

Abraham Tested: Faith That Obeys

— True Faith Submits to God, Even When the Command Is Difficult —

- The Test of Faith
- The Surrender of Faith
- The Confidence of Faith
- The Provision and Blessing of God

In our previous lesson, we studied “The Faith of Abraham.”

- We saw that Abraham’s faith, began with the Word of God.
- **God spoke**, Abraham heard, Abraham believed, Abraham obeyed, Abraham waited, and Abraham continued.

That lesson, focused mainly on Abraham’s faith-response in Genesis 12 and Genesis 15.

Today, God willing, we’ll consider one of the strongest **tests of faith**, recorded in Scripture: [Genesis 22:1–19](#).

The focus of this lesson is simple:

- **True faith submits to God, even when the command is difficult.**

Abraham,

- Had already heard God.
- He had already believed God.
- He had already obeyed God.
- And He had already waited on God.

But now, his faith would be **tested**, in a very personal and painful way.

God commanded Abraham to offer Isaac, the son whom he loved.

This lesson will show that:

- Faith can be tested.
- Faith must surrender to God.
- Faith obeys, while trusting God’s promise.
- God provides, and God blesses obedient faith.

A simple way to remember the lesson, is this:

- God Tested.
- Abraham Trusted.
- Abraham Obeyed.
- And God Provided.

Before we look at Abraham’s obedience, we must first understand the nature of,

I. The Test of Faith

Genesis 22 does not begin with Abraham testing God, but with God testing Abraham.

A. God Proved Abraham’s Faith

Genesis 22, opens by telling us, that God tested Abraham.

This was not temptation to evil, but a proving of Abraham’s faith.

- The Bible says, “**And it came to pass after these things, that God did tempt Abraham, and said unto him, Abraham: and he said, Behold, here I am.**” ([Gen.22:1](#))

Explanation:

- The phrase, “**After these things**” — points backward, to Abraham’s life of faith, promise, waiting, and blessing.
- “**Tempt**” here, means to test, try, or prove — It does Not mean, God was tempting Abraham to sin.
- “**Here I am**” — shows, Abraham’s readiness to hear God.

James helps us understand, that God does Not tempt man to evil.

Therefore, Genesis 22 is a test of faith, Not an attempt to make Abraham sin.

- James said, “Let no man say, when he is **tempted**, I am tempted of God: **for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth He any man:** But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed.” ([Jas.1:13–14](#))

Explanation:

- The word, “**Tempted**” in James — refers to being enticed toward sin.
- “**God cannot be tempted with evil**” means — evil has no power over God.
- “**Neither tempteth He any man**” means — God does not lure people into sin.

In Genesis 22, God was proving Abraham’s faith, Not enticing him to do evil.

Peter also teaches, that faith may be tried.

Such testing, can reveal the genuineness and value of faith.

- He said, “That the **trial** of your **faith**, being much **more precious than of gold** that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory, at the appearing of Jesus Christ:” ([1Pet.1:7](#))

Explanation:

- “**Trial**” means — testing or proving.
- “**Faith**” — is trust in God, that obeys Him.
- “**More precious than of gold**” shows that — tested faith, is of great value before God.

Gold is put into fire, Not to destroy it, but to prove and purify it.

- In Genesis 22, Abraham’s faith was placed under a severe test.
- God already knew Abraham’s heart, but the test would reveal Abraham’s faith, in action.

Faith that is never tested, may be easy to claim.

- Faith that obeys under testing, shows reverence toward God.
- God proved Abraham’s faith.

Now that we have seen, that God tested Abraham, we must notice,

B. The Command Was Difficult

God’s command, was not general or easy.

It touched Abraham’s heart deeply, because Isaac was the son of promise.

