

What You Need to Know About ABRAHAM

“God Is Faithful to Keep His Promises”

SESSION #8: Abraham 22:1-19

TEXT:

- v. 1 Some time later God tested Abraham. He said to him, “Abraham!” “Here I am,” he replied.
- v. 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.”
- v. 3 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.
- v. 4 On the third day Abraham looked up and saw the place in the distance.
- v. 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.”
- v. 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,
- v. 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?”
- v. 8 Abraham answered, “God himself will provide the lamb for the burnt offering, my son.” And the two of them went on together.
- v. 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.
- v. 10 Then he reached out his hand and took the knife to slay his son.
- v. 11 But the angel of the Lord called out to him from heaven, “Abraham! Abraham!” “Here I am,” he replied.
- v. 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.”

v. 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.

v. 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.”

v. 15 The angel of the Lord called to Abraham from heaven a second time

v. 16 and said, “I swear by myself, declares the Lord, that because you have done this and have not withheld your son, your only son,

v. 17 I will surely bless you and make your descendants as numerous as the stars in the sky and as the sand on the seashore. Your descendants will take possession of the cities of their enemies,

v. 18 and through your offspring all nations on earth will be blessed, because you have obeyed me.”

v. 19 Then Abraham returned to his servants, and they set off together for Beersheba. And Abraham stayed in Beersheba.

INTRODUCTION:**Age Limit for Concealed Weapons?**

This is a true account recorded in the Police Log of Sarasota, Florida.

An elderly Florida lady did her shopping and upon returning to her car, found four males in the act of leaving with her vehicle. She dropped her shopping bags and drew her handgun, and screamed at the top of her voice, "I have a gun, and I know how to use it! Get out of the car!"

The four men didn't wait for a second invitation. They got out and ran like mad. The lady, somewhat shaken, then proceeded to load her shopping bags into the back of the car and got into the driver's seat. She was so shaken by the event that she could not get her key into the ignition. She tried and tried, and then realized why she could not start her car. For the same reason she realized why there was a football, Frisbee, and two twelve-packs of beer in the front seat.

A few minutes later, she found her own car parked four or five spaces farther down. She loaded her bags into the car and drove to the police station to report her mistake. The sergeant to whom she told her story couldn't stop laughing. He pointed to the other end of the counter where four pale men were reporting a car jacking by a mad, elderly woman described as white, less than five feet tall, glasses, curly white hair, and carrying a large handgun.

No charges were filed.

Moral of the story:

If you're going to have a Senior Moment, make it memorable.

(Received via email from Ceboyd1@att.net, July 1, 2007)

How to Call the Police When You're Old

HOW TO CALL THE POLICE WHEN YOU'RE OLD AND DON'T MOVE FAST ANYMORE.

George Phillips of Meridian, Mississippi was going up to bed when his wife told him that he'd left the light on in the garden shed, which she could see from the bedroom window. George opened the back door to go turn off the light but saw that there were people in the shed stealing things. He phoned the police, who asked "Is someone in your house?" and he said "no". Then they said that all patrols were busy, and that he should simply lock his door and an officer would be along when available. George said, "Okay," hung up, counted to 30, and phoned the police again. "Hello, I just called you a few seconds ago because there were people stealing things from my shed. Well, you don't have to worry about them now because I've just shot them." Then he hung up.

Within five minutes three police cars, an Armed Response Unit, and an ambulance showed up at the Phillips' residence and caught the burglars red-handed. One of the Policemen said to George: "I thought you said that you'd shot them!" George said, "I thought you said there was nobody available!"

Don't mess with old people!

(Received via email from David Stubblefield, June 2, 2007)

(Lookin' At Life by Joe Kreger) St. Louis, MO: Doane Agricultural Services.
 Copyright – Joe Kreger, 1997, second printing 2000.

Fifty Six

I ain't plumb over the hill yet,
 but I'm crowdin' the other side.
 My legs are gettin' thinner,
 and my belly's gettin' wide.

My wind is gettin' shorter,
 but my sight is gettin' far.
 And my voice is gettin' gruffer,
 and my hearin' ain't up to par.

I'm spendin' more time a thinkin'
 'bout things back in the past.
 My walk is gettin' slower,
 but my pulse is gettin' fast.

I think it'll be a long time
 before they put me in the grave.
 But, I keep on countin' wrinkles
 in the mirror when I shave.

I'm wonderin' how those feedsacks
 picked up all that extra weight,
 and the horses are gettin' taller
 and rougher in their gait.

It don't seem like my ropin' arm
 is what it used to be,
 and I interrupt my ridin'
 by gettin' off to pee.

My cowdog's gettin' aged,
 but I just can't get up
 to all of the excitement
 of startin' out a pup.

Oh, I can still hold up my end
 and put in good long day.
 But crawlin' out of bed next morn
 is when I start to pay.

I think I'm gettin' wiser,
but my memory ain't the same.
I recognize everybody,
but I just can't call their name.

New cow folks are gettin' different,
so I seek the old ones out,
and we set in speculatin'
if they know what it's all about.

I still keep my cow records
with a notebook and a pen.
I guess I just got passed up
by this computer age we're in.

I don't understand the music
that comes out on the air,
and I wonder why country singers
have adopted hippie hair.

But, some things are gettin' better,
like the stories that I tell.
They kinda seem to grow with age,
but I guess it's just as well.

My son says he's already heard'em all,
So I change 'em just a bit
to help him endure another round
of his old man's worn-out wit.

pp. 119-20

Driver Learns Valuable Lesson About Traffic Signs

Parked on the side of the road, waiting to catch speeding drivers, a state trooper sees a car puttering along at 22 mph. Thinking the driver is as dangerous as a speeder, the state trooper turns on his lights and pulls the car over.

As he approaches the vehicle, the officer notices there are five elderly ladies inside—two in the front seat and three in the back—wide-eyed and white as ghosts.

The driver, obviously confused, says, “Officer, I don’t understand. I was going the exact speed limit. What seems to be the problem?”

The trooper, trying to contain a chuckle, explained to her that 22 was the route number—not the speed limit.

A bit embarrassed, the woman grins and thanks the officer for pointing out her error.

“Before you go,” the officer says, “I have to ask: Is everyone in this car okay? These women seem awfully shaken.”

“Oh,” she answered, “they’ll be all right, sir. We just got off of Route 127.”

Submitted by Van Morris, Mount Washington, Kentucky

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C. S. Lewis On How Pain Transforms Us

Imagine yourself as a living house. God comes in to rebuild that house. At first, perhaps, you can understand what He is doing. He is getting the drains right and stopping the leaks in the roof and so on: you knew that those jobs needed doing and so you are not surprised.

But presently He starts knocking the house about in a way that hurts abominably and does not seem to make sense. What on earth is He up to? The explanation is that He is building quite a different house from the one you thought of—throwing out a new wing here, putting on an extra floor there, running up towers, making courtyards.

You thought you were going to be made into a decent little cottage, but He is building up a palace. He intends to come and live in it himself.

*Citation: C. S. Lewis, Mere Christianity (book IV, chapter 9);
submitted by Andy Scarcliffe, Edinburgh, Scotland*

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(God Is Closer Than You Think by John Ortberg) Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan.
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So I thought I would start this chapter with words I associate with winter.

Death. Ice. Hypothermia. Windchill.

Snow. Shoveling snow. Shoveling more snow. Buying a snowblower.

Salt trucks. Black ice. Dead batteries. Frostbite. Gangrene. Thermal underwear. My wife wearing long thermal underwear for months at a time.

Ice fishing. Diminished mental capacity.

Seasonal affective disorder. Happy days for electrical utility companies.

Recreational eating.

Death.

I don't like winter.

I know there are people in the world who claim to love winter. But it always makes me wonder: How many people spend their working careers in Florida, then retire and move to Minot, North Dakota?

p. 151

We generally associate well-being with the presence of God and assume that suffering means someone has done something wrong. No one writes a book called *Where Is God When It Feels Good?* No one wins the lottery and cries out, "Why me, God?" And of course, it is true that pain was not part of God's original plan, and the day is coming when he will wipe every tear from every eye.

p. 158

(Why Did This Happen To Me? Finding God's Strength Through Life's Hurts and Heartaches by Ray Pritchard) Eugene, OR: Harvest House Publishers. Copyright – Ray Pritchard, 2003.

After the operation, Steve sent me a small book of poems he had written called *Plans for You*. At a low point he wrote a poem called “The Author of Miracles” that included these words: “We need a miracle now/ a Band-Aid or aspirin won’t do/ ‘cause we need a miracle now. Not a walk on water/ or mountain in the sea miracle/ but a healing from you. We’ve so little faith somehow/ but since all power resides in you/ that’s where we’ll rest now/ so we send up our request and rest in you now.”

Evidently the miracle came in one form or another because the surgery was successful even though Liz’s body keeps trying to reject Aaron’s kidney. The battle continues, the war is not over. In a recent note he commented that trials are difficult mostly because we don’t know when (or if) they will end. Then he added this thought: “Liz and I are beginning to appreciate Job. He kept getting sicker and sicker, yet he refused to curse God and die. (I’m working on a spoof piece dedicated to our choir entitled, ‘The More You Pray, the Sicker We Get.’) Trials are not about time. They are not about double blessings you might get if you endure like Job did. (If Job had bugged out one day early, would he have received anything from God? How many Christians bug out of their college/business/marriage one day early?) Trials are about God. Illness happens because life happens. So you’re having a bad year. So! Who’s in charge?”

“Trials are about God.” What a good thought that is. *Your troubles are not about you. Your troubles are about God.* They are sent to teach you things about God you couldn’t learn any other way.

p. 45

(Fénelon: Selected Writings – The Classics of Western Spirituality Edited and translated by Chad Helms) Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press. Copyright – Chad Helms, 2006.

While thinking about the misery of your privileged position, about the servitude from which you cry out in pain, the words of Jesus Christ to Saint Peter came to my mind: “In times past you used to walk where you would; but when you are in a more advanced age, another—a stronger one—will guide you and will lead you where you will not want to go.”³⁹ Let yourself go and be guided, Madame, and do not hesitate along the path. You will go to pure love, to perfect renunciation, to total death of your own will while accomplishing that of God who leads you according to his good pleasure.

p. 187

In Genesis 21 we have the blessed experience of seeing God faithful to fulfill the promises in the birth of Isaac. Now, some time has transpired since the birth of Isaac, probably some 30 plus years. For Abraham this is the greatest test of all.

I think as we begin this study it's important for us to make a distinction between a **TEST** and a **TEMPTATION**:

A TEST comes from God and is meant for our **SPIRITUAL DEVELOPMENT**.

TEMPTATION comes from Satan and is designed to **DESTROY US**.

It is our responsibility:

to be **SUBMITTING TO THE TEST** and

OVERCOMING THE TEMPTATION.

Oftentimes failure can be explained in **REVERSING THESE TWO**:

by trying to **OVERCOME THE TEST** and

SUBMITTING TO THE TEMPTATION.

TRIALS are designed for our **GROWTH** and God will give grace to get through it. He will ultimately get the glory.

TEMPTATIONS are going to produce that which is **EVIL** and will cause us to sin and break fellowship with the Lord.

Trials are God's vote of confidence in us.

When we're describing trials they start with:

1. trifling before the greater,
2. the lower peaks before the lofty summits,
3. you run the mile before the marathon, and
4. you wait in the shallows before you fight the waves.

There are a number of passages of Scriptures that would be good for us to give attention to at this time.

1 Peter 1:5-7

who are protected by the power of God through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. In this you greatly rejoice, even though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been distressed by various trials, that the proof of your faith, being more precious than gold which is perishable, even though tested by fire, may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ;

Job 23:10

But he knows the way that I take; when he has tested me, I will come forth as gold.

1 Peter 4:12-13

Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery ordeal among you, which comes upon you for your testing, as though some strange thing were happening to you; but to the degree that you share the sufferings of Christ, keep on rejoicing; so that also at the revelation of His glory, you may rejoice with exultation.

Romans 8:17-18

and if children, heirs also, heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him in order that we may also be glorified with Him. For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that is to be revealed to us.

Isaiah 48:10-11

See, I have refined you, though not as silver; I have tested you in the furnace of affliction. For my own sake, for my own sake, I do this. How can I let myself be defamed? I will not yield my glory to another.

2 Chronicles 32:31 (NLT)

However, when ambassadors arrived from Babylon to ask about the remarkable events that had taken place in the land, God withdrew from Hezekiah in order to test him and to see what was really in his heart.

John 6:6

And this He was saying to test him; for He Himself knew what He was intending to do.

It is God's plan that we go through these tests and to grow and to mature toward Christlikeness as a result of them.

Isaiah 43:2

When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and when you pass through the rivers, they will not sweep over you. When you walk through the fire, you will not be burned; the flames will not set you ablaze.

Psalm 23:4

Even though I walk
 through the valley of the shadow of death,
 I will fear no evil,
 for you are with me;
 your rod and your staff,
 they comfort me.

In Daniel 3 it was the Father's plan for **SHADRACH, MESHACH, AND ABEDNEGO** to go through the **FIERY FURNACE** and He would go with them.

God has been preparing Abraham for this crisis experience, this test of faith, all through his entire life

This is the most serious conflict. Shall he deny the authority of Jehovah?

The only true test of love is:

How much are we willing to do for the one to whom we profess it?

Shall he enthrone human ambition and make selfishness his king?

As we begin our journey through this final study in the life of Abraham, let's begin our time together with some personal reflection.

There are two Psalms that I would like to bring to your attention at this time.

Psalm 26:2-3

Test me, O Lord, and try me,
 examine my heart and my mind;
 for your love is ever before me,
 and I walk continually in your truth.

Psalm 139:23-24

Search me, O God, and know my heart;
 test me and know my anxious thoughts.
 See if there is any offensive way in me,
 and lead me in the way everlasting.

As we begin our study together, let's accept the admonition of the **APOSTLE PAUL** in:

2 Corinthians 13:5

Test yourselves to see if you are in the faith; examine yourselves!
 Or do you not recognize this about yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you—unless indeed you fail the test?

Boice says:

As F. B. Meyer wrote, “So long as men live in the world, they will turn to this story with unwaning interest. There is only one scene in history by which it is surpassed: that where the Great Father gave his Isaac to a death from which there was no deliverance.”

p. 683

Candlish titles this chapter:

**THE TRIAL, TRIUMPH, AND REWARD OF
ABRAHAM'S FAITH.**

p. 364

Gangel & Bramer say:

MAIN IDEA: *Abraham's spiritual journey moves forward by steps of faith. Now he is about to take two giant steps forward as he ties Isaac to the altar and then faces the death and burial of his beloved Sarah.*

A. Moriah Meeting (22:1-8)

SUPPORTING IDEA: *Spiritual growth depends on how we handle the tests and trials that come our way.*

p. 197

Henry says:

Here is the trial of Abraham's faith. It was made to appear that he loved God better than his father; now that he loved him better than his son.

p. 40

Keil & Delitzsch say:

For many years had Abraham waited for the promised seed, in which the divine promise was to be fulfilled. At length the Lord had given him the desired heir of his body by his wife Sarah, and directed him to send away the son of the maid. And now that this son had grown into a young man, the word of God came to Abraham to offer up this very son, who had been given to him as the heir of the promise, for a burnt-offering, upon one of the mountains which should be shown him.

p. 248

McGee says:

In this chapter we come to another great high point of the Bible. We are walking on mountain peaks in the Book of Genesis. Chapter 22 is the account of Abraham's offering of his own son. God commanded him to offer Isaac on the altar and then restrained him at the last minute when He saw that Abraham was willing to go through with it. This chapter brings us to the seventh and last appearance of God to Abraham. After this, there is nothing more that God could ask Abraham to do. This is the supreme test that He brought to this man.

