

**HIS STORY**

**God Asked for a Sacrifice**

Remember that God had made a covenant with Abraham in which He promised Abraham land as well as offspring as numerous as the stars in the sky, and that through Abraham’s descendants all the nations of the earth would be blessed. God promised to redeem the peoples of the planet through Abraham’s family.

The problem, of course, was that Abraham and Sarah didn’t have any children, and Sarah was well past the age of being able to conceive. But God repeatedly stated that Abraham and Sarah would have a child of their own, and Abraham believed God’s promise.

In the chapters between what we studied in the previous session and this one, several situations arose, including a threat to the fulfillment of God’s promise when a king named Abimelech attempted to take Sarah as his wife. But God remained faithful and miraculously provided a son named Isaac (Gen. 21). Isaac was not only the child God promised Abraham and Sarah; he was the heir through whom God’s promises would be carried forward.

More than a decade later, however, Abraham’s faith was put to the test big time. God told Abraham to do something that would horrify any father, but especially a man through whom the salvation of the world was to come.

**God Provides the Sacrifice and Calls Abraham to Trust in Him**

So how does this climatic moment in history end? What happens to the promise? Let’s continue to read to find out.

When they reached the place, Abraham built an altar and arranged the wood. He bound his son, laid him on the altar, and raised his knife to sacrifice the boy. We shudder to think of what that moment was like. What was going through his mind at that second?

Suddenly, the Angel of the Lord called from heaven and told Abraham not to touch the boy, “for now I know that you fear God,” Abraham’s faith was tested, and he passed with flying colors because he was willing to obey God, even if it cost him everything. True faith leads to obedience (see Jas. 2).

After the Angel stopped him, Abraham saw a ram caught in some thorns. God had provided this animal for the sacrifice as a substitute for Isaac. Abraham offered the ram instead and named the place “The Lord Will Provide.”

► **What situation are you facing right now that requires you to trust and obey God?**

► **What do you already know about God? How can that knowledge help you to trust Him?**

**Essential Doctrines**

**Christ the Substitute:** *At the heart of the atonement is Jesus Christ substituting Himself for sinners as He died on the cross. This truth is seen against the backdrop of the Old Testament sacrificial system, which provided a picture of humanity’s need for sin to be covered and guilt to be removed by an innocent sacrifice.*

**Leader Note:** *Because some content from the Personal Study Guide will not be available on the One Sheet, make sure to adapt the session based on how you use the material with your group.*

## YOUR STORY

- ▶ **Like Abraham, we may not know when we are being tested. In what ways should Abraham's story impact our obedience?**
- ▶ **When was a time you sensed God testing you? What did you learn about Him from that experience? What did you learn about yourself?**
- ▶ **How does faith fuel obedience?**
- ▶ **Why is it important for us to trust in the provision of God and not in our own work?**

## YOUR MISSION

### Head

The story of Abraham and Isaac is mind-boggling to the reader at first. Isaac is the promised son to Abraham and Sarah, and God has specifically stated that it will be through Isaac that Abraham's descendants will be named—meaning the covenant will continue through him. Yet while it is mind-boggling at first, we quickly come to realize what God is doing through this event.

- ▶ **What are some things God asks us to do in His Word that may seem counter intuitive? Why does He ask us to do these things?**
- ▶ **Why is it important that God provide a substitute for us?**

### Heart

The Abraham we see in this event is somewhat different from the Abraham we have seen in former chapters. That is because Abraham has learned over time and through some poor past decisions that God can be trusted and will fulfill what He has promised. While Isaac was asked to be the sacrifice, one could also say that in another sense, Abraham's will was also a sacrifice.

- ▶ **How does Abraham's obedience challenge you to be more obedient to God?**
- ▶ **How does Abraham's faith in God challenge your own faith in God?**

### Hands

Abraham's faith and belief in God influenced his decisions and the way he lived. The same is true for us as well—true faith will also result in a transformed life.

- ▶ **How has this session challenged you to live differently?**
- ▶ **How might you be able to use this story in the Bible to point others toward Christ? Explain.**