A SACRIFICE | GOD’S GOOD PURPOSE

WEEK 14: GENESIS 22

ANCHOR PASSAGE.

Consider using this passage as the underpinning for your group’s conversation. Encourage your group to read and pray through this Scripture passage prior to your group meeting and in the days following.

**Genesis 22:15-18**

**15**And the angel of the Lord called to Abraham a second time from heaven **16**and said, “By myself I have sworn, declares the Lord, because you have done this and have not withheld your son, your only son, **17**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, **18**and in your offspring shall all the nations of the earth be blessed,   
because you have obeyed my voice.”

**Deuteronomy 8:2**

**2**And you shall remember the whole way that the Lord your God has led you these forty years in the wilderness, that he might humble you, testing you to know what was in your heart, whether you would keep his commandments or not.

**Helpful Passages:**

* Hebrews 11:17-19
* James 2:23
* John 10:18
* 1 Peter 1:6-7

THEMES.

The following themes trace the high-level movement of this week’s Scripture passage. They may help you begin to frame the direction of your group’s conversation.

1. God always keeps his covenant. He keeps covenant with Abraham to bless the nations through his line-a promise that finds its fulfillment in Jesus Christ, a descendant of Isaac. (Gen. 12:1-3; Gen. 22:16-18; Matt. 1)
2. God is faithful to provide a sacrifice to die as a substitute for man’s sin. Where Isaac was spared, Jesus was not. (Gen. 22:6, 8,12-14; John 1:29; 1 Pet. 2:24)
3. God never tempts us to sin; rather, he tests us for the purpose of purifying and refining our faith. (Deut. 8:2; 1 Pet. 1:6-7; Matt. 19:16-22)
4. God calls Abraham and all of his people to trust him completely (Gen. 22:1, 10)

QUESTIONS.

Feel free use any, all, or none of these questions as you facilitate your group. Their purpose is to be an aid to you as you consider how to teach the implications of the week’s Scriptures.

1. In God’s covenant with Abraham, he promised to “make of [him] a great nation” (Gen. 12:2) and “make [his] offspring as the dust of the earth,” (Gen. 13:16). Furthermore, in Genesis 21:12, God tells Abraham that the promise would be fulfilled through Isaac. So, in Genesis 22, why did God test Abraham, especially with Isaac?

Hint: God tests Abraham for the same reason he tests us: to purify and strengthen our faith in him (Deut. 8:2;

Ex. 20:20, 1 Pet. 1:6-7; Matt. 19:16-22). His provision of a ram as a substitutionary sacrifice served as a reminder to Abraham and Isaac of God’s commitment and power to fulfill all his promise to them-promises ultimately fulfilled in Jesus Christ.

1. How does Jesus reflect a better Isaac??

Consider this insight from Tim Keller:

Jesus is the true and better Isaac who was not just offered up by his father on the mount but was truly sacrificed for us. And when God said to Abraham, “Now I know you love me because you did not withhold your son, your only son whom you love from me,” now we can look at God taking his son up the mountain and sacrificing him and say, “Now we know that you love us because you did not withhold your son, your only son, whom you love from us.”[[1]](#footnote-1)

1. Has God ever called you to sacrifice something valuable to you? What was it and what was the outcome?
2. Have you ever walked through a time when your faith was *tested*? Was your faith strengthened as a result?
3. How have you seen God keep his promises in your life? Where are you struggling to trust him today?
4. How does the voluntary sacrifice of Jesus encourage you to pursue him deeper and share him with others?

*Personal Mission* – Understanding the mission of God and discovering how He has uniquely gifted me to love and serve His church and the places where I live, work, and play.

PRAY.

Consider these prompts as you pray with your group:

* Confess areas of life where you struggling to trust God.
* Pray that the Lord would give you and your friends faith to trust him with those things.
* Give thanks to God that he keeps his promises.
* Spend some time remembering that Jesus offered himself as a sacrifice on our behalf. Thank him.

1. Timothy Keller, *Preaching: Communicating Faith in an Age of Skepticism*. (New York, NY: Viking, 2015), 77. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)