If you were to designate the ten greatest chapters of the Bible, you would almost have to include Genesis 22. One of the reasons for that is that this is the first time human sacrifice is even suggested. It is in the plan and purpose of God to make it clear to man that human sacrifice is wrong. This incident reveals that. It also reveals that God requires a life to be given up in order that He might save sinners. There is no one among the children of men worthy to take that place. God's Son was the only One. It is interesting that Paul said, "God spared not His own Son," but you might add that He *did* spare the son of Abraham and did not let him go through with the sacrifice of Isaac.

p. 90

Radmacher & Allen say:

Without question, this narrative is one of the most shocking and memorable in the whole Bible. And yet in its outcome it is one of the finest texts describing the loyalty of the Lord to His covenant and to His servant Abraham. It also reveals remarkable faith on the part of Abraham, Sarah, and Isaac and points to the future sacrifice of God's only Son, Jesus.

p. 42

Stigers says:

The most significant conflict in his entire life arises to confront Abraham. Shall he deny the authority of Yahweh whose he is and whom he loves just to preserve alive Isaac whom he also loves very greatly? Shall he enthrone human ambition and make selfishness king, or shall he obey God and rejoice eternally in that obedience?

p. 188

Thomas titles this chapter:**THE SUPREME CRISIS**

p. 194

Thomas says:

LIFE is a succession of tests, for character is only possible through discipline. In many lives there is some supreme test to which all others are secondary and preparatory. It was so with Abraham, and we are now to consider the record of the crowning event of his life. For him it was the avenue leading to his closest fellowship with God and his greatest spiritual blessing. For us today it still reveals the secret of spiritual power and victory.

p. 195

Waltke says:

The commitments of both the Lord and Abraham are now tested to their limits. With the perplexing command to Abraham to sacrifice his son, how will God fulfill his commitment to make Abraham into a great nation that blesses the earth? Confronted by such a costly sacrifice, how will Abraham remain obedient to his covenant commitment? This scene presents the radical nature of true faith: tremendous demands and incredible blessings. The crisis of Abraham's faith and the promises and provisions of God will be no greater than in this testing of Abraham . . .

p. 301

Waltke says further:

Abraham's faith, not Isaac's submission, is the focal point of this scene. Hence the scene is framed by the twofold repetition of Abraham in 22:1 and 19. This story of Abraham's testing develops in three parts helpfully suggested by Ross: "presentation of the test [22:1-2], compliance with the instructions [22:3-10], and approval (or disapproval) of the compliance [22:11-19]." ¹⁸³

¹⁸³A. P. Ross, *Creation and Blessing: A Guide to the Study and Exposition of the Book of Genesis* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1988), 392.

p. 301

Waltke says:

The narrator does not satisfy his audience's curiosity about the ages of Abraham and Isaac, the role of Sarah, or Isaac's reaction to his father's binding him to the altar of sacrifice. Since Sarah is entirely blanked here, it is best not to speculate on her role in this dramatic scene.¹⁸⁴ Isaac's reaction is essentially blanked as well; however, the narrator includes enough information to depict Isaac as having a habit of obedience, trust in his father, and trust in God's provision. A son strong enough to carry a load of wood sufficient for a sacrifice on his back is certainly able to resist an aged father if so minded. Instead, Isaac freely consents to Abraham's will. Deathe comments, "We scarcely know which to admire—the brave spirit of the patriarch or the meek resignation of the youth. The son exceeds in 'humble endurance.'" ¹⁸⁵

¹⁸⁴Early exegesis has Abraham concealing from his wife the true purpose of his journey lest she hinder him from doing God's bidding" (Saran, *Genesis*, 151). Søren Kierkegaard (*Fear and Trembling*, ed. and trans. by H. V. Hong and E. H. Hong [Princeton, N.J.: Princeton Univ. Press, 1983], 82-120) wrestles with whether it was ethically defensible for Abraham to conceal his undertaking from Sarah.

¹⁸⁵Deathe, "Abraham," 145, cited by George Rawlinson, *Men of the Bible: Isaac and Jacob: Their Lives and Times* (New York: Revell, n.d.), 24.

p. 302

The Bible Knowledge Commentary titles these 19 verses that we are going to be studying together:

The testing of Abraham's faith (22:1-19)

v. 1 Some time later God tested Abraham. He said to him, "Abraham!" "Here I am." he replied.

Peterson paraphrases verse 1:

After all this, God tested Abraham. God said, "Abraham!" "Yes?" answered Abraham. "I'm listening."

The NET Bible translates verse 1:

Some time after these things God tested Abraham. He said to him, "Abraham!" "Here I am!" Abraham replied.

The Bible Knowledge Commentary says:

The greatest test in the life of **Abraham** (God tested him) came after he received the promised seed following a long wait. The test was very real: he was to give Isaac back to God. As a test it was designed to prove faith. And for it to be a real test, it had to defy logic; it had to be something Abraham wanted to resist.

God has prepared Abraham through his undergraduate program for this very hour.

I am certain that the circumstances came suddenly upon Abraham, just like they did on Job and his most tender spot, right where Job lived and right where Abraham was vulnerable.

It would be good for us to first notice the **OPENING PHRASE:**
“SOME TIME LATER.”

These things did not come about before or during.

For Abraham then could not have stood it. He would have gone down again for he was not yet prepared. This came to pass at a perfect time **“SOME TIME LATER”** that God did test Abraham. It was only after all the things that we have looked at in the previous chapters of Genesis 12-21 that has prepared Abraham for this moment.

God is always working on us!

Whereas it was the **GIVING OF ISHMAEL** in Genesis 21, now it is the **GIVING OF ISAAC** in Genesis 22.

GOD NEVER LETS UP! He is constantly:

WORKING,

WEEDING,

WEEPING,

PRUNING,

PROBING,

PICKING,

SPANKING,

STICKING,

SMASHING,

TESTING,

TEARING,

THRASHING,

BLASTING,

BEATING,

BLOCKING,

RUINING,

RESTRAINING,

RENEWING,

REWORKING.

After all the previous trials, life is a constant hassle.

It is good for us to note that He is still working on us too.

It is well for us to note that God tested Abraham. God is constantly leading us into situations in which what lies concealed in the heart must be revealed. The devil tempts to destroy, but God tests that He may crown. The test presupposes that Christ is not fully formed in us yet.

We have the **BLESSING** of Genesis 21, and now the **TEST** of Genesis 22.

The development of character is only possible through discipline.

There's the:

DISCIPLINE,

DEVELOPMENT, and

DIRECTION

that God gives to circumstances in order to produce the desired result in making us all more like the Lord Jesus.

Isaiah 55:8-11

“For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways,” declares the Lord. As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts. As the rain and the snow come down from heaven, and do not return to it without watering the earth and making it bud and flourish, so that it yields seed for the sower and bread for the eater, so is my word that goes out from my mouth: It will not return to me empty, but will accomplish what I desire and achieve the purpose for which I sent it.

Our Lord **TESTED THE DISCIPLES** in the midst of a storm on the Sea of Galilee:

Mark 4:39-41

And being aroused, He rebuked the wind and said to the sea, “Hush, be still.” And the wind died down and it became perfectly calm. And He said to them, “Why are you so timid? How is it that you have no faith?” And they became very much afraid and said to one another, “Who then is this, that even the wind and the sea obey Him?”

With that question they obviously have **FLUNKED THAT TEST** and can plan on taking it again.

The **QUESTIONS** that come before us are:

Will Abraham go all out for God?

Will he give his very best for the Lord?

Someone has said:

A test is an opportunity in overalls.
(source unknown)

We're coming now to the **SUPREME LESSON**:

GOD DEMANDS THE SUBMISSION OF OUR WILL TO HIS OWN.

Abraham is called to give up everything. To sink his will into God's will. There are **THREE DOMINANT FACTORS** in this test:

1. **FAITH**,
2. **OBEDIENCE**, and
3. **SUBMISSION** to Divine authority.

These are the things that God is looking for in these kind of circumstances.

It is only by passing through tests that we learn who God is. We learn of His:

GRACE,

FAITHFULNESS, and

SUFFICIENCY.

"SOME TIME LATER" refers to the trials and the birth of Isaac.
"GOD TESTED ABRAHAM":

1. Is Jehovah really first?
2. Shall he deny the authority of Jehovah?

It's one thing to have faith and it's another thing to submit to Divine authority, even when we do not understand that which is asked. It is faith's imbalance against common sense. Human affection and a life-long ambition is under consideration in this study.

God said, “ABRAHAM!” and he said “HERE I AM.”

Even as we found Abraham in the door of his tent, in the center of God’s will in Genesis 18, now in Genesis 22, we find him as a child of God ready to do his Father’s will.

All thy vexations were but my trials of thy love:
And thou hast strangely stood the test.
(source unknown)

James 1:12

Blessed is a man who perseveres under trial; for once he has been approved, he will receive the crown of life, which the Lord has promised to those who love Him.

Revelation 2:4

But I have this against you, that you have left your first love.

Can we, at the beginning of this particular study, say:

“Lord, we’ve been through it all and You love me just the same!
And I love You just as intensely!”

Moreover God often prepares us for coming trial by giving us some new and blissful revelation of Himself. I notice that at the close of the preceding chapter we are told that Abraham called on the name of the everlasting God.

Now, we do not learn that he had ever looked on God in this light before. He had known Him as God the almighty, but not as God the everlasting. Who then can remember seeing the seed for the first time? Can ever forget the first impression of His grandeur and far-spread mirror-like expanse? The soul of the Patriarch was thrilled with the lofty train of high and holy thought as he used the name in prayer beside the well and beneath the spreading shade of the tree he has planted. With him, as so often with us, the new name was to enable him better withstand the shock of coming sorrow.

Anderson says:

Most people don't see life's trials that way. They figure that the farther we walk with God, the easier it should become; the less strenuous the journey, the more brownie points we should receive. Let me tell you, as believers, the more we walk with the Lord, the more difficult it becomes. We climb the lower peaks before we scale the summit. We learn to run a mile with Him before we tackle a marathon in His name. Through trials of increasing intensity, the Lord molds the quality of a believer's character.

p. 177

Bush says:

In this sense of *trying, putting to the proof, bringing to the test*, the original term in many other instances is used in reference to the Most High and always in such a way as to leave his attributes unimpeached.

p. 4

Hartley says:

. . . **God** was going to test **Abraham**. God, however, never gave Abraham a hint that this was only a test.

That God needs to test a person might seem incomprehensible in light of the belief in God's full knowledge, but God is involved with those who fear him—leading, guiding, and testing them.

p. 206

Hartley says further:

The ease with which God got Abraham's attention attests that he was in close fellowship with God. Responsively Abraham **replied: "Here I am,"** indicating that he was ready to do whatever God asked.

p. 206

Hughes says:

The announcement in the opening line of chapter 22 that God was testing Abraham serves to cushion the reader from the shock that follows. How painful this story would be to read for the first time without the knowledge that it was a test. Also, the understanding that this is a test alerts us to the truth that growth in faith involves testing. As God tests our faith, it is stretched and thereby grows. Here Abraham's faith was going to be stretched to the utter limit, and because he held firm, his faith has become the grand faith-example in history. We see from this that the way to increase faith is to exercise faith. Trust God as you can, and he will give you so much more than you expected—and then you will trust him even more! It is also important to see that this test came *after* substantial spiritual growth and blessing. Abraham's recent success and growth was the ground for greater testing and growth.
pp. 300-301

Jamieson, Fausset & Brown say:

1. **God did tempt Abraham**—not incite to sin (Jas. 1:13), but try, prove—give occasion for the development of his faith (I Pet. 1:7). **and he said, . . . Here I am**—ready at a moment's warning for God's service.
p. 30

Kidner says:

Abraham's trust was to be weighed in the balance against common sense, human affection, and lifelong ambition; in act against everything earthly.
p. 143

Parker says:

But we are looking at the case of men who stand nearest God, who love him most, and whom he himself most delights to honour, and we find that *they* are called upon to bear trials of unexampled and intolerable severity, without one word of explanation or argument. When such trials are accepted in a filial spirit, the triumph of faith is complete. Such faith is counted unto men for righteousness. It is not a faith that hesitates and falters and struggles; it is a faith victorious in its way even infinite and omnipotent.

p. 236

Phillips says:

The test did not come out of the blue. “It came to pass after these things.” What thing? Why, all the things that had gone before, climaxing in the expulsion of Hagar and Ishmael. Again and again Abraham had been challenged to surrender. First it was his father, now it was his son. In between, it had been the well-watered plains of Jordan, then the gifts of Sodom’s king, then Ishmael. And with each surrender he was learning how to scale the heights, gaining experience on the foothills, tackling the lower glaciers, preparing for the ultimate challenge. “Now then, Abraham,” God said, “now tackle Moriah.”

p. 179

Phillips says further:

“God did test Abraham.” It was examination time, and a stiff examination it was. But God had been preparing His man, coaching him patiently in the school of faith, giving him those little tests along the way. Now came the “finals.” Here was the test for which God had prepared him. All the other tests were preparatory. Now on the stage of Abraham’s life could be enacted, in type and shadow, the great drama of Calvary, so much so that, as we put our hand upon the beating of Abraham’s heart, we can measure the pulse of the heart of God. As we watch Isaac make his way to Mount Moriah, we see Jesus wend His way up the parallel slopes of Calvary.

p. 179

Radmacher & Allen says:

God **tested Abraham** in order to give Abraham an opportunity to show his true character. The verb does not suggest entrapment to harm or to destroy Abraham and his faith, but to refine him, to allow him to display his inner character.

p. 43

Spurgeon says:

After he had passed through a great fight of affliction, and had through the process been strengthened and sanctified, he was called to endure a still sterner test. From which fact it is well to learn that God doth not put heavy burdens upon weak shoulders, and He doth not allot ordeals fit only for full-grown men to those who are but babes. He educates our faith, testing it by trials which increase little by little in proportion as our faith has increased. He only expects us to do man's work and to endure man's afflictions, when we have passed through the childhood state, and have arrived at the stature of men in Christ Jesus. Expect then, beloved, your trials to multiply as you proceed towards heaven. Do not think that as you grow in grace the path will become smoother beneath your feet, and the heavens serener above your heads. On the contrary, reckon that as God gives you greater skill as a soldier, He will send you upon more arduous enterprises; and as He more fully fits your barque to brave the tempest and the storm, so will he send you out upon more boisterous seas, and upon longer voyages, that you may honour Him, and still further increase in holy confidence.

p. 112

Thomas says:

It is frequently the case that severe tests follow special times of blessing. Our Lord's temptation followed immediately upon the spiritual experiment of His baptism, and the two events are closely associated by the Evangelists (Matt. iv. 1; Luke iv. 1). Discipline thus proves whether our spiritual experiences have really become part of our life and character, instead of being mere temporary enjoyments and luxuries.

p. 195

Thomas says:

What are we to understand by the words, “God did tempt Abraham”? The word “test” better expresses the Divine intention and action. God tests us to bring out the good. Satan tempts us to bring out the evil (James i. 12-15).
p. 195

Waltke says:

The focal point of this story is not the danger to Isaac but the danger to Abraham in his relationship to God. The Hebrew word “tested” does not mean “to entice to do wrong.” With a personal object it means “test another to see whether the other proves worthy” (1 Kings 10:1; 2 Chron. 9:1; Dan. 1:12, 14).¹⁹¹ Youngblood summarizes, “Satan tempts us to destroy us (1 Peter 5:8; James 1:15; Rom. 6:23), but God tests us to strengthen us (Ex. 20:20; Deut. 8:2).”¹⁹² Here the saint is torn between his faith in the divine promises and the command to nullify them, between his affection for God’s gift and for God. Faith is living within the vision of trusting God and his promises.