- God said, “Take now **thy son, thine only son Isaac, whom thou lovest**, and get thee into the land of Moriah; and **offer him** there, for a **burnt offering**, upon one of the mountains, which I will tell thee of.” ([Gen.22:2](#))

Explanation:

- “**Thy son**” — shows the personal nature of the command.
- “**Thine only son Isaac**” — refers to Isaac, as the unique son of promise.
- “**Whom thou lovest**” — shows the affection Abraham had for Isaac.
- “**Offer him**” means — to present him as a sacrifice.
- “**Burnt offering**” — was an offering wholly given unto God.

The difficulty of this command, is even clearer,
when we remember, what God had already said, concerning Isaac.

- “God said, Sarah thy wife, shall bear thee a son indeed;
and thou shalt call his name Isaac: and I will establish My **covenant with him**,
for an everlasting covenant, and with his seed after him.” ([Gen.17:19](#))

Explanation:

- “**Covenant**” means — an established promise or agreement from God.
- “**With him**” shows — Isaac was the promised son, through whom God’s promise would continue.

This made the test especially difficult:

God had **promised** through Isaac, and now God commanded Abraham, to **offer** Isaac.

God had also plainly said, that Isaac was the son, through whom Abraham’s seed, would be called.

- “God said unto Abraham, Let it not be grievous in thy sight, because of the lad,
and because of thy bondwoman; in all that Sarah hath said unto thee,
hearken unto her voice; for **in Isaac**, shall **thy seed be called**.” ([Gen.21:12](#))

Explanation:

- “**In Isaac**” means — Isaac was the chosen son of promise.
- “**Thy seed be called**” means — the promise line would be identified, through Isaac.

This command was difficult, because it touched Abraham’s love,
his family, and his understanding of God’s promise.

- Abraham was Not asked, to give something small.
- He was asked to surrender, the son whom he loved.
- Sometimes obedience is difficult, not because God’s command is unclear, but because the cost is great.

A child may understand the words, “Give that to me,”
but still struggle, because he loves what he is holding.

- Abraham understood God’s command,
- and the test, was whether he would obey God, above all.
- The command was difficult, but faith does not obey, only when the command is easy.

God tested Abraham’s faith.

- This was Not temptation to evil, but a proving of faith.
- The command was difficult, because Isaac was Abraham’s beloved son and the son of promise.

Faith is Not proved by words alone.

Faith is Proved, when God’s Word is trusted and obeyed, even when the command is hard.

Having seen the test, we now look at Abraham's response.

II. The Surrender of Faith

True faith does not merely listen to God's command; true faith submits.

The Bible does not show Abraham arguing, delaying, or trying to change God's command.

A. Abraham Rose Early to Obey

After God gave the command, Abraham acted.

His obedience was deliberate and prompt.

- Scripture says, "**Abraham rose up early in the morning, and saddled his ass, and took two of his young men with him, and Isaac his son, and clave the wood for the burnt offering, and rose up, and went unto the place, of which God had told him.**" ([Gen.22:3](#))

Explanation:

- "**Rose up early**" — shows prompt action.
- "**Saddled**" and "**clave the wood**" — show preparation.
- "**Went unto the place**" — shows obedience, to God's specific instruction.
- "**God had told him**" — shows that Abraham's actions, were guided by God's Word.

Jesus teaches,

- "**IF ye love Me, keep My commandments.**" ([Jn.14:15](#))

Explanation:

- "**Love**" — is not merely emotion or words.
- "**Keep**" means — to observe, guard, and obey.
- "**Commandments**" — are the instructions of the Lord.
- True love, submits to the Lord's Word.

James teaches,

- "**be ye Doers of the word, and Not hearers only, deceiving your own selves.**" ([Jas.1:22](#))

Explanation:

- "**Doers**" — are those who obey.
- "**Hearers only**" — are those who listen, but do not submit.
- "**Deceiving your own selves**" means — a person can fool himself, by thinking hearing is enough.

Abraham did not merely say, "I believe God."

- He rose, prepared, and went.
- Faith took, the next step.

If a father tells his child, "Come here," the child has not obeyed, simply because he heard the words.

- Obedience is seen, when the child comes.

