**1. Motivate**

In school, what was the most difficult test you had to take?

* math

A video introduction for the lesson is available. View at <https://watch.liberty.edu/media/t/1_k458stvz> If you have no wi-fi where you teach, best to download to your computer from <https://tinyurl.com/56az7n5f>

* science
* chemistry
* memorizing dates for history
* the SAT or ACT test
* the test I forgot to study for
* the test where I lost the notes for that part of the course
* it was open book and I forgot my book

**2. Transition**

Today we look at a test God gave to Abraham.

* There are more difficult tests in *life* than in school.
* When our *faith* is tested during those situations, trust God.

**3. Bible Study**

3.1 Faith Will Be Tested

Listen for God’s test of Abraham.

Genesis 22:1-2 (NIV) 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."

What three imperatives summarize the task God gave to Abraham?

* take your son (only son, whom you love)
* go to region of Moriah
* sacrifice him there as a burnt offering

In what ways might this task seem counterintuitive to the promises God had made to Abraham?

* Jehovah God forbade human sacrifice
* this son was God’s promise fulfilled – why would God undo the promise
* this son was to be the beginning of a great number of descendants – how could that happen if he was dead

Teachers give tests to find out if students know the material. If God is omniscient, knows all things, why do you think He decided to give Abraham this test?

* the test was not for God … as we say, He already knew if Abraham learned the lesson
* the test is for *Abraham* to learn the limits of his own trust/obedience in God
* the test was a learning experience to *prove* to Abraham that God is wise, all sufficient
* to show Abraham that nothing he had belongs to him … all that any of us have belongs to God

⇨ We must be willing to separate ourselves from anything and give it over to God’s control

How would you describe the difference between *temptation* and *testing*?

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Temptation | Testing |
| * does not come from God
* James says it begins with your own evil desire
* that gives birth to sin
* eventually sin leads to spiritual death
 | * events that require faith in and obedience to God
* God uses them to strengthen your faith
* you discover that God’s strength is sufficient to survive the test
* your faith is strengthened
* you are more convinced of God’s power and authority at work in your life
 |

What kinds of feelings or thoughts do you think Abraham experienced?

* fear
* confusion
* disbelief
* skepticism
* incredulity
* mistrust
* doubt
* discouragement

Note that these initial feelings and thoughts are normal …

⇨ Initial fear and struggling with obedience are OK

However, how could this have been a temptation for Abraham? How might he respond and it *not* be OK to doubt God’s goodness and wisdom

* to refuse God
* to do something different, like take a lamb (and name it Isaac??) instead of his son
* to argue with God

What kinds of obedience tests does God place before us?

* separate ourselves from ungodly acquaintances
* speak up when given an opportunity to witness
* surrender control of one’s life to God
* accept a leadership or ministry opportunity in the church
* send a child or grandchild off to serve the Lord as a foreign missionary
* as a missionary send a young child off to boarding school
* learning to tithe a certain percentage of our gross income (before taxes, before bills)\

3.2 Trust God in the Test

Listen for how Abraham trusted God.

Genesis 22:3-10 (NIV) 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.

Identify the actions in these verses that indicate Abraham intended to carry out the instructions of God.

* got up early and prepared to travel
* appointed two servants to travel with them
* cut the wood for the sacrifice
* set out on the trip

What would be hard about each of these tasks?

* 3 day journey is a long time to think about what is going to happen
* cutting the wood, building the altar and thinking about what would actually happen to the sacrifice – his only son would be totally destroyed – not even a body to bury
* every step up the mountain brought him closer to the loss of his beloved son
* answering the son’s questions would be tricky – if you alarm him, he might run away
* How would he able to tie him up? This was a teenager or a young man by now

We previously listed examples of tests God takes us through. In what ways do we demonstrate faith?

* making the best choices we can, depending on God’s guidance
* obeying God, whatever it would cost
* obeying God, even when the world’s advice would be in the opposite direction
* exercising “tough love”
* talking to God, early and often in the test
* keep on keeping on

Abraham told the servants, “We will worship and then ***we*** will come back to you." What could he have been implying by that?

* he might have doubted he would be able to actually go through with it
* God might raise Isaac from the dead
* God would intervene in some way
* God had promised a son to begin a line of descendants … God would keep His promise
* Abraham believed God, he had faith in God’s words to him

What tips might Abraham have about obedience for us?

* do what God says
* God knows what He is doing
* you might wonder why, but God’s purposes are wise
* God will get you through the situation
* obey right away, quickly

 3.3 God Provides on Time

Listen for God’s timing.

Genesis 22:11-14 (NIV) 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."

How did God spare Isaac’s life?

* halted Abraham as he picked up the knife
* “don’t do anything to him”
* told Abraham he had demonstrated faith
* nearby in a thicket there was a ram caught by its horns
* that was the animal to be sacrificed

What reasons does God give for stopping him from killing Isaac?

* now I know you fear God
* you have not withheld from me your son
* you have obeyed me

God provided a substitute sacrifice, a ram caught in the thicket. How does this story anticipate or parallel what God would do through His Son, Jesus ?

* Isaac was Abraham’s only son, Jesus is God’s only Son
* both fathers were willing to sacrifice them
* there was a substitute involved in both cases …
* the ram was the substitute for Isaac, Jesus is the substitute for all of us
* in that sense, there is also a parallel between the ram and Jesus and Isaac and Jesus
* Jesus was/is a substitute sacrifice for the judgement we deserve
* Jesus died in our place
* the judgement for our sin was taken by the substitute of God’s son
* Abraham was willing to give his son
* God was willing and *did* give His Son, Jesus

What lessons do you think *Isaac* learned from this experience?

* do what God says, God provides in some impossible situations
* Dad really trusted God … I hope I can also
* God rescued us in a very scary situation … He is powerful and wise
* that was a vivid lesson about God’s provision, God’s requirement for our obedience

Application

Use the last page as a handout so your learners can take home the application points of this week’s lesson.

Ask.

* Where might God be testing you with what seems like a ridiculous request?
* Have you been delaying, or are you obeying promptly?
* Where might the enemy be tempting you physically or mentally to get off course?

Remember.

* Take a moment to look back on God’s track record in your life.
* Write down where you have seen God show off His power.
* Take some time now and ask God to continue to show off in your seasons of testing.

Share.

* Where have you seen God’s prevention as protection played out in your life?
* Take some time right now to thank Him for that prevention.
* Then share that testimony with someone who may need to hear it in the coming days.

Crossword Puzzle



Clues and words taken from
Genesis 22:1 – 14 (NIV) Help and further Family activities available at <https://tinyurl.com/56az7n5f>

Illustration by Richard Gunther