¹⁹¹G. Gerleman, “*nsh*,” *TLOT*, 2:742.

¹⁹²Youngblood, *Genesis*, 186.

p. 304

Waltke says:

God tests his saints often through adversity or hardship in order to prove the quality of their faith by their obedience in the actual time-space continuum we call “history” . . .
p. 309

Wenham says:

“Testing” shows what someone is really like, and it generally involves difficulty or hardship. The queen of Sheba tested Solomon with riddles (1 Kgs 10:1); Daniel and his companions were tested by being put on a simple diet (Dan 1:12, 14).
pp. 103-104

Wenham says:

The use of the term here hints that Abraham will face some great difficulty but that he will ultimately benefit from it. This is the only time God is said to have tested an individual . . .

p. 104

Wenham says:

Against this background of success, the opening comment “God tested Abraham” warns the reader that the coming narrative will strain Abraham’s faith and obedience to the uttermost in order to reveal his deepest emotional attachment. Is he willing to love God with all his heart, mind, and soul? Does he trust and obey simply because it pays him to do so: in the words of the Satan of Job, “Does Job fear God for nought? Hast thou not put a hedge about him . . . ? Thou hast blessed the work of his hands, and his possessions have increased in the land” (Job 1:9-10).

But like Job, Abraham was unaware that his trial was a test; for him it was totally real. Though the comment “God tested Abraham” alters the reader’s view of what follows, it must not obscure the awful situation Abraham found himself confronted with—torn between his faith in the divine promises and the command that promised to nullify them, between his affection for his only surviving son and heir and his love for God.

p. 113

Wiersbe says:

Genesis 22 records the greatest test that Abraham ever faced. True, it also presents a beautiful picture of our Lord’s sacrifice at Calvary; but the main lesson is *obedient faith that overcomes in the trials of life*. Abraham teaches us how to face and handle the tests of life to the glory of God. Consider five simple instructions.

p. 103

Wiersbe says:

In the “School of Faith” we must have occasional tests, or we will never know where we are spiritually. Abraham had his share of tests right from the beginning. First was the “family test,” when he had to leave his loved ones and step out by faith to go to a new land (11:27-12:5). This was followed by the “famine test,” which Abraham failed because he doubted God and went down to Egypt for help (12:10-13:4).

Once back in the land, Abraham passed the “fellowship test” when he gave Lot first choice in using the pastureland (vv. 5-18). He also passed the “fight test” when he defeated the kings (14:1-16) and the “fortune test” when he said no to Sodom’s wealth (vv. 17-24). But he failed the “fatherhood test” when Sarah got impatient with God and suggested that Abraham have a child by Hagar (Gen. 16). When the time came to send Ishmael away, Abraham passed the “farewell test” even though it broke his heart (21:14-21).

Not every difficult experience in life is necessarily a personal test from God. (Of course, any experience could become a test or a temptation, depending on how we deal with it. See James 1:12-16). Sometimes our own disobedience causes the pain or disappointment, as when Abraham went to Egypt (Gen. 12:10ff) and to Gerar (Gen. 20). Sometimes our hurts are simply a part of normal human life: As we grow older, friends and loved ones relocate or even die, life changes around us, and we must make painful adjustments.

Learn to distinguish between *trials* and *temptations*. Temptations come from our desires within us (James 1:12-16) while trials come from the Lord who has a special purpose to fulfill. Temptations are used by the devil to bring out the worst in us, but trials are used by the Holy Spirit to bring out the best in us (vv. 1-6). Temptations seem logical while trials seem very unreasonable. Why would God give Abraham a son and then ask Abraham to kill him?
p. 103

Wiersbe says:

Our faith is not really tested until God asks us to bear what seems unbearable, do what seems unreasonable, and expect what seems impossible.
p. 104

Wiersbe says:

. . . when God sends us a test; it shows God wants to “promote us” in the “School of Faith.” God never sends a test until He knows you are ready for it.
p. 104

Wiersbe says:

Consider how unreasonable God’s request was. Isaac was Abraham’s only son, and the future of the covenant rested in him. Isaac was a miracle child, the gift of God to Abraham and Sarah in response to their faith. Abraham and Sarah loved Isaac very much and had built their whole future around him. When God asked Abraham to offer his son, He was testing Abraham’s faith, hope, and love; and it looked like God was wiping out everything Abraham and Sarah had lived for.
p. 104

Psalm 119:67-68, 71

Before I was afflicted I went astray,
but now I obey your word.
You are good, and what you do is good;
teach me your decrees.

It was good for me to be afflicted
so that I might learn your decrees.

(Turning Points: Moments of Decision in the Presence of God by David Jeremiah) Nashville, TN: Integrity. Copyright – David Jeremiah, 2005.

MAY 5

A SECOND, DEEPER LOOK

It is good for me that I have been afflicted, that I may learn Your statutes.
PSALM 119:71

Many of Fred Astaire’s movies rank as classics of the silver screen. But in 1932, when Astaire was just starting out in Hollywood, he went to a screen test to try out for a part. After the audition, the evaluator wrote, “Can’t act. Can’t sing. Can dance a little.” That memo hung over the actor’s fireplace in his Beverly Hills home throughout his successful career as an actor, singer, and dancer.

There is no end to the stories of people who succeeded wildly after failing miserably—often for years. The lessons are usually similar in every case: don’t give up, try harder, dig deeper, don’t settle for no, and winners never quit.

There’s nothing wrong with such advice but it only addresses one level of our lives. For the Christian, failure can represent an entirely different set of realities: God is at work in me for His own good pleasure (Philippians 2:13); God can take every event and cause it to work for good (Romans 8:28); God is shaping my character to be like Christ (Romans 8:29). If you have failed recently, take a second, deeper look. God is at work to accomplish what only He can.

Every time we fail, we eliminate one more option that is proven not to work.

p. 132

One of the awesome things that we are going to see in this chapter is how Abraham has grown in his relationship to God. As soon as God speaks, he says:

“HERE I AM.”

Sensitive, ready, and submissive to whatever the Father would have, he is eager to fulfill the Father’s desires.

(A Continual Feast by Jan Karon) New York, NY: Viking / Penguin Group.
Copyright – Jan Karon, 2005.

Our tendency is to run from the painful realities or try to change them as soon as possible. But cure without care makes us into rulers, controllers, manipulators.

Henri J.M. Nouwen

. . . There are tender-hearted people who . . . object to the whole scheme of creation; they would neither have force used nor pain suffered; they talk as if kindness could do everything, even where it is not felt. Millions of human beings but for suffering would never develop an atom of affection. The man who would spare due suffering is not wise. It is folly to conclude a thing ought not to be done because it hurts. There are powers to be born, creations to be perfected, sinners to be redeemed, through the ministry of pain, that could be born, perfected, redeemed in no other way.

George Macdonald

(Refined by Fire by Brian & Mel Birdwell) Wheaton, Illinois: Tyndale House Publishers, Inc.. Copyright – Brian and Mel Birdwell, 2004.

We have been through the refiner's fire as the Bible discusses in Zechariah 13:9. The Lord says,

*"I will bring [them]...through the fire,
Refine them as silver is refined,
And test them as gold is tested.
They will call on My name,
And I will answer them;
I will say, 'They are My people,'
And they will say, 'The Lord is my God.'"*
p. 150

(Morning and Evening by Charles H. Spurgeon) Peabody, Massachusetts: Hendrickson. Copyright – Unknown.

Thank God then, if you have been led by a rough road: it is this which has given you your experience of God's greatness and lovingkindness. Your troubles have enriched you with a wealth of knowledge to be gained by no other means: your trials have been the cleft of the rock in which Jehovah has set you, as He did His servant Moses, that you might behold His glory as it passed by. Praise God that you have not been left to the darkness and ignorance which continued prosperity might have involved, but that in the great fight of affliction, you have been capacitated for the outshinings of His glory in His wonderful dealings with you.
p. 402

Good men must never expect to escape troubles; if they do, they will be disappointed, for none of their predecessors have been without them. Mark the patience of Job; remember Abraham, for he had his trials, and by his faith under them, he became the "Father of the faithful." Note well the biographies of all the patriarchs, prophets, apostles, and martyrs, and you shall discover none of those whom God made vessels of mercy, who were not made to pass through the fire of affliction.
p. 136

(Making Sense Out Of Suffering by Peter Kreeft) New York, N.Y.:Walker and Company. Copyright – Peter Kreeft, 1986.

Remember St. Teresa's bold saying that from heaven the most miserable earthly life will look like one bad night in an inconvenient hotel!
p. 245

(Turning Points: Moments of Decision in the Presence of God by David Jeremiah) Nashville, TN: Integrity. Copyright – David Jeremiah, 2005.

REFINER'S FIRE

Every branch in Me that does not bear fruit He takes away; and every branch that bears fruit He prunes, that it may bear more fruit.

JOHN 15:2

As evidenced by the devastation in California in 2003, wildfires have an out-of-control nature. Each year, more than one hundred thousand wildfires occur in the United States. Did you know that these fires are a natural way of clearing old growth in order to make room for new growth? In fact, some trees cannot survive without periodic blazes—and most animals escape and even benefit from wildfires. They simply find a new place to live. Thus the forest's cycle of life starts over—lasting decades or centuries, until the forest grows back and the departed animals return.

Sometimes there is no way to stop the out-of-control flames but to pray and wait for the flames to fall silent.

How do we handle the fires that rage through our lives—divorce, unemployment, or disappointments? Remember that God is with you in the midst of those trials. He has plans for new growth in your heart. His reasons are not always known, but the benefits of trusting God through hard times are eternal.

Meditate on these lyrics from Brian Doerksen's worship song "Refiner's Fire": "Refiner's fire, my heart's one desire is to be holy, set apart for You, Lord. I choose to be holy, set apart for You, my master, ready to do Your will."

p. 53

v. 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.”

Peterson paraphrases verse 2:

He said, “Take your dear son Isaac whom you love and go to the land of Moriah. Sacrifice him there as a burnt offering on one of the mountains that I’ll point out to you.”

The NET Bible translates verse 2:

God said, “Take your son—your only son, whom you love, Isaac—and go to the land of Moriah! Offer him up there as a burnt offering on one of the mountains which I will indicate to you.”

***The Bible Knowledge Commentary* says:**

God had told the patriarch to send Ishmael away (21:12-13), and now He told Abraham to sacrifice Isaac. Abraham had willingly sent Ishmael away, but he would not want to kill Isaac.

It is one thing to claim to trust God’s word when waiting for something; it is quite another thing to trust and obey His word after it is received. This was a test of how much Abraham would obey God’s word. Would he cling to the boy now that he had him, or would he still obey and return him to the Lord? In other words how far would Abraham go in obedience? Did he really believe that God would still keep His word and raise the seed of promise?

There are obvious connections with God’s earlier words to Abraham to get out and go to the land God would show him (12:1-3). But in this subtle reminder of the original call God also reminded him of the fulfillment, which made the test so hard: **Take your son, your only son Isaac** [“laughter”] **whom you love** (22:2). The command to **sacrifice** his own son **as a burnt offering** would have undoubtedly seemed totally unreasonable (even though child sacrifice was known in Canaan). How then could God fulfill the promises He made earlier (12:1-3), to say nothing of Abraham’s emotional loss of his only son, born to him so late in life?

The intensity of this command and the test is seen in the fact that there is a **CONTRADICTION** between the **PROMISES** and the **COMMAND** that the Lord gives.

Romans 8:32

He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how will He not also with Him freely give us all things?

The **QUESTION**:

Is it God who occupies our vision or is it Isaac?

Before Isaac's birth, the two were one. Now they have become two, representing two claims upon our attention.

We think that now Isaac is come that God's work is done and everything turns upon him. But God's promise is still with Himself and not with His gift. Isaac can stand for many things. He represents many gifts of God's grace. Before God gives them, our hands are empty. Afterwards they are full. Sometimes God reaches out His hands to take ours in fellowship. Then we need an empty hand to receive His.

When we have received his gifts and are nursing them to ourselves, our hands are full. When God puts out His hand we have no empty hand for Him. We can dwell on His gifts at the neglect of Him. Often we forget that our experience is not for our life-long use. Our source of life is God and not our experience. We hold on to the experience and forget God as Father.

You've got to let go to take what God has to offer.

“Make no mistake about it Abraham, I do not mean Eleazar, Ishmael, or not even yourself, but Isaac.” You have got to let go of everything, to receive that which God has for you. The closed hand must be opened, and empty to receive the gracious gift of God’s Son.

These words must have dropped into Abraham’s heart like hot lead. But not more hotly in his heart than in some of ours. Slowly has the finger of God moved over our most cherished treasures marking them for ruin.

“**TAKE [NOW] YOUR SON**” is the way verse 2 begins. We are assuming that the following statements will be made by the Lord:

- 1 Invest him with honors.
2. It’s time for the possession of his inheritance.
3. Find him a bride for a companion.

The whole focus of this trial isn’t on Isaac. It’s on you, Abraham.

ISAAC is described as the one “**WHOM YOU LOVE.**”

I am reminded of the resurrected Lord’s question to **SIMON PETER** while they were having breakfast together on the shore:

John 21:15

. . . “Simon, son of John, do you love Me more than these?”

The words of the Lord Jesus to the **CHURCH AT EPHESUS** in:

Revelation 2:4

But I have this against you, that you have left your first love.

Let us ask ourselves some **QUESTIONS**:

Are we holding our treasures with a loose hand?

Loving God most of all?

Prepared to obey at all costs?

Slaying our brightest hopes?