Abraham's faith, surrendered to God's command, by action.

- True faith, does Not delay obedience, because the command is difficult.
- True faith says, "God has spoken; I must obey."

But Abraham's obedience, was not only quick; it was deeply surrendered.
He was willing to give God, what was most precious.

B. Abraham Withheld Nothing from God

As Abraham and Isaac approached the mountain,
Abraham separated from the young men and continued with Isaac.

- Scripture says, "**Then on the third day**, Abraham lifted up his eyes, and saw the place afar off.
And Abraham said unto his young men, Abide ye here with the ass;
and I and the lad, will go yonder and **worship**, and **come again to you**.
And Abraham took the wood of the burnt offering, and laid it upon Isaac his son;
and he took the fire in his hand, and a knife; and **they went both of them together**." ([Gen.22:4-6](#))

Explanation:

- The words, "**Third day**" — shows this obedience, was Not a quick moment;
Abraham continued toward the place.
- "**Worship**" means — reverent service and submission before God.
- "**Come again to you**" — shows Abraham's confidence, that both he and Isaac, would return.
- "**They went both of them together**" — shows the solemn movement, toward obedience.

Six verses later, God declared what Abraham's obedience had shown.

- "He said, **Lay Not thine hand** upon the lad, neither do thou any thing unto him:
for now I know, that thou **fearest God**, seeing thou hast not **withheld** thy son,
thine only son, from Me." ([Gen.22:12](#))

Explanation:

- The phrase, "**Lay Not thine hand**" — shows that, God stopped Abraham, before Isaac was harmed.
- "**Fearest God**" means — Abraham revered God, above all.
- "**Withheld**" means — held back or kept from God.
- Abraham's obedience showed, that he would not hold back, even Isaac from the Lord.

Likewise, Jesus teaches that loyalty to Him, must be above every earthly relationship.

- Jesus said, "**He that loveth father or mother more than Me, is Not worthy of Me:**
and he that **loveth son or daughter more than Me, is Not worthy of Me**.
And he that **taketh Not his cross**, and followeth after Me, is **Not worthy of Me**." ([Matt.10:37-38](#))

Explanation:

- The phrase, "**More than Me**" — shows the issue, of supreme loyalty.
- "**Not worthy of Me**"
means — one cannot be accepted as a faithful disciple, while placing family above the Lord.
- "**Taketh Not his cross**" means — accepting the cost of following Christ.

Abraham loved Isaac, but he feared God **More**.

- This does Not mean, Abraham loved Isaac less than he should.
- It means, Abraham loved God, above all.

A person holding something tightly, cannot **fully give it to another**.

Abraham's hands, were willing to release Isaac, because his heart, belonged FIRST to God.

- Faith surrenders to God.
- Faith does Not say, "Lord, I will obey, UNLESS You touch what I love most."
- Faith says, "Lord, all that I have, belongs to You."

Abraham rose early and **Obedied**.

- He prepared for the journey.
- He went to the place God commanded.
- He withheld nothing from God.

This, is the **Surrender** of faith.

- Faith obeys promptly.
- Faith obeys personally.
- Faith obeys, even when, the cost is great.

But Abraham's obedience, was not blind confusion.

Let's now notice,

III. The Confidence of Faith

Genesis 22 shows obedience, but it also shows confidence.

Abraham trusted, that God could do, what man could Not understand.

A. Abraham Believed, God Could Keep His Promise

Abraham's words to the young men, show confidence.

- Again, the Bible says, "**Abraham said unto his young men, Abide ye here with the ass; and I and the lad will go yonder and worship, and come again to you.**" ([Gen.22:5](#))

Explanation:

- The phrase, "**I and the lad**" means — Abraham spoke of both himself and Isaac.
- "**Will go**" — shows obedience.
- "**Come again to you**" — shows Abraham expected both to return.
- This is faith, speaking under trial.

Hebrews explains, what Abraham believed, about God's power.

