

YOUTH UNIT I: The Genesis of Altars and Sacrifices
YOUTH GENERAL LESSON TITLE: Abraham Makes an Offering
YOUTH TOPIC: Ultimate Allegiance

LESSON 3
DATE: June 15, 2025

BACKGROUND SCRIPTURE: Genesis 22:1-19
PRINT PASSAGE: Genesis 22:1-14

KEEPIN' IT CURRENT! (5 Minutes)

"Passing the Test" - Do you remember feeling that tightness in your stomach as you prepared to take a huge exam? Your parents received notes from your school during an end-of-grade test to remind them you needed your pencils. You might have experienced anxiety when a test question leaves you clueless about how to start answering. We are experiencing test anxiety when our bodies begin to sweat, our heart beats rapidly, and our minds shut down! Taking a test can be a real ordeal.



Can you recall an incredible accomplishment when you knew you had passed the test? Handing in your paper early, while others continue to struggle, gives you a sense of confidence. Experiencing happiness when you tell your family that you scored either a perfect 100 or at least an A brings great satisfaction.

As followers of God, we must recognize that life's numerous tests exist because God intentionally sends test for our benefit. He cares about more than our happiness and comfort because He desires personal development and maturity. The challenges we encounter serve to strengthen us rather than destroy us. Challenges help us to mirror Jesus as we are formed into the image of Christ. Tests teach us to establish and maintain proper relationships with our brothers and sisters in Christ. God uses life challenges to build our capacity to accept our cross and follow Christ wholeheartedly.

Today's lesson will examine how God uses life's challenges to build our character and strengthen our faith. God can give us victory amid trials and tribulations, if we will trust Him!

KEEPIN' IT REAL! (5 Minutes)

- Consider a recent "test" or difficulty you have encountered in your life. What lessons do you believe God was attempting to impart to you during that encounter? Did going through the test lead to any areas of character development or spiritual growth?
- "God isn't just concerned about our happiness and comfort—He's interested in our growth and maturity," the lesson says. How might this viewpoint alter how you might handle challenges when they come up? How would it feel to tackle your next obstacle in life with this kind of attitude?

KEEPIN' IT BIBLICAL! (20 Minutes)

KEY VERSES: "Indeed, the whole earth is mine, but you shall be for me a priestly kingdom and a holy nation." Exodus 19:5b-6a.

The Command to Sacrifice Isaac

¹ After these things God tested Abraham. He said to him, "Abraham!" And he said, "Here I am." ² He said, "Take your son, your only son Isaac, whom you love, and go to the land of Moriah and offer him there as a burnt offering on one of the mountains that I shall show you." ³ So Abraham rose early in the morning, saddled his donkey, and took two of his young men with him and his son Isaac; he cut the wood for the burnt offering and set out and went to the place in the distance that God had shown him. ⁴ On the third day Abraham looked up and saw the place far away. ⁵ Then Abraham said to his young men, "Stay here with the donkey; the boy and I will go over there; we will worship, and then we will come back to you." ⁶ Abraham took the wood of the burnt offering and laid it on his son Isaac, and he himself carried the fire and the knife. And the two of them walked on together. ⁷ Isaac said to his father Abraham, "Father!" And he said, "Here I am, my son." He said, "The fire and the wood are here, but where is the lamb for a burnt offering?" ⁸ Abraham said, "God himself will provide the lamb for a burnt offering, my son." And the two of them walked on together.

⁹ When they came to the place that God had shown him, Abraham built an altar there and laid the wood in order. He bound his son Isaac and laid him on the altar on top of the wood. ¹⁰ Then Abraham reached out his hand and took the knife to kill his son. ¹¹ But the angel of the Lord called to him from heaven and said, "Abraham, Abraham!" And he said, "Here I am." ¹² He said, "Do not lay your hand on the boy or do anything to him, for now I know that you fear God, since you have not withheld your son, your only son, from me." ¹³ And Abraham looked up and saw a ram, caught in a thicket by its horns. Abraham went and took the ram and offered it up as a burnt offering instead of his son. ¹⁴ So Abraham called that place "The Lord will provide," as it is said to this day, "On the mount of the Lord it shall be provided."

Genesis 22 opens with one of the Bible's most difficult tests of faith. God calls out to Abraham, who immediately responds, "Here I am." But what God asks next is shocking: "Take now your son, your only son Isaac, whom you love, and go to the land of Moriah, and offer him there as a burnt offering." This wasn't just any son - this was Isaac, the miracle child born when Abraham was 100 years old. This was the son through whom God had promised Abraham would become the father of many nations. This was the son for whom Abraham and Sarah had waited for 25 years. And now, God was asking Abraham to sacrifice him.