There is no purpose or reason given for the command. But each test is permitted to measure our progress. Every word that the Lord spoke stabbed him like a knife. Every word tore his heart out. How easy it would have been for Abraham to say:

“Now just a minute Lord. Let’s reason this out. How about taking my cattle? I have thousands of them. You can have them all. Are you sure you do not mean Ishmael? I have silver and gold. He is my only son. He is the son of the covenant. What will Sarah say? Lord, let thousands of rams be given. Every bullock in the stall is Yours. Even let me, but not him. Lord, I’ve waited all of these years!”

There were no questions, but simple submission and obedience from a servant’s heart that walks by faith.

In acceptance lieth peace;
 O my heart still;
 Let thy restless worries cease
 And accept His will.
 Though this test be not thy choice,
 It is His—therefore rejoice.

In His plan there cannot be
 Aught to make thee sad.
 If this is His choice for thee,
 Take it and be glad.
 Make from it some lovely thing
 To the glory of thy King.

Cease from sighs and murmuring,
 Sing His lovely grace,
 This thing means thy furthering
 To a wealthy place.
 From thy fears He'll give release,
 In acceptance lieth peace.

—**Hannah Hurnard**, *Mountain of Spices*

My life is but a weaving between my Lord and me,
 I cannot choose the color, He worketh steadily.

Oft times He weaveth sorrow, and I in foolish pride
 forget He sees the upper and I the under side.

Not till the loom is silent and the shuttles cease to fly,
 shall God unroll the canvas and explain the reason why.

The dark threads are as needed in the Weaver's skillful hand,
 as the threads of gold and silver in the pattern He has planned.

—**Benjamin Malachi Franklin**

The secret to triumph in trial is to trust in God.

The secret to triumph in the trial is to just trust God.

Jeremiah 32:27

“I am the Lord, the God of all mankind. Is anything too hard for me?”

Jeremiah 33:3

‘Call to me and I will answer you and tell you great and unsearchable things you do not know.’

We are often guilty of limiting God with human expectations.

God is able to fulfill any promise, no matter what is demanded of His servants.

Anderson says:

In Genesis 22 Abraham would face the greatest trial of his life, a huge test of faith. He had professed to love God, but true love is measured by how much we are willing to give up for the one we care about. In chapter 22 God gave Abraham the chance to give up everything for Him. The Lord demanded it all.

“Everything,” to Abraham, meant his son Isaac. God’s final great test for Abraham required him to be willing to surrender his much-loved boy. How would Abraham respond? Would he deny the authority of Jehovah by refusing God the gift of Isaac, the gift He had given in fulfillment of the promise? Would Abraham enthrone human ambition, making selfishness his king, or would he honestly open his heart and try to cooperate with his Lord? Could and would Abraham go all the way with God?

p. 178

Barker & Kohlenberger say:

The clear statement that “God tested Abraham” reveals the Lord’s real purpose in this incident. There is no thought of an actual sacrifice of Isaac in the narrative, though in the mind of Abraham within the narrative that was the only thought that was entertained. The abruptness of God’s request surprises us as much as it would have Abraham. Without any further explanation, the request is made in three simple imperatives: “Take,” “go,” and “sacrifice him.”
p. 33

Barnhouse says:

This is one of the Bible’s blessed contradictions. There are no real contradictions, but several are planned by God to teach us deep truth. After spending a chapter on Ishmael and recording Abraham’s cry, “Oh that Ishmael might live in thy sight” (17:18), God now calls Isaac Abraham’s only son. The New Testament says that Abraham offered up “his only son” (Hebrews 11:17). Here is an only son who had a brother! God is showing us a pageant, a type, a parable of the heavenly Father offering up His only begotten Son.
p. 197

Boice says:

Suddenly this peaceful world was shattered. God put Abraham to a great test, probably the greatest test any of God’s servants have ever endured. 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” (Gen. 22:2).
p. 684

Bush says:

. . . my heart bleeds at the thought!—but as for Isaac, the son of Sarah, the son of my old age, the crown of all my hopes, the very solace of my soul; how shall I survive such a loss? The blow that goes in his heart, must be fatal to us both.’ Such we may conceive to have been the plea which fond nature would have prompted in any other father than the father of the faithful; and if his prayer availed not to avert the doom of death, he would have besought that it might be mitigated; that he might expire by a natural dissolution; that some disease might gently loose the cords of life, and that his sorrowing but submissive parents might have the melancholy consolation of soothing his dying pangs, and of closing his eyes when he had ceased to live.
p. 6

Candlish says:

Was this, then, to be the end of all the patriarch’s hopes?—this the fate of that son—the heir of so many promises, the child of such persevering faith, the destined father of a mighty people—in whom all the families of the earth were to be blessed? Was it thus that the old man, who had given up to God his youth, his friends, his home, his country, was to give up even Isaac, the child of his old age, the son of his love and his tears, his last and only stay?—to give him up, too, to the God in the fond faith of whose promises he had already sacrificed so much, and sacrificed all so vainly? Were all his long-cherished expectations to be thus cruelly mocked, at the very time when they seemed to be at last realised?
p. 367

Henry says:

. . . I think, might very well be read thus: *Take now that son of thine, that only one of thine, whom thou lovest, that Isaac.*
p. 40

Hughes says:

We know it was a test, but Abraham did not—and the hearing of God’s command must have been excruciating beyond words because it began with terms of family endearment: “Take your son, your only son Isaac, whom you love, and go to the land of Moriah” (v. 2a). He was Abraham’s only son by virtue of Ishmael’s departure some fourteen to sixteen years earlier. (Significantly the same word—“boy” (vv. 5, 12)—is here used for Isaac as was used for Ishmael when he was a teenager.) Teenage Isaac had been his laughter for a decade and a half. And as the child of the promise, everything was focused on him. Abraham loved him with aching parental love, the kind that hurts.

Those sweet, endearing terms are followed by unmitigated horror: “Offer him there as a burnt offering on one of the mountains of which I shall tell you” (v. 2b). Three simple unqualified imperatives—“Take,” “go,” “offer him”—are the bare structure of the command.

p. 301

Jamieson, Fausset & Brown say:

Every circumstance mentioned was calculated to give a deeper stab to the parental bosom. To lose his only son, and by an act of his own hand, too!—what a host of conflicting feelings must the order have raised! But he heard and obeyed without a murmur . . .

p. 30

MacArthur says:

These startling commands activated a special testing ordeal for Abraham, i.e., to sacrifice his “only son” (repeated three times by God, vv. 2, 12, 16). This would mean killing the son (over twenty years old) and with that, ending the promise of the Abrahamic covenant. Such action would seem irrational, yet Abraham obeyed . . .

p. 43

MacArthur says further:

Moriah. Traditionally associated with Jeru-salem, this is the site on which Solomon’s temple would be built later . . .

p. 43

McGee says:

Right after this chapter, we are told that Sarah was 127 years old when she died (see Gen. 23:1). When you put that down with this chapter, you find that this boy Isaac was not just a little lad. Sarah was 90 years old when Isaac was born and 127 when she died. That means that 37 years elapsed here. Since he is called a “lad” in this chapter, you would not gather that he actually was in his thirties—probably around 30 or 33 years of age.

pp. 90-91

Parker says:

The words must have dropped into Abraham’s heart like molten lead. But not more hotly into his heart than some words have dropped into our own. Slowly has the finger of God moved over our most cherished treasures, marking them for ruin. They have not been spoken of in the gross, or hurriedly, as if with reluctance, but slowly, lingeringly, with a deliberation that aggravated the cruelty, until the steadiness of reason itself has been threatened.

p. 238

Radmacher & Allen say:

. . . Abraham had one son by Hagar (ch. 16), and as we learn later he had six sons by Keturah (ch. 25). But only Isaac was *uniquely born* (the same idea is in the description of Jesus as the “only begotten,” John 1:18). Indeed, the Greek term for “only begotten” is used to describe Isaac in Heb. 11:17. The point is not that Abraham had no other children, but that this was the unique child to whom all the promises of God resided. But that wasn’t the only reason God’s command would test Abraham’s faith; this was Isaac, the son who had brought God’s “laughter” to Abraham and Sarah . . .

p. 43

Radmacher & Allen say:

It seems incredible that God would tell Abraham to “take . . . your son, your only son Isaac, whom you love,” and offer him up as a sacrifice (Gen. 22:2). What sort of God would ask such a thing? What sort of God would test a man’s faith with such a weighty request?

It was a severe test of Abraham’s faith. Perhaps most of us would have failed the test. We might even have rejected God as cruel and bloodthirsty. But Abraham believed God. Though the sacrifice of Isaac seemed to go against God’s promise of an heir, Abraham believed that God would still fulfill His Word, even if it required Him to raise Isaac from the dead (Rom. 4:17).

The request was also a harsh lesson that all of life comes from and belongs to God (Gen. 2:7; Job 27:3; 33:4). In essence, life is merely on loan to us, both as parents and children. God can ask for its return at any time. So in that respect, the request to slay Isaac was similar to the difficult period that Abram and Sarai endured as they waited for the birth of this very son (Gen. 18:1-15; 21:1-7). Their lives and the lives of any children they might have were in the hands of God.

Let there be no mistake: God abhors human sacrifice, as many OT passages make clear (Lev. 18:21; 20:2; Deut. 12:31; Ps. 106:35-38; Ezek. 20:30, 31). So when Abraham was about to slay His son, God stopped him short of the actual sacrifice and provided an alternative in Isaac’s place. It proved to Abraham that his faith was well-placed: God is the God of mercy.

He is also the God of wisdom. He sometimes makes what to us may seem like strange requests. But if like Abraham we will believe and obey, He will reward our faith with His goodness and righteousness.

p. 43

Thomas says:

Thus by point after point Abraham is reminded of the dearest possession of his life, and is asked to give to God his best. Trials that are put upon us with no reason given at the time are the severest tests of all. They call for absolute unquestioning faith, and when responded to in this spiritual invariably lead the soul higher and nearer to God.

pp. 195-96

Waltke says:

“Since you are ready to obey me, take your son.”
p. 305

Waltke says:

The word *son* is repeated throughout the account (22:2, 3, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 12, 13, 16). The emphasis is inescapable. Abraham faces a monumental test.
p. 305

Wiersbe says:

Abraham heard God’s word and immediately obeyed it by faith. He knew that God’s will never contradicts God’s promise, so he held on to the promise “in Isaac shall thy seed be called” (Gen. 21:12). Abraham believed that even if God allowed him to slay his son, He could raise Isaac from the dead (Heb. 11:17-19). *Faith does not demand explanations; faith rests on promises.*
p. 104

The **TRIPLE COMMAND** from God to the heart of Abraham in verse 2 is:

1. **“TAKE,”**
2. **“GO,”** and
3. **“SACRIFICE.”**

(Living the Cross Centered Life: Keeping the Gospel the Main Thing by C. J. Mahaney) Sisters, OR: Multnomah. Copyright – Sovereign Grace Ministries, 2006.

In the same month that *The Passion of the Christ* was released in movie theaters, *Newsweek* magazine filled its front cover with a close-up of Jim Caviezel as the bloodied and battered Christ, plus this blaring headline: “Who Really Killed Jesus?”

Isaiah gives us the answer.

Who killed Jesus?

God did. God the Father was ultimately responsible for the death of His Son. God is telling us, “I purposefully determined to crush My Son with My wrath—for *your* sins, as *your* substitute.”

Why?

“Because I love you.”

When you’re tempted to doubt God’s love for you, stand before the cross and look at the wounded, dying, disfigured Savior, and realize why He is there. I believe His Father would whisper to us, “Isn’t that sufficient? I haven’t spared My own Son; I deformed and disfigured and *crushed* Him—for *you*. What more could I do to persuade you that I love you?”

That’s how far God’s love goes.

p. 56

(The Joy of My Heart by Anne Graham Lotz) Nashville, TN: J Countryman / Thomas Nelson. Copyright – Anne Graham Lotz, 2004.

THE CROSS OF OBEDIENCE

“If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross and follow me.”
MATTHEW 16:24, NIV

Are you repulsed by the thought of crucifixion? I am. But I also know that when I look into the eyes of Jesus, I see a cross! And He has said to me, “Anne, if you want to be My disciple, if you want to follow Me, you must deny yourself, take up your cross and follow Me. Because if you want to save your life, you’re going to lose it in the end. If you choose to lose your life for Me, you will find it. For what good will it do you if you gain the whole world, yet forfeit your soul?” (Matt. 16:24-26, paraphrased).

The cross that Jesus commands you and me to carry is the cross of submissive obedience to the will of God, even when His will includes suffering and hardship and things we don’t want to do. It is a willingness to totally, absolutely, irrevocably, and finally yield our lives to Him because we want what He wants more than what we want.

p. 128

v. 3 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.

Psalm 119:60

I will hasten and not delay
to obey your commands.

Peterson paraphrases verse 3:

Abraham got up early in the morning and saddled his donkey. He took two of his young servants and his son Isaac. He had split wood for the burnt offering. He set out for the place God had directed him.

The NET Bible translates verse 3:

Early in the morning Abraham got up and saddled his donkey. He took two of his young servants with him, along with his son Isaac. When he had cut the wood for the burnt offering, he started out for the place God had spoken to him about.

***The Bible Knowledge Commentary* says:**

Abraham's response was staggering—he gave instant, unquestioning obedience. He even got an **early** start! However, the three-day journey (v. 4) was probably silent and difficult. The distance from Beersheba to Mount Moriah was about 50 miles . . .

His costliest and dearest treasure was not too great to give to that great and glorious God who was the one object of his love and life.

Bowed in absolute submission and in obedience to the will of God, he arises **“EARLY THE NEXT MORNING.”** He has the same urgency about him that is displayed in the life of the Lord Jesus, when he said in:

John 9:4

We must work the works of Him who sent Me, as long as it is day; night is coming, when no man can work.

Here Abraham is in a hurry to be obedient.

Through deep experience Abraham has come to know God, not just as the Giver of gifts, but as the Father, the source of everything. It is this that qualified him to be the father of them that believe. It was this that fitted him to be God's vessel in the divine program of recovery.

After he made the preparations, he took two young men with him to assist him along with his son Isaac. And the word says:

“HE SET OUT FOR THE PLACE GOD HAD TOLD HIM ABOUT.”

Anderson says:

That's all God wants from you and me when we go through trials. He just wants the basics. What are they? Number one, *trust*. Trust Him. Number two, *submit*. Don't fight the test. Three, *obey*. Recognize that He wants an obedient heart, above everything else. Trust, submission, obedience – those are the basics He desires of us. After so much had already happened to Abraham, the Lord handed out still another exam for him. Let's see if he responded with the basics.
p. 180

Boice says:

Genesis 22 highlights certain features of Abraham's obedience, and the first of these is promptness. His was an immediate obedience. This was apparently a great characteristic of Abraham's life and is undoubtedly an important secret to his spiritual growth. After Abraham had been told to circumcise all the males of his household, "*On that very day* Abraham took his son Ishmael and all those born in his household or bought with his money, every male in his household, and circumcised them, as God told him" (Gen. 17:23, italics mine). After God instructed him to send away Sarah's slave Hagar and Hagar's son Ishmael, "*Early the next morning* Abraham took some food and a skin of water and gave them to Hagar. He set them on her shoulders and then sent her off with the boy" (Gen. 21:14, italics mine). It is the same in Genesis 22. Immediately after being instructed to offer his son as a burnt offering, "*Early the next morning* Abraham got up and saddled his donkey" (v. 3, italics mine). Throughout his long life, Abraham could have been saying, as the psalmist later said explicitly, "I will hasten and not delay to obey your commands" (Ps. 119:60).
pp. 703-704

Bush says:

The ready obedience exhibited by the patriarch to this call, evinces beyond question that he must have been perfectly satisfied of its emanating from God. The law of parental duty, the instincts of parental feeling, would inevitably have prevailed over a dubious revelation; and though we may be unable to determine *how* he could have been thus assured, yet of the fact there can be no doubt. His conduct was such as might have been expected under the unwavering conviction by which it was prompted. The command came during the night, and it was obeyed 'early in the morning.' There was no doubtful question of its reality or its obligation. There was no culpable communing with flesh and blood. Even Sarah seems not to have been informed of it, lost her affections should embarrass or overpower his faith.

p. 7

Henry says:

The several steps of obedience.