- The Bible says, "**By faith Abraham, when he was tried, offered up Isaac: and he that had received the promises, offered up his only begotten son, Of whom it was said, That in Isaac, shall thy seed be called: Accounting, that God was able to raise him up, even from the dead; from whence also, he received him in a figure.**" ([Heb.11:17–19](#))

Explanation:

- The words, "**By faith**" — shows the motive, behind Abraham's obedience.
- "**Tried**" means — tested.
- "**Received the promises**" — reminds us, that Abraham trusted, what God had spoken.
- "**Accounting**" means — reasoning or concluding.
- "**God was able**" — shows Abraham's confidence, in God's power.
- "**Raise him up**" means — Abraham believed, God could restore Isaac even from death, if necessary.

Paul also describes Abraham's confidence, in God's ability to fulfill what He promised.

- He said, "**And being fully persuaded that, what He had promised, He was able also to perform.**" ([Rom.4:21](#))

Explanation:

- The words, "**Fully persuaded**" means — completely convinced.
- "**Promised**" means — what God had spoken.
- "**Able**" means — God has the power, to do what He says.
- "**Perform**" means — to accomplish or bring to pass.

Abraham did not understand every detail, but he trusted God's promise and God's power.

- Faith does Not require, that we understand how, God will work everything out, before we obey Him.
- Faith requires, that we trust the God, Who has spoken.

A child may not understand, how a father will fix a broken thing, but if he knows his father is able, he can trust him.

- Abraham trusted God, not because the situation looked easy, but because God was able.
- Abraham believed, God could keep His promise.

Additionally,

B. Abraham Trusted God to Provide, What Was Needed

As Abraham and Isaac went together, Isaac asked a serious question.

- Scripture says, "**Isaac spake unto Abraham his father, and said, My father: and he said, Here am I, my son. And he said, Behold the fire and the wood: but where is the lamb for a burnt offering?** And Abraham said, My son, **God will provide Himself**, a lamb for a burnt offering: **so they went both of them together.**" ([Gen.22:7-8](#))

Explanation:

- The questions, "**Where is the lamb...**?" — shows, Isaac saw something missing.
- "**God will provide**" means — Abraham trusted God, to supply what was needed.
- "**Himself**" — emphasizes, that the provision, belongs to God.
- "**They went both of them together**" — shows continued obedience, after the question was asked.

The psalmist teaches, that the Lord is able to supply, what His people need.

- He said, "**The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want.**" ([Psa.23:1](#))

Explanation:

- The word, "**Shepherd**" means — one who guides, cares for, feeds, and protects.
- "**I shall not want**" (or "I shall not be in want") means — the faithful servant is Not left without, what the Lord knows is needed.

Jesus taught His disciples, to trust the Father and seek His kingdom first.

- He said, "**But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and His righteousness; and all these things, shall be added unto you.**" ([Matt.6:33](#))

Explanation:

- The statement, "**Seek ye first**" means — make God's rule and will, the **highest priority**.
- "**Kingdom of God**" — refers to God's reign and authority.
- "**His righteousness**" means — what is right, according to God.
- "**Added unto you**" — shows that, God knows how to provide, what His servants need.

Isaac asked, “Where is the lamb?”

Abraham answered, “God will provide.”

- That is one of the great lessons, of tested faith.
- When faith cannot see the answer yet, faith still trusts, the God Who provides.

A person walking through a dark hallway, may not see the whole room ahead, but if he has a lamp, for the next step, he can keep walking.

- God’s Word gave Abraham, enough light to obey.
- Faith trusts God, to provide.

Abraham’s obedience, was joined with confidence.

- He believed, God could keep His promise.
- He believed, God was able to raise Isaac, if necessary.
- He trusted, that God would provide.

Faith, does not always know, how God will fulfill His Word.

But **Faith** knows, that God is able, faithful, and true.

Having seen Abraham’s tested faith, surrendered heart, and confidence in God’s promise, we now turn our attention, to what the LORD provided.

