer him there as a burnt offering on one of the mountains of which I will tell you." ³ 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 wood for the burnt offering, and arose and went to the place of which God had told him. ⁴ On the third day Abraham raised his eyes and saw the place from a distance.

It's one thing to know how God loves you, but it's another thing to know how to love God! The first time the word **TESTED** appears in the Bible was when God tested Abraham (**Genesis 22**). God tests us for our good to reveal what's inside us. The word "test" connotes something unpleasant. The same word (Heb. NASA, Gk. PEIRASMOS) is in **James 1:2-4** and we are to "consider it joy to face trials and temptations", because it reveals and develops our character. It produces endurance, allowing us to be "**perfect and complete**". It all depends on how we respond to testing; many times, testing is a blessing! We are to rejoice amidst our trials – it attains the "**proof of our faith**" (**1 Peter 1:6-7**). God desires for us to know that our faith is REAL! No temptation has overtaken us – God is truly faithful; He calibrates His testing for us, He will not allow us to be tested beyond our capacity; He provides "**a way of escape**" (**1 Corinthians 10:13**). If you have trials today, God wants you to know He has a purpose, He will not let you go through it alone. He loves us, but the question is, do we love Him? We love Him through:

OBEDIENCE

Jesus said the foremost commandment is to love God with all our heart, soul, mind, and strength, then to love others (**Mark 12:29-31**). Jesus asked Peter (after Peter denied Jesus three times) this important question – DO YOU LOVE ME MORE THAN THESE (**John 21:25**)? There's nothing wrong with loving other things, but do we love God? Is He number one?

The first time LOVE appears in Scripture is in the context of Abraham's love for Isaac, his only son (**Genesis 22:1-2**). In **chapter 21**, God asked Abraham to let go of Hagar and Ishmael. In **chapter 22**, Abraham was asked to take his only son Isaac and sacrifice him as a burnt offering on Mount Moriah.

We can obey God willingly or reluctantly, fearfully or expectantly; it all depends on our love for Him. **Chapters 21 and 22** has a span of over 25 years. By this time, Isaac was already a young man! More importantly, Abraham waited for a very long time to have a son, so he really loved Isaac. Remember, God appeared to Abraham (his name was Abram before) first in **Genesis 12**, calling him out of his home (in modern-day Iraq) to the land of promise and giving him a unilateral promise – he was 75 years old then (**vv. 1-4**). In **Genesis 15**, Abraham still negotiated for a son, willing to adopt a servant (Eliezer) since he was not given his own offspring – but God said this will not be his heir, but someone from him and his own wife Sarah (**vv.2-4**). After almost 25 years, Abraham was visited by God and told him Sarah will have a son – at this point they were very old, and Sarah was still barren (**Genesis 18:9-11**). Sarah even laughed when she overheard this, but God mentioned that nothing is too difficult for Him (**Genesis 18:12-14**)! Abraham was 100 years old when he had a son (**Genesis 21:5**).

Despite the difficulty of the task, Abraham obeyed, and walked 50 miles to reach the mountain of sacrifice (**Genesis 22:3-4**). Abraham obeyed God! "**Instant obedience is the only kind of obedience there is; delayed obedience is disobedience**" (Thomas à Kempis). Why is obedience the evidence of love? **John 14:15** is clear – if we love GOD, we must OBEY and not play games. To love God, we need to grow in intimacy with God. The promise of loving God and obeying God is greater intimacy with God (**John 14:21**). What is God asking you to do today? Are you going to obey Him?