1. He rises early, *v.* 3, for the command was peremptory, and would not admit a debate. Note, those that do the will of God heartily will do it speedily.
2. He gets things ready for a sacrifice.
3. It is very probable that he said nothing about it to Sarah.
4. He carefully, looked about him, to discover the place appointed for this sacrifice, when he said (*v.* 5), "We will go yonder, where you see the light, and worship."
5. He left his servants at some distance off (*v.* 5), lest they should interpose in his strange oblation. Thus, when Christ was entering upon his agony in the garden, he took only three of his disciples with him, and left the rest at the garden door.
6. He obliged Isaac to carry the wood while he himself carried the fatal knife and fire, *v.* 6.
7. Without any ruffle or disorder, he talks it over with Isaac, as if it had been but a common sacrifice, that he was going to offer, *v.* 7, 8.

p. 40

Hughes says:

At the crack of dawn he was up and at it. No hesitation whatsoever. However, there is a subtle hint that his sorrow may have numbed his mind, as Gordon Wenham notes, because of the order of action—first saddling his donkey and then cutting wood is illogical. Though possibly disoriented, Abraham nevertheless obeyed with alacrity.

p. 302

Jamieson, Fausset & Brown say:

That there might be no appearance of delay or reluctance on his part, he made every preparation for the sacrifice before setting out—the materials, the knife, and the servants to convey them. From Beer-sheba to Moriah, a journey of two days, he had the painful secret pent up in his bosom. So distant a place must have been chosen for some important reason. It is generally thought that “the place of which God had told him” was one of the hills of Jerusalem, on which the Great Sacrifice was afterwards offered.

p. 30

Keil & Delitzsch say:

Without taking counsel with flesh and blood, Abraham started early in the morning (vers. 3, 4), with his son Isaac and two servants, to obey the divine command; and on the third day (for the distance from Beersheba to Jerusalem is about 20 ½ hours; Rob. Pal. iii. App. 66, 67) he saw in the distance the place mentioned by God, the land of Moriah, *i.e.* the mountainous country round about Jerusalem.

p. 249

Lange says:

Abraham sets out with the bleeding heart of the father, and the three days' journey are, no doubt, designed to give him time for the great conflict within him, and for the religious process of development . . .

p. 467

Wiersbe says:

Abraham told the two servants, “I and the lad will go yonder and worship, and come again to you” (Gen. 22:5). Because he believed God, Abraham had no intentions of bringing back a corpse! It has been pointed out that Abraham believed God and obeyed Him when he did not know *where* (Heb. 11:8), when he did not know *when* (vv. 9-10, 13-16), when he did not know *how* (vv. 11-12), and when he did not know *why* (vv. 17-19).

p. 104

(Life as a Vapor by John Piper) Sisters, OR: Multnomah. Copyright – Desiring God Foundation, 2004.

But in reality our pain and losses are always a test of how much we treasure the all-wise, all-governing God in comparison to what we have lost. We see this merciful testing of God throughout the Scriptures. For example, in Deuteronomy 8:3 Moses said, “And [God] humbled you and let you hunger and fed you with manna, which you did not know, nor did your fathers know, that he might make you know that man does not live by bread alone, but man lives by every word that comes from the mouth of the LORD.” In other words, God ordains the hard times (“he . . . let you hunger”) to see if we have made a god out of our good times. Do we love bread, or do we love God? Do we treasure God and trust His good purposes in pain, or do we love His gifts more and get angry when He takes them away?

p. 112

(The Journey Home: Finishing with Joy by Bill Bright, *Afterward* by Vonette Zachary Bright) Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson. Copyright – Bill Bright, 2003.

I cannot describe this process any better than Charles Fenelon, a sixteenth-century bishop who wrote,

Often, when you suffer, it is the life of your self-nature that causes you pain. When you are dead, you do not suffer. If you were completely dead to your old nature, you would no longer feel many of the pains that now bother you.

Endure the aches and pains of your body with patience. Do the same thing with your spiritual afflictions (that is, trouble sent to you that you cannot control). Do not add to the cross in your life by becoming so busy that you have no time to sit quietly before God. Do not resist what God brings into your life. Be willing to suffer if that is what is needed. Overactivity and stubbornness will only increase your anguish.

p. 75

v. 4 On the third day Abraham looked up and saw the place in the distance.

Peterson paraphrases verse 4:

On the third day he looked up and saw the place in the distance.

The NET Bible translates verse 4:

On the third day Abraham caught sight of the place in the distance.

For three whole days Abraham has journeyed in silence. That's a long time. That's like the opposing team calling time-out so the field-goal kicker can suffer a little longer. Abraham realizes that he would probably never walk this road again with his son.

He can say with Job, however, in:

Job 13:15

Though he slay me, yet will I hope in him . . .

v. 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.”

Peterson paraphrases verse 5:

Abraham told his two young servants, “Stay here with the donkey. The boy and I are going over there to worship; then we’ll come back to you.”

The NET Bible translates verse 5:

So he said to his servants, “You two stay here with the donkey while the boy and I go up there. We will worship and then return to you.”

The Bible Knowledge Commentary says:

When he **saw the place in** the region of Moriah (v. 2; later the temple mount; 2 Chron. 3:1) he took only **Isaac** and had the two **servants** stay behind. His statement, **We will worship and then we will come back . . .** is amazing. All Abraham knew was that (a) God planned the future around Isaac, and (b) God wanted him to sacrifice Isaac. He could not reconcile the two, but he would obey anyway. That is faith.

Abraham commands the young men to stay with the donkey and he and the lad will go yonder.

The servants probably would have resisted. This is business just between the father and the son, and he also says:

“WE WILL WORSHIP AND THEN WE WILL COME BACK TO YOU.”

We have a clue of what is being said here in:

Hebrews 11:17-19

By faith Abraham, when he was tested, offered up Isaac; and he who had received the promises was offering up his only begotten son; it was he to whom it was said, "In Isaac your descendants shall be called." He considered that God is able to raise men even from the dead; from which he also received him back as a type.

Romans 4:20-21

yet, with respect to the promise of God, he did not waver in unbelief, but grew strong in faith, giving glory to God, and being fully assured that what He had promised, He was able also to perform.

Abraham could have said to the servants:

"I don't know how God is going to do this but we're going to go over there and we're going to worship and then we're going to come back to you."

Accounting that God was able to even raise Isaac, the safest place for Abraham to be was in the place of submission and obedience to the command of the Father.

Oh how we resisted that when things don't seem to be working out.

Can we trust God when we are totally unable to see how He is going to work out His will?

Abraham demonstrated that he could. He showed he could trust God not merely for innumerable seed while Isaac stood before him healthy, vigorous and strong, but he could trust God just as fully if Isaac were a smoking victim on the altar. Abraham rested in God himself. He counted on the fact that God was able to bring Isaac back from the dead.

Isaiah 50:7

Because the Sovereign Lord helps me, I will not be disgraced. Therefore have I set my face like flint, and I know I will not be put to shame.

Hebrews 11:1

Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen.

Abraham's character is beautiful here. It shines forth in all of its radiant splendor. There is not a word of complaint, nor a selfish clinging to his rights, but a deep abiding peace and submission to God's plan and also to his authority, in his life. And of trust and faith to take God at His word.

Hartley says:

Abraham spoke definitely by using intense Hebrew verbal forms (cohortatives): we will go, we will worship, we will return. He was thereby expressing both his resolve to obey God and his hope for Isaac's survival.
p. 207

Radmacher & Allen say:

If the **young man** (servants) had accompanied Abraham and his son to the sacrificial site, they might have tried to restrain him from his awful deed. He told them to **stay** with the donkey, he and his son were on their way to **worship** the Lord. **we will come back:** In the Hebrew text, those words are even more arresting than in a translation. The three verbs all show a strong determination on the part of the speaker (12:2): "We are determined to go, we are determined to worship, we are determined to return."
p. 43

Waltke say:

Abraham must leave everything behind. His lonely journey up that mountain symbolizes the lonely, psychological journey of faith to the place of sacrifice.
p. 307

Waltke says:

we will come back. Although he does not know how God will work it out, his faith harmonizes God's promise that in Isaac his offspring will be reckoned (21:1-13) with God's command to sacrifice Isaac. According to Heb. 11:17-19, he expresses a type of "resurrection" faith, and according to Rom. 4:16-25 his faith is of the same quality and caliber as Christians who believe in Christ's resurrection from the dead.

p. 307

Wiersbe says:

Two statements reveal the emphasis of this passage: "God will provide Himself a lamb for a burnt offering" (v. 8); and "Jehovah-jireh" (22:14), which means, "The Lord will see to it," that is, "The Lord will provide." As he climbed Mount Moriah with his son, Abraham was confident that God would meet every need.

p. 104

**(Morning and Evening by Charles H. Spurgeon) Peabody, Massachusetts:
Hendrickson. Copyright – Unknown.**

There is no single point in which we can hope to escape from the sharp arrows of affliction; out of our few days there is not one secure from sorrow. Man's life is a cask full of bitter wine; he who looks for joy in it had better seek for honey in an ocean of brine. Beloved reader, set not your affections upon things of earth: but seek those things which are above, for *here* the moth devoureth, and the thief breaketh through, but *there* all joys are perpetual and eternal. The path of trouble is the way home. Lord, make this thought a pillow for many a weary head!

p. 141

v. 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.

Peterson paraphrases verse 6:

Abraham took the wood for the burnt offering and gave it to Isaac his son to carry. He carried the flint and the knife. The two of them went off together.

The NET Bible translates verse 6:

Abraham took the wood for the burnt offering and put it on his son Isaac. Then he took the fire and the knife in his hand, and the two of them walked on together.

Deliverance is not seen until we come to the **MOUNT OF SACRIFICE.**

Robert G. Lee points out:

No pipe organs are at this worship service only the harp of trees strung against the wind. No choir, only the wailing of the mountain winds. No cathedral only the mountain itself. No congregation one half of the congregation made up of a fine young lad, the other half an old man who carried in his body a heart as heavy as lead. No collection of money taken though Abraham was rich in cattle silver and gold, but an offering of that which was a thousand times more precious than money, an offering which money could not buy, no announcements [except "Father if it be possible, let this cup pass from me and] . . . the scream of a mountain eagle who watched from afar. No soloist except [the sobbings of a broken heart" and] the pleading eyes of Isaac trying to understand it all. No ushers except the invisible usher of the urgings of God's voice in his soul. No aisle, except the dim aisle of the trees formed. Worship in which he was offering to God the best that he had.
(source unknown)

Here we get a picture of God's side of Calvary. This is business between the Father and the Son.

Even as Christ carried the cross, so the wood of the burnt offering is laid upon Isaac.

God so loved the world that He gave His Isaac.

Ishmael was never offered because Ishmael is an act of the flesh. He represents legalistic works and performance and they are never acceptable to God.

John 10:17-18

“For this reason the Father loves Me, because I lay down My life that I may take it again. No one has taken it away from Me, but I lay it down on My own initiative. I have authority to lay it down, and I have authority to take it up again. This commandment I received from My Father.”

Kidner says:

6. The loading of *the wood* on to Isaac brings inevitably to mind the detail in John 19:17: 'he went out, bearing his own cross'. But *the fire and the knife* are in the father's hands. Victim and offerer walking *both of them together* . . . p. 143

**(Morning and Evening by Charles H. Spurgeon) Peabody, Massachusetts:
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Temptation, pain, disappointment, weakness, weariness, poverty—He knows them all, for He has felt all. Remember this, Christian, and let it comfort thee. However difficult and painful thy road, it is marked by the footsteps of thy Saviour; and even when thou reachest the dark valley of the shadow of death, and the deep waters of the swelling Jordan, thou wilt find His footprints there. In all places whithersoever we go, He has been our forerunner; each burden we have to carry, has once been laid on the shoulders of Immanuel.

“His way was much rougher and darker than mine;
Did Christ, my Lord, suffer, and shall I repine?”

Take courage! Royal feet have left a blood-red track upon the road, and consecrated the thorny path for ever.

p. 46

v. 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?”

Peterson paraphrases verse 7:

Isaac said to Abraham his father, “Father?” “Yes, my son.” “We have flint and wood, but where’s the sheep for the burnt offering?”

The NET Bible translates verse 7:

Isaac said to his father Abraham, “My father?” “What is it, my son?” he replied. “Here is the fire and the wood,” Isaac said, “but where is the lamb for the burnt offering?”

***The Bible Knowledge Commentary* says:**

In response to Isaac’s question **Where is the lamb?** Abraham again revealed his faith: **God Himself will provide** (v. 8; cf. v. 14). Isaac was brought “from the dead” twice—once from Sarah’s dead womb, and again from a high altar (cf. Heb. 11:17-19).

“THE FIRE AND WOOD ARE HERE . . . BUT WHERE IS THE LAMB FOR THE BURNT OFFERING?”

Isaac’s **QUESTION** cuts to the quick. He has recognized the fact that there’s **“FIRE AND WOOD”** but there is the absence of the **“LAMB FOR THE BURNT OFFERING.”**

John 1:29

The next day he saw Jesus coming to him, and said, “Behold, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!”

How is Abraham going to answer this question and explain to his son Isaac the absence of the lamb?

v. 8 Abraham answered, “God himself will provide the lamb for the burnt offering, my son.” And the two of them went on together.

Peterson paraphrases verse 8:

Abraham said, “Son, God will see to it that there’s a sheep for the burnt offering.” And they kept on walking together.

The NET Bible translates verse 8:

“God will provide for himself the lamb for the burnt offering, my son,” Abraham replied. The two of them continued on together.

In the passage we have had the repetition of the phrase:

in verse 6—“the two of them went on together” and

at the conclusion of verse 8—“THE TWO OF THEM WENT ON TOGETHER.”

Make no mistake about it, this is work between the Father and the Son.

God will provide for Himself. He Himself is going to pay the price, rather He Himself is going to be the Lamb in the Person of His Son. When no one else could pay God said, “I will pay the price.” That answer satisfied Isaac. He seems to say, “Alright father that is enough. God will provide Himself a sacrifice for me if I submit now.” So they “WENT ON TOGETHER.”

