

## Faith and Testing

### WARM-UP

- What was your favorite subject in school? What was your least favorite? Why?
- Was there something you longed for, finally owned or achieved, and then lost? What happened? How did it make you feel?
- What is the biggest challenge you recently overcame? How did you overcome this challenge?

### WORD

*<sup>2</sup>Count it all joy, my brothers, when you meet trials of various kinds, <sup>3</sup>for you know that the testing of your faith produces steadfastness. <sup>4</sup>And let steadfastness have its full effect, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing.* **JAMES 1:2-4**

(Read also **GENESIS 22:1-18.**)

After a long period of waiting, Abraham saw the fulfillment of God's promise when Sarah conceived and bore a son, Isaac. But *God tested Abraham*, asking him to sacrifice Isaac as a burnt offering. As we walk with God, our faith in Him will surely be tested. While this is not a happy truth, we rejoice in knowing that *the testing of our faith produces steadfastness*, and as we *let steadfastness have its full effect*, we will be *complete, lacking in nothing*. Today, we will look at the life of Abraham to see the choices he had and the choices he made when his faith was tested.

## 1 Flee or face

<sup>1</sup>*After these things God tested Abraham and said to him . . .*

<sup>2</sup>*“Take your son, your only son Isaac, whom you love, and go to the land of Moriah, and offer him there as a burnt offering . . .”*

<sup>3</sup>*So Abraham rose early in the morning, saddled his donkey, and took . . . his son Isaac. And he cut the wood for the burnt offering and arose and went to the place of which God had told him.*

### **GENESIS 22:1-3**

God tested Abraham to reveal the condition of his faith. When the test was given, we see that Abraham did not think twice. He obeyed exactly what God told him to do. Abraham could have disobeyed God and fled with Isaac, his beloved son. Instead, he obeyed even if it was a difficult command to follow. When God gives us a command or a challenge, we can choose to obey and face it head on or to flee and live a life away from God. When we face challenges, our hearts and our faith are exposed. Was there a time when God tested you to reveal your level of faith in Him? Did you flee or did you face it head on? How did God use this to strengthen your faith?

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## 2 Doubt or trust

<sup>5</sup>*“Stay here with the donkey; I and the boy will go over there and worship and come again to you.” . . .* <sup>7</sup>*And Isaac said to his father Abraham . . . “Behold, the fire and the wood, but where is the lamb for a burnt offering?”* <sup>8</sup>*Abraham said, “God will provide for himself the lamb for a burnt offering, my son.”* So they went both of them together. **GENESIS 22:5,7,8**

Abraham could have responded in doubt, but he trusted in God, the promise-giver and promise-keeper. There was no doubt in his mind that God would provide what was needed at that moment. Abraham trusted the goodness and faithfulness of the Lord, that He will provide the offering.

What do you think enabled Abraham to trust God completely despite God's command?

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### 3 Fail or pass

*11But the angel of the Lord called to him from heaven and said, "Abraham, Abraham!" And he said, "Here I am." 12He said, "Do not lay your hand on the boy or do anything to him, for now I know that you fear God, seeing you have not withheld your son, your only son, from me."* **GENESIS 22:11,12**

Abraham passed the test because he faced the test by trusting and obeying God. In turn, God rewarded his faith saying, *"because you have done this and have not withheld your son, your only son, I will surely bless you"* (Genesis 22:16,17). God tests us to expose what is in our hearts—if we truly fear, revere, and love Him above all else. He wants us to pass because He wants us to receive His promises. While God has promises for us, we must seek Him above all else every day and not just His promises. According to Jesus, what is the greatest commandment? (Matthew 22:36-38)

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### APPLICATION

- Have you put your full faith in God by receiving His Son, Jesus, as your Lord and Savior? Would you like to do so today?
- How does knowing that the testing of our faith produces steadfastness encourage you to do what God is telling you? What is one step you can take this week to move forward to where God is calling you?
- Do you have a family member or friend whose faith is being tested? How can you encourage him or her to persevere with what you have learned today?