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FAITH

We are to trust God by FAITH. Abraham had faith when he told his men that they will “**worship and return to you**” – and Isaac, a young man, willingly followed Abraham’s lead towards the mountain (**Genesis 22:5-7**). When Isaac asked where the sacrifice was, Abraham’s answer that GOD WILL PROVIDE, showing his faith in the Lord (**v.8**). Our job is to OBEY, the consequences we leave in God’s hands! We are to please God (something impossible to do), we must have faith in Him, believing in Him and trusting that He is “**a rewarder of those who seek Him**” (**Hebrews 11:6**). Faith always has its object – it is faith in GOD, His character and His promises. “**The Bible recognizes no faith that does not lead to obedience, nor does it recognize any obedience that does not spring from faith. The two are at opposite sides of the same coin...**” (A.W. Tozer). Abraham did not waver towards unbelief, but instead grew stronger in the faith during this testing (**Romans 4:20-21**). Abraham responded in faith during this testing period, believing that God is able (**Hebrews 11:17-19**)!

WORSHIP

Worship is the ultimate expression of our love for God. It’s giving Him our best. Abraham obeyed to the point that he laid down his son on the altar, to slay him with a knife (**Genesis 22:9-10**). Isaac did not run away; Isaac trusted in his father, and it shows he trusted God also. When bad things happen to you, remember **Romans 8:28** – He causes everything to work together for good, conditionally for those who truly love GOD, in obedience, faith, and worship. **Genesis 22:11-14** shows God intervened – Abraham passed the test; Abraham feared God, not withholding what was precious to him. There, God provided the ram for sacrifice, and Abraham acknowledged that God is JEHOVAH JIREH – the God who Provides! All the nations were blessed through Abraham’s son Isaac (**Galatians 3:8-9 & 19**). The similarities of Isaac and Jesus is amazing –

ISAAC	JESUS
Child of promise (Gen. 12:3) Loved by his father	Child of promise (Gen. 3:15) Loved by his father
Only son (Gen. 22:2)	Only Son (John 3:16)
Miraculous birth barren old mother (Gen. 18:11)	Miraculous birth virgin mother (Luke 2:1-7)
Carried the wood for his sacrifice (Gen. 22:6)	Carried the wooden cross for His sacrifice (John. 19:17)
willingly submitted (Gen. 22:9)	willingly submitted (Luke. 22:42)
Sacrificed on Mt Moriah (Gen. 22:2)	Sacrificed on Mt Moriah (John. 19:20, Heb. 13:12)
A substitute was provided	No substitute He was the sacrifice

If we are to love God, we must think of the “Isaacs” of our lives – it may be anything that becomes the center of our lives. Is God asking you to surrender something? Choose to obey by faith, and worship God fully!

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

(Leaders: Please choose questions that are appropriate to the level of spiritual maturity of your members)

1. Self-Check.

Why do you think GOD allows testing?

2. Setting It Right.

What is it that God is asking you to obey but you are not yet obeying?

3. Living It Out.

What is your “Isaac” that God is asking you to surrender to Him today?

WORKS

PRAY CARE SHARE IN ACTION

Pray for your family, friends, etc. to learn what it means to love God above all. Help them get to know Jesus more intimately by sharing God’s word to them. Share God’s love for them through your life and the gospel.

WEEKLY PRAYER POINTS

I. Thanksgiving

- Worship God for who He is, what He has done, and what He will do in our lives.

II. Country and the World

- Upright and moral governance of public servants; repentance and salvation for government leaders and citizens for a Christ-centered Philippines.
- God’s help and comfort, salvation for Israel, wisdom for their leaders in government, military and their soldiers as they defend themselves against terrorists’ attacks. PRAISE GOD for the release of hostages so far! Continue to pray for the release of the remaining ones.
- War in Ukraine to end, loss of lives prevented, violence and lawlessness in Haiti to stop.

III. Church

- That CCF Members would honor and love God and make disciples.
- Elders, pastors, deacons, and families (holy, humble, harmonious, happy, heart-working).
- Ministries and churches expansion worldwide.

IV. CCF Facilities

- Worship and Training Center
- Prayer Mountain

V. Personal Concerns

- Deeper intimate relationship with God.
- Righteous living.
- Salvation of family and friends..

MEMORY VERSE

HEBREWS 11:6

⁶ And without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is and that He is a rewarder of those who seek Him.