Abraham is obeying without question and he’s leaving the details and circumstances to God.

Once again we have the **REPETITION** of this phrase:

“AND THE TWO OF THEM WENT ON TOGETHER.”

This is business between the father and the son. Now the rest of the world is shut outside as the father and the son proceed to the **PLACE OF WORSHIP.**

God’s method was of His own affair. It would take them both by surprise.

Hartley says:

Confronted with the reality of what was about to take place, **Abraham answered** with hopeful words: **“God himself will provide the lamb for the burnt offering.”** The verb “provide” is literally “see.” With this assertion, was Abraham refusing to face what was about to take place, or was he venturing a statement of great faith? This assertion, along with the one made to his servants about returning, suggests Abraham had a hope deep within himself that God would not let him kill the child of promise.

p. 208

Parker says:

In the next instance, Abraham said to Isaac, “God will provide himself a lamb for a burnt offering” (v. 8), when he knew that Isaac was appointed to the altar! It is so often in human life that the inward contradicts the outward, and that the unseen controls that which is seen. Terrible as the storm may be, yet far away in some dim chamber of the heart is an angel singing softly of hope, and light, and rest. Sometimes it is a voice without words; a solemn sound that never comes within the narrow range of articulation; yet it is as a rock on which the soul builds. “We will come again,” said Abraham, when the very earth was reeling under his feet! “God will provide himself a lamb,” said he, when the appointed victim was walking at his side. All this is true to life, as we ourselves know it. We have said these very words. We have said things to dying friends which would not bear a strictly literal test of accuracy, yet which were true in large interpretations than literal exactness could comprehend or contain.
p. 237

Abraham is obviously the center of attention in this whole thing.

ABRAHAM is mentioned **SEVENTY TIMES** in these nineteen verses.

THE LORD is mentioned **TWENTY-ONE TIMES**.

**(Morning and Evening by Charles H. Spurgeon) Peabody, Massachusetts:
Hendrickson. Copyright – Unknown.**

Must Christ pass through seas of His own blood to win the crown, and are we to walk to heaven dryshod in silver slippers? No, our Master’s experience teaches us that suffering is necessary, and the true-born child of God must not, would not, escape it if he might.
p. 178

v. 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.

Peterson paraphrases verse 9:

They arrived at the place to which God had directed him. Abraham built an altar. He laid out the wood. Then he tied up Isaac and laid him on the wood.

The NET Bible translates verse 9:

When they came to the place God had told him about, Abraham built the altar there and arranged the wood on it. Next he tied up his son Isaac and placed him on the altar on top of the wood.

You can see Abraham gathering rocks so slowly, fitting them so carefully.

At last the discovery could no longer be withheld. They came to the place which God had told him of and Abraham built an altar there and laid the wood in order. Can you not see the old man slowly gathering the stones, bringing them from the furthest distance possible, placing them with reverence and judicious precision and binding the wood with as much deliberation as possible? But at last everything is complete and he turns to break the fatal secret to the young lad, who stood wondering by. Inspiration draws a veil over that last tender scene. The father's announcement of his mission. The broken sobs, the kisses, wet with tears the instant submission of the son who was old enough and strong enough to rebel if he had the mind. Graciously the Father pulls the curtain just like He did on Calvary with the darkness from noon until three. Then the binding of that tender frame which indeed needed no compulsion because the young heart had learned the secret of obedience and resignation.

Isaac was probably in his 30's at this point—possibly 33—even as His greater Son the Lord Jesus Christ was at the time of the giving of His life as a sacrifice for sin.

Isaac has the faith of his father, or he would have resisted that which is being done.

Finally there is the lifting of Isaac to lie upon the altar, upon the wood. Here was a spectacle which must have arrested the attention of Heaven. Here was a proof of how much mortal man will do for the love of God. Here is an evidence of childlike faith, which must have thrilled the heart of the eternal God and moved Him into the very depths of His being.

Do you and I love God like this? Is He more to us than our nearest and dearest? Suppose they stood on this side and He on that side, would we go with Him though it costs us the loss of all? You think you would? Oh it is a great thing to say, the air upon this height is too rare to breathe with comfort. The one explanation of it is to be found in the words of our Lord:

Matthew 10:37

“He who loves father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me; and he who loves son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me.

The **QUESTION** is:

Would you give up everything?

Would you go sell all?

Would you truly say I love You more than these?

Is your all on the altar?

Your body?

Your belongings?

Your blessings?

Romans 12:1-2

I urge you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship. And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect.

We would do well to ask ourselves the **QUESTION**:

Is our Isaac on the altar?

Isaac is a picture of:

the sinner bound by sin.

Gangel and Bramer say:

SUPPORTING IDEA: *Abraham's God asks of his people complete trust, obedient, and surrender of all human possessions, including life itself. Just as Abraham trusted God to find a way, we stand in the same position about every challenge we face in our lives.*

p. 198

Henry says:

He goes on with a holy willfulness, aft many a weary step, and with a heavy heart he arrives at length at the fatal place, builds the altar, the saddest that ever he built, lays the wood in order for Isaac's funeral pile, and now tells him the amazing news: "Isaac, thou art the lamb which God has provided." Isaac, for aught that appears, is as willing as Abraham; we do not find that he attempted to make his escape or made any resistance. Yet it is necessary that a sacrifice be bound. But with what heart could tender Abraham tie those guiltless hands, which perhaps had often been lifted up to ask his blessing, and stretched out to embrace him, and were now the more straitly bound with the cords of love and duty! However, it must be done. Having bound him, he lays him upon the altar, and his hand upon the head of his sacrifice; and now, we may suppose, with floods of tears, he gives, and takes, the final farewell of a parting kiss. With a fixed heart, and an eye lifted up to heaven, he takes the knife, and stretches out his hand. Be astonished, O heavens! at this; and wonder, O earth! Here is an act of faith and obedience, which deserves to be a spectacle of God, angels, and men.

pp. 40-41

Jamieson, Fausset & Brown say:

Had not the patriarch been sustained by the full consciousness of acting in obedience to God's will, the effort would have been too great for human endurance; and had not Isaac, then upwards of twenty years of age displayed equal faith in submitting, this great trial could not have gone through.

p. 30

HE WOULD NOT GO IN

Some theologians divide transgressions into “sins of the flesh” and “sins of the spirit.” This means that some sins originate in our physical passions; others come from our “heart” or disposition. In the story of the prodigal son, the elder brother’s attitude gives us an example of the latter.

We’re inclined to single out the prodigal son as worse than his brother. But it’s worth noting that when the story ends, the prodigal is restored, forgiven, and full of joy, while the elder brother stands outside and refuses to go in.

The stay-at-home son is more than background filler. He makes us think about the state of our heart, for sour moods create untold misery.

Discontent, jealousy, bitterness, resentment, defensiveness, touchiness, and ingratitude are the dispositions that ruin our marriages, wither our children, alienate our friends, and embitter every life—including our own.

It’s easy to defend our bad moods and to slide into deception and hypocrisy. But we must guard our hearts against such destructive attitudes. When they arise, we need to confess them, let them go, and experience God’s forgiveness.

Don’t let your bad attitude cause you to lose out while others enter into joy. —David H. Roper

*When anger lingers in our heart,
It poisons all we think and do;
When faith seeks ways to show God’s love
It keeps our spirit strong and true. —D. De Haan*

**Resentment comes from looking at others;
contentment comes from looking at God.**

(From *Our Daily Bread*, Saturday, June 2, 2007)

v. 10 Then he reached out his hand and took the knife to slay his son.

Peterson paraphrases verse 10:

Abraham reached out and took the knife to kill his son.

The NET Bible translates verse 10:

Then Abraham reached out his hand, took the knife, and prepared to slaughter his son.

Here we have the **FATHER AND THE SON:**

OBEYING,

YIELDING, and

COOPERATING.

Abraham was acquainted with human sacrifice, from the Canaanites that lived in the land. As he took the knife it is a picture of divine justice about ready to fall.

The blade was raised high, flashing in the rays of the morning sun. But it was not permitted to fall. With the test God also made a way of escape.

Barnhouse says:

With the consent of Isaac, Abraham binds him hand and foot, and lays him on the altar; then with confidence unshaken, and obedience unparalleled, he raises the knife to slay the victim. For in the heart of each was full devotion, though both expected death to strike, and fire to consume. The heart of the story is that both believed that out of the ashes God would bring forth resurrection life.

p. 202

Candlish says:

But, in the eye of faith, the venerable patriarch was still, even in this hour of terror, looking up to God, and reposing with unshaken confidence on that goodness which, during a long and harassed life, had never deceived or forsaken him. The same humble and holy trust in God, as his benefactor and his friend, which had thus far led him in safety, still triumphed over every doubt. Harsh as the decree might appear, he knew by much experience that God had never yet commanded him to his hurt; and he felt that the faithfulness of God must be as secure in the time to come as he had ever found it in time past. The cloud, indeed, might be dark which veiled the divine proceedings from his view; but it was not so dark as to cast a single shadow over his heart. He still trusted in the Lord as implicitly as when first he abandoned his father's house, casting himself on the Lord's protection. It mattered not to Abraham that by sacrificing his only son, he was, to all appearance, sacrificing his hope of a future people and a future Saviour to spring from him through that son. It mattered not that what God commanded seemed most inconsistent with what God had promised; and that, according to human judgment, by obeying the command, he was making utterly void the promises. He presumed not to question the wisdom or truth of God. He simply confided in his faithfulness and love; being well assured that God would reconcile all difficulties in the end, and justify his own ways, and accomplish his own word.

Thus, "against hope he believed in hope." The language of his obedience was the language of Job: "Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him."
pp. 368-69

Candlish says further:

He beholds it in a threefold figure. First of all, when he takes the knife, and stretches forth his hand to slay his son, he is made to realise the intensity of the love of him who spared not his own Son, but gave him up even to the death. Again, secondly, in the ram provided for Isaac's release, there is a vivid representation of the great principle of the sacrifice of Christ—the principle of substitution. A ransom is found for the doomed and condemned—an acceptable victim is put in their place. But, thirdly and especially, in the reception of Isaac again by Abraham virtually from the dead, and his welcome restoration to his father's embrace; —not, however, without a sacrifice, not without blood; —the resurrection of the Son of God, and his return to the bosom of the Father—after really undergoing that death which Isaac underwent only in a figure—might be clearly and strikingly discerned.

p. 380

v. 11 But the angel of the Lord called out to him from heaven, “Abraham! Abraham!” “Here I am,” he replied.

Peterson paraphrases verse 11:

Just then an angel of God called to him out of Heaven, “Abraham! Abraham!” “Yes, I’m listening.”

The NET Bible translates verse 11:

But the Lord’s angel called to him from heaven, “Abraham! Abraham!” “Here I am!” he answered.

The Bible Knowledge Commentary says:

God’s intervention—so dramatic and instructive—showed that He never had intended **Abraham** to go through with the sacrifice (child sacrifice was not to be practiced in Israel) but that it indeed was a test. **The Angel of the LORD . . .** stopped Abraham just as the patriarch **took** in his hand **the knife to slay** Isaac! Now God knew that Abraham would hold nothing back and that he did in fact **fear God**. To fear God means to reverence Him as sovereign, trust Him implicitly, and obey Him without question.

**“THE ANGEL OF THE LORD CALLED OUT TO HIM FROM HEAVEN,
‘ABRAHAM!’”**

How excited would the much-trying soul seize at anything that offered the chance of respite or of pause. And he said, with his uplifted hand returning to his side, **“HERE I AM.”**

Would that we could more constantly live in the spirit of that response so that God might always know where to find us. And so that we might always be ready to fulfill His will. Then followed words that spoke release and deliverance:

“DO NOT LAY A HAND ON THE BOY . . . 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.”

90% of the knowing the will of God consists in willingness to do it before it is known. When we are ready to pick up the knife or to lay it down, God will pour out His richest blessings.

Candlish says:

Such is the explanation generally of Abraham’s faith, as exemplified in the most memorable instance of its trial and its triumph. It is reliance, confidence, consent; taking God at his word; closing with his proposals; resting upon his known character and revealed will; laying hold of himself. Thus viewed, it has a double efficacy, as a bond of union and a motive of action.
p. 370

Hartley says:

The double calling of Abraham’s name in contrast to the single mention of his name at the opening of the narrative conveys the angel’s urgency in getting Abraham’s attention. Abraham responded in the way he did to God’s first call: **Here I am.** “From heaven” is mentioned because sometimes the angel of Yahweh walked about on earth (chs.18-19). Abraham was ready to hear any word from heaven, especially a word of release for his son.
p. 209

Woman Decides Against Abortion

Already on the operating room table and moments from an abortion, Anna Chernocke made a life-changing decision—she backed out.

The *U.K.'s Daily Mail* carries the story:

Minutes away from having the abortion she thought she wanted, each second felt like a second closer to murder rather than the blessed relief she had imagined. Overwhelmed with guilt and fighting back tears, she was led by two nurses into the operating theater. The doctor, a fatherly-looking man in his 50s, was sitting, waiting for her. He was kind, reassuring.

“Anna,” he said. “Are you ready? If so, we will give you a little injection in the back of your hand and transfer you to the table. Is there anything you would like to say?”

“Yes,” replied Anna. “I’m really sorry, but I’ve changed my mind.”

But instead of being annoyed with her for wasting their time, the medical team seemed to be overcome with a sudden, unexpected euphoria. The doctor broke out into a huge smile, grabbed her shoulder, and laughed, “Congratulations! Well done; you won’t regret it.”

The article goes on to share the story of the child’s birth. In July 2004, Chernocke gave birth to a beautiful baby boy. In her words:

“The day David was born was overwhelming. It was a very difficult labor, but the moment I saw him I felt instant love.

“Even though I was exhausted and connected to drips, the minute he cried, I would get out of bed and go to him.

“He really is the best thing that ever happened to me, and I still feel guilty that he could have so easily not been here.”

Today, Anna’s son, David, is a lively toddler with blond hair and blue eyes who eagerly awaits the birth of his younger brother. And just as the doctor promised, Anna has never regretted her decision.

*Helen Weathers, “Why I changed my mind seconds before I had an abortion,”
www.dailymail.co.uk (5-7-07); submitted by David Slagle, Atlanta, Georgia*

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v. 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.”**

Peterson paraphrases verse 12:

“Don’t lay a hand on that boy! Don’t touch him! Now I know how fearlessly you fear God; you didn’t hesitate to place your son, your dear son, on the altar for me.”

The NET Bible translates verse 12:

“Do not harm the boy!” the angel said. “Do not do anything to him, for now I know that you fear God because you did not withhold your son, your only son, from me.”

The verse begins with **TWO COMMANDS** from the Lord:

1. **“DO NOT LAY A HAND ON THE BOY”** and
2. **“DO NOT DO ANYTHING TO HIM.”**

The **LORD EXPLAINS** the two commands:

“NOW I KNOW THAT YOU FEAR GOD.”

The **REASON:**

“YOU HAVE NOT WITHHELD FROM ME YOUR SON, YOUR ONLY SON.”