What's impressive is Abraham's immediate obedience. The Bible says he "rose early in the morning," saddled his donkey, split the wood for the sacrifice himself, and set out on the three-day journey to Moriah. There's no record of Abraham arguing with God, questioning the command, or discussing it with Sarah. He simply obeyed. For three days, Abraham traveled with this heavy burden. When Abraham and Isaac got to the mountain, Abraham told his servants, "Stay here with the donkey; the lad and I will go yonder and worship, and we will come back to you." This wasn't just positive thinking. Hebrews 11:19 tells us Abraham believed that even if he did sacrifice Isaac, God would raise him from the dead because God had promised Abraham would have descendants.

As Abraham and Isaac climbed the mountain together, Isaac noticed something missing. "Look, the fire and the wood, but where is the lamb for a burnt offering?" he asked. Abraham's response is powerful: "My son, God will provide for Himself the lamb for a burnt offering." When they reached the place God had chosen, Abraham built an altar, arranged the wood, and did something that shows Isaac's and Abraham's faith; he bound his son and laid him on the altar. Isaac, likely a young man strong enough to resist, willingly submitted to his father's actions. Just as Abraham took the knife to sacrifice his son, the Angel

of the Lord called out from heaven, "Abraham, Abraham!" He responded again with those words of availability: "Here I am."



God stopped him and said, "Do not lay your hand on the lad or do anything to him; for now I know that you fear God since you have not withheld your only son from Me." Abraham then saw a ram caught in a thicket by its horns, which he sacrificed instead of Isaac. Abraham named that place "Jehovah Jireh," meaning "The Lord Will Provide." This name pointed to God's provision--not just of the ram that day, but ultimately to Jesus, who would one day be sacrificed on that same mountain range where Jerusalem was later built. Because of Abraham's extraordinary act of faith, God renewed His covenant with

Abraham, promising to multiply his descendants "as the stars of the heaven and as the sand which is on the seashore." God also promised that all nations of the earth would be blessed through Abraham's offspring, pointing to Jesus Christ who would come from Abraham's line.

This story powerfully foreshadows what God, Himself, would do centuries later. Like Isaac, Jesus willingly submitted to His Father's will, carried the wood for His own sacrifice up the hill, and was laid on that wood to be sacrificed. But unlike Isaac's case, there was no substitute for Jesus because Jesus was the substitute, not just for Isaac, but for all of us. The story of Abraham and Isaac shows us the incredible faith Abraham had in God's promises and gives us a picture of what God would do for us through Jesus, His only Son. The next time you face a challenging test of faith, remember Abraham. He trusted God even when he didn't understand, obeyed even when it was painful, and believed God would keep His promises even when it seemed impossible. And God proved faithful.

KEEPIN' IT TOGETHER (5 Minutes)

Just like physical muscles get stronger when pushed with weights, your spiritual muscles grow when faced with challenges and tests. Think about how a good workout at the gym requires adding more weight and going through discomfort. There's this story about a college student who was into weightlifting. One day, another guy watched him easily bench pressing and curling heavy weights. When the weightlifter finished, the observer demanded, "Give me that weight." Looking at the fifty-pound dumbbell, the lifter asked if he was sure. The impatient observer insisted so the weightlifter handed it over. Immediately, the guy dropped to the ground because he wasn't prepared for that weight. He hadn't undergone the training to handle what the experienced lifter could carry.

This perfectly illustrates how God works in our lives. Many teens want to do amazing things for God without going through His "training program" - the process He uses in preparation for more significant responsibilities and challenges. In James 1:2-4, the Bible says, "Count it all joy when you fall into various trials, knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience. But let patience have its perfect work, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing." James isn't saying you should enjoy tough times but recognize their purpose. Nobody enjoys the burning sensation during a challenging workout, but everyone loves the results--being more confident, more fit, and healthier.

Each test in your life reveals what's truly inside you - your character, faith, and priorities. When you face difficulties with friends, family struggles, or tough decisions, these moments are like spiritual gym sessions where God helps you to develop endurance and strength. And here's some good news: If you've recently failed a test, maybe you lost your temper, gave in to peer pressure, or didn't stand up for what's right - God offers second chances. Unlike some teachers who won't let you retake a test; God sees your sincere efforts and provides fresh opportunities to grow. The key is learning from your failures, identifying what triggered them, and preparing yourself for the next challenge with stronger spiritual muscles.

iTHINK! (5 Minutes)

- What challenging situation are you facing right now that might actually be God's "weight training" to strengthen a particular area of your faith or character?
- Think about a time when you "failed a test" in your faith journey. What did you learn about yourself, and how might God be preparing you to handle a similar situation better next time?