This is the **SECOND OF THREE TIMES** that it is spelled out in these verses, that the Lord recognizes Isaac as Abraham and Sarah’s **“ONLY SON.”**

Back in verse 2:

“your only son Isaac.”

Now here in verse 12:

“YOUR ONLY SON.”

Then down in verse 16:

“YOUR ONLY SON.”

Is God calling you to give your life as an act of worship? Is God calling you to surrender that which you hold dear?

It was Jim Elliot who said:

“He is no fool who gives what he can not keep to gain what he can not lose.”

(source unknown)

That which we give to the Lord is never lost.

Whatever God asks of you in the way of sacrifice He never goes the limit.

It was Bill Scholten, who in his final letter to his wife in Africa written before he gave his life, who said:

“Dearest Dorothy, the Lord will not allow you to go through more than you can bear.”

(source unknown)

“DO NOT DO ANYTHING TO HIM. NOW I KNOW THAT YOU FEAR GOD.”

The **REASON** is:

**“BECAUSE YOU HAVE NOT WITHHELD FROM ME YOUR SON,
YOUR ONLY SON.”**

We need to also remember that there is **NO RECOGNITION OF ISHMAEL** throughout this entire passage.

John 20:21

Jesus therefore said to them again, “Peace be with you; as the Father has sent Me, I also send you.”

Margaret Clarkson has this verse in her famous hymn:

So Send I You

So send I you to leave your life’s ambition,
To die to dear desire, self-will resign,
To labor long and love where men revile you;
So send I you to lose your life in Mine.

(“So Send I You” by E. Margaret Clarkson. *The New Church Hymnal*, Lexicon Music, Inc., 1976. #238)

Henry says:

The best evidence of our fearing God is our being willing to serve and honour him with that which is dearest to us.

p. 41

Thomas says:

What God desired was not Isaac's life but Abraham's loyalty . . .
p. 197

Thomas says further:

. . . "Now I know that thou fearest God." Abraham was prepared to give God his very best. Faith can do no more.
p. 197

**(The Pursuit of God by A. W. Tozer) Camp Hill, Pa: Christian Publications, Inc.
Copyright – Christian Publications, Inc., 1982.**

God let the suffering old man go through with it up to the point where He knew there would be no retreat, and then forbade him to lay a hand upon the boy. To the wondering patriarch He now says in effect, "It's all right, Abraham. I never intended that you should actually slay the lad. I only wanted to remove him from the temple of your heart that I might reign unchallenged there. I wanted to correct the perversion that existed in your love. Now you may have the boy, sound and well. Take him and go back to your tent. Now I know that thou fearest God, seeing that thou hast not withheld thy son, thine only son, from me."
p. 26

Heroic Rescue in New York Subway

After entering a New York City subway station in the first week of 2007, 19-year-old film student Cameron Hloppeter suffered a seizure while waiting for a train. As his body convulsed out of control, the young man stumbled down the platform and fell onto one of the tracks—directly in the path of an inbound train. Fortunately, a 50-year-old construction worker named Wesley Autrey noticed his distress.

Standing on the platform with his two young daughters, Autrey realized that nobody else in the station was going to help. According to later interviews, he decided: “I’m the only one to do it.” Placing himself in great danger, Autrey jumped down onto the tracks and grabbed hold of Hloppeter. With only seconds to spare, he rolled with the younger man into a drainage trough cut between two tracks. An instant later, the train cars thundered over both of them with only inches to spare. Amazingly, neither man was injured.

In the ensuing days, Autrey was rewarded handsomely for his bravery. Mayor Michael Bloomberg presented him the city’s highest award for civic achievement, calling him “a great man—a man who makes us all proud to be New Yorkers.” Autrey was also given \$10,000 from Donald Trump, a trip to Disney World, and a year’s supply of MetroCards from the Metropolitan Transportation Authority. His boss even bought him a “hero” sandwich.

When asked about his invitations to appear on *The Late Show with David Letterman* and *The Ellen DeGeneres Show*, Autrey noted that “good things happen when you do good.” Still, he is modest about his new status as the Hero of Harlem. “I just did it because I saw someone in distress,” he told reporters. “Someone needed help.”

Other observers respectfully disagree. Elliot Sander, executive director of the Metropolitan Transportation Authority, called Autrey’s rescue “a death-defying act of bravery. We truly have not seen anything like this . . . He was at the right place at the right time and did the right thing.”

In the end, Wesley Autrey is just glad that he could help. “It’s like a fairy tale come true,” he said. “What better way to start the year off than saving a life?”

Van Morris and Sam O’Neal; sources: Verena Dobnik, “NYC Subway Savior Showered with Gifts,” Associated Press (1-4-07); Jill Gardiner, “Subway Hero Gets the Red-Carpet Treatment,” The New York Sun (1-5-07)

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(God's Best Secrets: Daily Devotional Meditations by Andrew Murray) Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan. Copyright – unknown, 1977.

NOTICE how often the Psalmist speaks here of the whole heart. “They that seek Him with the whole heart” (ver. 2.) “I shall observe Thy law with my whole heart” (ver. 34). “I will keep Thy precepts with my whole heart” (ver. 69). “I cried with my whole heart” (ver. 145). In seeking God, in observing His law, in crying for His help—each time it is with the whole heart.
(January 28)

v. 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.

Peterson paraphrases verse 13:

Abraham looked up. He saw a ram caught by its horns in the thicket. Abraham took the ram and sacrificed it as a burnt offering instead of his son.

The NET Bible translates verse 13:

Abraham looked up and saw behind him a ram caught in the bushes by its horns. So he went over and got the ram and offered it up as a burnt offering instead of his son.

Here we have the recognition of a **SUBSTITUTIONARY SACRIFICE**.

This is a principle that will be carried over into the New Testament when the Lord Jesus becomes our substitutionary sacrifice by his death upon Calvary's cross. You and I should be on that cross!

We must learn that Ecclesiastes 3:11 is true.

Ecclesiastes 3:11

He has made everything beautiful in its time . . .

We need also to learn that we are not to limit God with human expectations. The ram was coming up the other side of the mountain while Abraham and Isaac were coming up to the place of sacrifice.

Isaiah 53:4-6

Surely he took up our infirmities and carried our sorrows, yet we considered him stricken by God, smitten by him, and afflicted. But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was upon him, and by his wounds we are healed. We all, like sheep, have gone astray, each of us has turned to his own way; and the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all.

Isaiah 43:4

Since you are precious and honored in my sight, and because I love you, I will give men in exchange for you, and people in exchange for your life.

We began our passage and study with:

Romans 8:32

He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how will He not also with Him freely give us all things?

1 Peter 2:24

and He Himself bore our sins in His body on the cross, that we might die to sin and live to righteousness; for by His wounds you were healed.

2 Corinthians 5:21

He made Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.

Hartley says:

The provision of this ram enabled Abraham to worship God with a burnt offering as he had intended in coming to the region of Moriah. One can only imagine their exuberant joy as the two of them watched this ram ascend to God as a sweet-smelling aroma. It was possibly the greatest praise offering of all time.
p. 209

(Facing Your Giants by Max Lucado) Nashville, TN: W Publishing. Copyright – Max Lucado, 2006.

Christ intercepted the wrath of heaven.

Something remotely similar happened at the Chungkai camp. One evening after work detail, a Japanese guard announced that a shovel was missing. The officer kept the Allies in formation, insisting that someone had stolen it. Screaming in broken English, he demanded that the guilty man step forward. He shouldered his rifle, ready to kill one prisoner at a time until a confession was made.

A Scottish soldier broke ranks, stood stiffly at attention, and said, “I did it.” The officer unleashed his anger and beat the man to death. When the guard was finally exhausted, the prisoners picked up the man’s body and their tools and returned to camp. Only then were the shovels recounted. The Japanese soldier had made a mistake. No shovel was missing after all.³

Who does that? What kind of person would take the blame for something he didn’t do?

When you find the adjective, attach it to Jesus. “God has piled all our sins, everything we’ve done wrong, on him, on him” (Isa. 53:6 msg). God treated his innocent Son like the guilty human race, his Holy One like a lying scoundrel, his Abigail like a Nabal.

Christ lived the life we could not live and took the punishment we could not take to offer the hope we cannot resist.

3. Gordon, *To End All Wars*, 101-2.
p. 60

v. 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.”

Peterson paraphrases verse 14:

Abraham named that place God-Yireh (God-Sees-to-It). That’s where we get the saying, “On the mountain of God, he sees to it.”

The NET Bible translates verse 14:

And Abraham called the name of that place “The Lord provides.” It is said to this day, “In the mountain of the Lord provision will be made.”

The Bible Knowledge Commentary says:

A true worshiper of God holds nothing back from God but obediently gives Him what He asks, trusting that He will provide. The key idea of the entire passage is summarized in the name Abraham gave to the **place**: Yahweh Yir’eh, **The LORD will provide . . .** The explanation is, **On the mountain of the LORD it will be provided . . .** This is the basis of a truth often repeated in the Old Testament: the Lord was to be worshiped in His holy mountain by the nation. “Three times a year all the men [of Israel] are to appear . . . before the Sovereign LORD” to worship Him, bringing their offerings and sacrifices . . . The Lord would see . . . the needs of those who came before Him, and would meet their needs. Thus in providing for them He would be “seen.”

In naming the place Abraham of course was commemorating his own experience of sacrifice to the Lord. But an animal . . . was provided by God’s grace as a substitute for the lad in the offering . . . Later all Israel would offer animals to the Lord. Worship involved accepting God’s sacrificial substitute. But of course in the New Testament God substituted His only Son for the animal, and the perfect Sacrifice was made. John certainly had this in mind when he introduced Jesus as “the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!” (John 1:29)

The Bible Knowledge Commentary says further:

Yet the main point of Genesis 22:9-14 is not the doctrine of the Atonement. It is portraying an obedient servant worshiping God in faith at great cost, and in the end receiving God's provision. Abraham did not withhold his son. Similarly Paul wrote that God "did not spare . . . His own Son, but gave [delivered] Him up for us all" . . . A form of the same Greek word is used of Abraham in the Septuagint: "Thou hast not spared . . . thy beloved son" (Gen. 22:12).

This reveals the greatness of Abraham's faith; he was willing to obey God by sacrificing his son. It also reveals the greatness of Isaac's faith in submission; he had everything in the world to live for but willingly followed his father's words, believing that God would provide a lamb.

God will always intervene for His people, in the hour of their need. He will always be on time with His provision.

Philippians 4:19

And my God shall supply all your needs according to His riches in glory in Christ Jesus.

**(Each New Day by Corrie ten Boom) Grand Rapids, MI: Fleming H. Revell.
Copyright – Corrie ten Boom, 1977, 2003.**

Sometimes I am a thermometer—with all the needs around me, I go down. But we must be thermostats, not thermometers. A thermostat feels coldness and immediately restores the missing heat by bringing the room in contact with the heater. That is what we must do.

Said the Robin to the Sparrow:
“I should really like to know
Why these anxious human beings
Rush about and worry so.”

Said the Sparrow to the Robin,
“Friend, I think that it must be,
That they have no heavenly Father,
Such as cares for you and me.”
Elizabeth Cheney

Your heavenly Father knoweth that you have need of all these things.
Matthew 6:32 KJV

Father, keep us so close to your heart that although we are alert to the needs around us, we will not be depressed by what we see, for you make us able to act and help.
pp. 164-65

**(31 Days Toward Overcoming Adversity by Joni Eareckson Tada) Sisters,
Oregon: Multnomah Publishers. Copyright — Joni Eareckson Tada, 2006.**

This paralysis of mine has drawn me so much closer to Christ. It has given me a richer experience of His grace, encouragement, and sustaining power.
p. 128

I don't need to go so far as to wear a little turquoise wheelchair around my neck. But the principle is still the same. My disability . . . your heartaches and hardships . . . can take on new meaning through Christ.
p. 129

**(Victory in Jesus: Running the Race You Are Meant to Win by E. V. Hill)
Chicago, Illinois: Moody Publishers. Copyright – E. V. Hill, 2003.**

I'm going to come on down now to the fact that in answer to the quest of those who don't want to struggle, we have built struggle-free churches. We listen to preachers who say you don't have to struggle. I've seen preachers build great congregations on the gospel of the greenback. Their message is, "What are you doing broke, honey? Building gold is the law. Cattle on a thousand hills belong to the Lord. And you say you don't have any money? You're in the wrong church. You've got to come and join our church, where everybody's prosperous."

I was in Chicago, and one preacher said he didn't even want more members with problems to come to his church. Why? Because, "We have a God that has everything and there's something wrong with your faith if you are God's child and God owns everything, and you ain't got nothing," he said. He was saying, if you're struggling, there's something wrong with your faith. If that is true, then gamblers who have never been in church ought to become deacons. If the greenbacks are the judgment stick for salvation then Onassis should have been the pope. And if dollar bills are the yardstick of faith, then Christ was a flunky. If a bank account is the measure of faith then my momma had none. We could look up through the ceiling of our log cabin and see the stars. We could look down through the floors and see air. But it was a house of faith.

p. 36

(Stories for a Kindred Heart: Over 100 Stories Celebrating Friends, Family, and Love by Alice Gray & Barbara Baumgardner) Sisters, OR: Multnomah. Copyright – Alice Gray & Barbara Baumgardner, 2000.

RUDY'S ANGEL

WILMA HANKINS HIAWICZA

I walked into the grocery store not particularly interested in buying groceries. I wasn't hungry. The pain of losing my husband of thirty-seven years was still too raw. And this grocery store held so many sweet memories.

Rudy often came with me and almost every time he'd pretend to go off and look for something special. I knew what he was up to. I'd always spot him walking down the aisle with the three yellow roses in his hands.

Rudy knew I loved yellow roses. With a heart filled with grief, I only wanted to buy my few items and leave, but even grocery shopping was different since Rudy had passed on.

Shopping for one took time, a little more thought than it had for two. Standing by the meat, I searched for the perfect small steak and remembered how Rudy had loved his steak. Suddenly a woman came beside me. She was blond, slim, and lovely in a soft green pantsuit. I watched as she picked up a large pack of T-bones, dropped them in her basket, hesitated, and then put them back. She turned to go and once again reached for the pack of steaks. She saw me watching her and she smiled.

"My husband loves T-bones, but honestly, at these prices, I don't know."

I swallowed the emotion down my throat and met her pale blue eyes. "My husband passed away eight days ago," I told her.

Glancing at the package in her hands, I fought to control the tremble in my voice. "Buy him the steaks. And cherish every moment you have together." She shook her head, and I saw the emotion in her eyes as she placed the package in her basket and wheeled away.

I turned and pushed my cart across the length of the store to the dairy products. There I stood, trying to decide which size milk I should buy. A quart, I finally decided and moved on to the ice cream section near the front of the store. If nothing else, I could always fix myself an ice cream cone.

I placed the ice cream in my cart and looked down the aisle toward the front. I saw first the green suit, then recognized the pretty lady coming towards me. In her arms she carried a package. On her face was the brightest smile I had ever seen. I would swear a soft halo encircled her blond hair as she kept walking toward me, her eyes holding mine. As she came closer, I saw what she held and tears began misting in my eyes. "These are for you," she said and placed three beautiful long stemmed yellow roses in my arms. "When you go through the line, they will know these are paid for." She leaned over and placed a gentle kiss on my cheek, then smiled again.

I wanted to tell her what she'd done, what the roses meant, but still unable to speak, I watched as she walked away as tears clouded my vision. I looked down at the beautiful roses nestled in the green tissue wrapping and found it almost unreal. How did she know? Suddenly the answer seemed so clear. I wasn't alone.

“Oh, Rudy, you haven't forgotten me, have you?” I whispered, with tears in my eyes. He was still with me, and she was his angel.
pp. 129-30

v. 15 The angel of the Lord called to Abraham from heaven a second time

Peterson paraphrases verse 15:

The angel of God spoke from Heaven a second time to Abraham:

The NET Bible translates verse 15:

The Lord's angel called to Abraham a second time from heaven

The first time He called was to arrest Abraham from making the sacrifice, and the second to announce the blessing.

(The Weathering Grace of God: The Beauty God Brings From Life's Upheavals by Ken Gire) Ann Arbor, Michigan: Vine Books / Servant Publications. Copyright – Ken Gire, 2001.

Michelangelo knew how to be still before the stone and listen to the David within it. Strauss knew how to be still before the Danube and listen to the waltz that was eddying about in its waters. Money knew how to be still before the pond and listen to the lilies sunning on its surface.

What we are asked to listen to in times of upheaval is the voice of the Great Artists Himself, who will one day bring, out of the upheavals in this world, a new heaven and a new earth. And who is in the process of bringing, out of the upheavals in our life, a new heaven and new earth within us as well.

Our culture knows little of this kind of listening. That is true of our religious culture as well.

p. 54

v. 16 and said, “I swear by myself, declares the Lord, that because you have done this and have not withheld your son, your only son.”

Peterson paraphrases verse 16:

“I swear—God’s sure word!—because you have gone through with this, and have not refused to give me your son, your dear, dear son,

The NET Bible translates verse 16:

and said, “I solemnly swear by my own name,’ decrees the Lord, ‘that because you have done this and have not withheld your son, your only son,

“Abraham, because of what you have done, you have put yourself in the position of my blessing. This is what I’m going to do . . .”

v. 17 I will surely bless you and make your descendants as numerous as the stars in the sky and as the sand on the seashore. Your descendants will take possession of the cities of their enemies.

Peterson paraphrases verse 17:

I'll bless you—oh, how I'll bless you! And I'll make sure that your children flourish—like stars in the sky! like sand on the beaches! And your descendants will defeat their enemies.

The NET Bible translates verse 17:

I will indeed bless you, and I will greatly multiply your descendants so that they will be as countless as the stars in the sky or the grains of sand on the seashore. Your descendants will take possession of the strongholds of their enemies.

(Holiness: The Heart God Purifies by Nancy Leigh DeMoss) Chicago, Illinois: Moody Publishers. Copyright – Nancy Leigh DeMoss, 2004.

They will place us in bondage and misery, even as the beggar boy in Patricia St. John's story stumbled miserably down the dark, muddy street, clutching the stolen eggs.

As the story unfolds, Hamid slips and falls in the darkness, badly scraping and bruising his knees and shattering the eggs. When the nurse turns the light of her torch on him, he is covered with mud, blood, and egg yolk. He bursts into tears, terrified at the thought of what she might do, having discovered his theft. Will she call the police or have him beaten or put in jail? He knows he has forfeited the right to her kindness and is certain he will never again be allowed to enjoy the warmth or light of her home.

Instead, to his amazement, the nurse picks him up and takes him back to her home, where she washes him from head to toe, bandages his wounds, and replaces his tattered rags with fresh, clean clothes. She assures him of her forgiveness and explains his need to be forgiven by the Lord and to walk in His light.

Hamid looked down at his clean clothes and his spotless bandage, and understood. His eggs that had seemed so precious were gone, but he did not want them any more. He had been forgiven and washed and made clean. He had been brought back into the warmth and shelter of the nurse's home.

They were going out again in the dark to find Abd-el-Khader's house, but it would be quite different now. He would get under the nurse's big, warm coat and walk close beside her, sheltered from the rain; he would not stumble, and he would not be afraid of the light any longer, because he no longer had anything to hide. They would walk guided by its bright, steady beam. It would be a treat.⁴

Not until we mortify—put to death—our sinful flesh can we experience the freedom, forgiveness, and fullness for which our hearts long. Once we have been cleansed and have experienced the joys and satisfaction of His mercy and grace, we will find we no longer want those things we once craved and felt we couldn't live without. To walk in the light with Him will be our greatest treat.

4. St. John, *Star of Light*, 116-17. pp. 121-3

v. 18 and through your offspring all nations on earth will be blessed, because you have obeyed me.”

Peterson paraphrases verse 18:

All nations on Earth will find themselves blessed through your descendants because you obeyed me.”

The NET Bible translates verse 18:

Because you have obeyed me, all the nations of the earth will pronounce blessings on one another using the name of your descendants.”

The Bible Knowledge Commentary says:

God again confirmed His covenant with **Abraham** . . . His **descendants** would be **numerous** like **the stars** . . . like **the sand on the seashore** . . . and “like the dust of the earth” . . . God then added another element: Abraham’s **descendants** would be victorious over **the cities of their** Canaanite **enemies**. This was done by Joshua in the Conquest.

The Bible Knowledge Commentary says further

The lessons about true worship are timeless: (1) Faith obeys completely the Word of God. (2) Faith surrenders the best to God, holding nothing back. (3) Faith waits on the Lord to provide all one’s needs. But God does not provide until personal sacrifice has been made. True worship is costly. This was always so for Israel when they brought sacrifices. Those offerings were supposed to be given in faith so God would provide all the needs of each willing worshiper.

Here we have the Lord reminding Abraham of the covenant which He had made and the promises which were made way back in Genesis 12. Now as a result of all of the experiences we have had with Abraham, it is very fitting and significant that in this last picture after his faithful obedience and victory he should once again hear from the lips of the Lord the promises which had been made.

In other words, we open our series of studies with the **PROMISES** and we're ending our series of studies with the **PROMISES**.

Because of his obedience, all the nations of the earth shall be blessed. Abraham's greater Seed, the Lord Jesus Christ, is going to come and bring life.

This is the **REASON** the words of the Lord Jesus in the Gospel of John are so great:

John 8:56

Your father Abraham rejoiced to see My day, and he saw it and was glad.”

They have such great significance to us on this occasion.

Why all of this blessing for Abraham? It is seen in the **FINAL PHRASE** in verse 18:

“BECAUSE YOU HAVE OBEYED ME.”

THE LORD DELIGHTS TO BLESS THE OBEDIENT HEART.

v. 19 **Then Abraham returned to his servants, and they set off together for Beersheba. And Abraham stayed in Beersheba.**

Peterson paraphrases verse 19:

Then Abraham went back to his young servants. They got things together and returned to Beersheba. Abraham settled down in Beersheba.

The NET Bible translates verse 19:

Then Abraham returned to his servants, and they set out together for Beer Sheba where Abraham stayed.

After the test God renews the promises which He has made to Abraham and now we see Him descending from the mountain to the young men and they arose:

“AND THEY SET OFF TOGETHER FOR BEERSHEBA. AND ABRAHAM STAYED IN BEERSHEBA.”

Hartley says:

The account of Abraham’s testing ends abruptly with a detail that anchors it to real life: **Abraham returned to his servants.** They gathered up all the goods and **set off together for Beersheba.** The group who had come to Mount Moriah on a solemn mission returned to Beersheba in joy. There Abraham continued to live.
p. 210

CONCLUSION:

What are some of the lessons we can learn from this particular study?

LESSON #1: God often tests us to see what is really in our hearts.

LESSON #2: Testing in our lives often follows the time of blessing.

LESSON #3: Oftentimes there is no purpose given for the tests, but we discern that they are permitted to measure our progress.

LESSON #4: God is looking for our faith, our obedience, and our submission in the times of testing.

LESSON #5: Testing lets us know that God is not finished forming Christ in us as yet.

LESSON #6: Whatever God asks of us, in the way of sacrifice, He never goes the limit.

LESSON #7: God makes provision for a substitute sacrifice, even as the Lord Jesus is the center substitute upon Calvary's Cross.

LESSON #8: Following the time of testing, the Lord restates the promises which had been given earlier.

LESSON #9: Jim Elliot said: "If we are the sheep of His pasture, then we are headed for the altar."

LESSON #10: Obedience frees God to pour out His blessings.

LESSON #11: The Lord does not recognize the works of the flesh because of the phrase “only son Isaac” used three times here in this passage.

LESSON #12: The substitute sacrifice helps us be prepared for what Jesus is going to do on Calvary’s Cross for our sin.

LESSON #13: Is your Isaac on the altar? Have you given Him your body, your belongings, and your blessings?

Waltke says:

The obedience of Isaac and Abraham is a type of the Son of God, the true Suffering Servant. Like Isaac, Christ is a lamb led to the slaughter, yet he does not open his mouth. Just as Isaac carries his own wood for the altar up the steep mount, Christ carries his own wooden cross toward Golgotha (see John 19:17). Just as Abraham sacrificially and obediently lays Isaac on the altar (Gen. 22:9), so Christ sacrificially and obediently submits to his father's will (Rom. 8:32; Phil. 2:6-8; 1 Peter 2:21-24). Abraham's devotion ("You have not withheld from me your son, your only son") is paralleled by God's love to us in Christ as reflected in John 3:16 and Rom. 8:32, which may allude to this verse. Symbolically, Abraham receives Isaac back from death, which typifies Christ's resurrection from the death of the cross (Heb. 11:19). In taking an oath to bless Abraham and all nations through him, God guarantees the promise to Abraham's offspring (Gen. 22:15-18). Abraham's obedience prefigures the active obedience of Christ, who secures the covenantal blessings for Abraham's innumerable offspring.

pp. 310-11

**(The Life You've Always Wanted by John Ortberg) Grand Rapids, MI:
Zondervan. Copyright – John Ortberg, 1997, 2002.**

God still meets people in such ways. A friend of our family named Eileen was upset when her daughter told her that someone had been talking to her about God. Although she was disappointed with her life—trapped on her own suburban island—Eileen wanted nothing to do with God. That night Eileen couldn't sleep. At midnight she went downstairs and picked up a Bible. She couldn't remember the last time she had been to a church; nor had she ever opened a Bible on her own. When she opened it now, she noticed it was divided into an "old" part and a "new" part. She decided to start with the "new" part, figuring the book may have been updated.

So in the still of the night she sat on her living room floor and began to read the gospel of Matthew. By 3 a.m. she was in the middle of John's gospel and found, as she puts it, that she had fallen in love with the character of Jesus. "I don't know what I'm doing," she prayed to God, "but I know you are what I want."

p. 183

(Morning and Evening by Charles H. Spurgeon) Peabody, Massachusetts:
Hendrickson. Copyright – Unknown.

Oh, think not, believer, that your sorrows are out of God’s plan; they are necessary parts of it. “We must, through much tribulation, enter the kingdom.” Learn, then, even to “count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations.”

“O let my trembling soul be still,
And wait Thy wise, Thy holy will!
I cannot, Lord, Thy purpose see,
Yet all is well since ruled by Thee.”

p. 286

(Seize the Day with Dietrich Bonhoeffer by Charles Ringma) Colorado Springs,
CO: Piñon Press. Copyright – Charles Ringma, 2000.

He Knows Our Suffering
Hebrews 5:1-8

*“Lord Jesus Christ, you were poor and in distress, a captive and forsaken
as I am. You know all man’s troubles.”*

—PRAYER FROM PRISON

To know that others experience difficulties and struggles similar to the ones we are going through is usually of little comfort and help. This does not lessen our pain or distress. But when others come to weep with us, bring comfort and practical help, the burden is lessened. Christ is not meant to be a distant reminder to us that He also suffered, but He is the One who enters into our present distress and loneliness, to encourage and empower us even though He may not always bring immediate deliverance and escape.

Meditation

*Jesus is not only the suffering Man of
Golgotha, but also the present Lord who
lives with us through the Holy Spirit.*

(October 16)

(The Pursuit of God by A. W. Tozer) Camp Hill, Pa: Christian Publications, Inc.
Copyright – Christian Publications, Inc., 1982.

Father, I want to know Thee, but my cowardly heart fears to give up its toys. I cannot part with them without inward bleeding, and I do not try to hide from Thee the terror of the parting. I come trembling, but I do come. Please root from my heart all those things which I have cherished so long and which have become a very part of my living self, so that Thou mayest enter and dwell there without a rival. Then shalt Thou make the place of Thy feet glorious. Then shall my heart have no need of the sun to shine in it, for Thyself wilt be the light of it, and there shall be no night there. In Jesus' name, Amen.

pp. 30–31

(Seeing and Savoring Jesus Christ by John Piper) Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books.
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A PRAYER

Father, what can we say? We feel utterly unworthy in the face of Christ's unspeakable sufferings. We are sorry. It was our sin that brought this to pass. It was we who struck him and spit on him and mocked him. O Father, we are so sorry. We bow ourselves to the dirt and shut the mouths of our small, dark, petty, sinful souls. O Father, touch us with fresh faith that we might believe the incredible. The very pain of Christ that makes us despair is our salvation. Open our fearful hearts to receive the Gospel. Waken dead parts of our hearts that cannot feel what must be felt—that we are loved with the deepest, strongest, purest love in the universe. Oh, grant us to have the power to comprehend with all the saints the height and depth and length and breadth of the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge, and may we be filled with all the fullness of God. Fight for us, O God, that we not drift numb and blind and foolish into vain and empty excitements. Life is too short, too precious, too painful to waste on worldly bubbles that burst. Heaven is too great, hell is too horrible, eternity is too long that we should putter around on the porch of eternity. O God, open our eyes to the vastness of the sufferings of Christ and what they mean for sin and holiness and hope and heaven. We fear our bent to trifling. Make us awake to the weight of glory—the glory of Christ's incomparable sufferings. In his great and wonderful name, amen.

p. 72

Is Your All On the Altar?

You have longed for sweet peace,
and for faith to increase,
And have earnestly, fervently prayed;
But you cannot rest or be perfectly blest
Until all on the altar is laid.

Would you walk with the Lord
in the light of His Word,
And have peace and contentment always?
You must do His sweet will
to be free from all ill,
On the altar your all you must lay.

Oh, we never can know
what the Lord will bestow
Of the blessings for which we have prayed,
Till our body and soul
He doth fully control,
And our all on the altar is laid.

Who can tell all the love
He will send from above,
And how happy our hearts will be made,
Of the fellowship sweet
we shall share at His feet
When our all on the altar is laid?

Refrain:

Is your all on the altar of sacrifice laid?
Your heart, does the Spirit control?
You can only be blest and have peace and sweet rest,
As you yield Him your body and soul.

“Is Your All on the Altar?” by Elisha A. Hoffman. *The New Church Hymnal*.
Lexicon Music, Inc., 1976. #179)