IV. The Provision and Blessing of God

Abraham had said, “God will provide Himself, a lamb for a burnt offering.”

Now, Genesis shows the provision of God.

A. God Provided the Ram

The focus here, is not on what Abraham was willing to give, but on what God supplied, in Isaac’s place.

- Scripture says, “Abraham lifted up his eyes, and looked, and behold behind him, a **ram** caught in a thicket, by his horns: and Abraham went and took the ram, and offered him up for a burnt offering, **in the stead of his son**. And Abraham called the name of that place **Jehovahjireh**: as it is said to this day, In the mount of the LORD, it shall be seen.” ([Gen.22:13–14](#))

Explanation:

- The word, “**Ram**” — is a male sheep.
- The phrase, “**In the stead of his son**” means — in the place of Isaac.
- “**Jehovahjireh**” means — “The LORD will provide.”
- This passage shows, that God provided what was needed, for the offering.

The New Testament teaches, that God’s greatest provision, is found in giving His own Son.

- The Bible says, “**He that spared Not His own Son, but delivered Him up, for us all, how shall He not with Him, also freely give us, all things?**” ([Rom.8:32](#))

Explanation:

- The statement, “**Spared not His own Son**” means — God did Not withhold Christ.
- “**Delivered Him up**” — refers to, God giving His Son, for us.
- “**Freely give**” — shows, the generosity and provision of God.

Abraham did not provide the ram — God did.

Abraham obeyed, and God provided, what Abraham could not.

- This passage, should move us to reverence.
- Abraham was willing to give his son, but God stopped him and provided a ram.

God provides what man needs.

After God provided the ram,

B. God Blessed Obedient Faith

After Abraham obeyed, the angel of the LORD spoke again and confirmed God's promise.

- Scripture says, "And the angel of the LORD called unto Abraham out of heaven, the second time, And said, **By Myself have I sworn**, saith the LORD, for **because thou hast done this thing**, and **hast not withheld** thy son, thine only son:

That in blessing, I will bless thee, and in multiplying, I will multiply thy **seed** as the stars of the heaven, and as the sand, which is upon the sea shore; and thy seed, shall possess the gate of his enemies;

And in thy **seed** shall **all the nations of the earth be blessed**; **because thou hast obeyed My voice**. So Abraham returned unto his young men, and they rose up and went together to Beersheba; and Abraham dwelt at Beersheba." ([Gen.22:15–19](#))

Explanation:

- The statement, "By Myself have I sworn" — shows the certainty of God's promise.
- "Because thou hast done this thing" — shows God recognized Abraham's obedience.
- "Hast not withheld" means — recalls the surrender, already shown in the test.
- "Seed" means — descendant or offspring.
- "All the nations of the earth be blessed" — points forward, to God's larger plan.
- "Because thou hast obeyed My voice" — shows the connection, between faith and obedience.

James uses this very event, to show that Abraham's faith was active and obedient.

- He said, "Was not Abraham our father **justified** by works, when he had offered Isaac his son, upon the altar? Seest thou, how **faith wrought with his works**, and by works, was faith made perfect? And the scripture was fulfilled which saith, Abraham believed God, and it was imputed unto him for righteousness: and he was called the Friend of God. Ye see then, how that by works, a man is justified, and **Not by faith only**." ([Jas.2:21–24](#))

Explanation:

- "Justified" means — shown to be right before God.
- "Faith wrought with his works" means — faith worked together with obedience.
- "Not by faith only" means — God rejects a faith, that refuses obedience.

Abraham's faith, did Not remain hidden in his heart — It was completed in obedience.

God provided the ram, spared Isaac, declared Abraham's reverence, and confirmed the blessing.

Abraham's faith obeyed, and God provided.

- The lesson, is Not that man earns God's promises, by his own greatness.
- The lesson, is that true faith, trusts God enough, to obey Him.

With these truths before us, let's gather the lesson into a few,

V. Closing Thoughts

Abraham had already heard, believed, obeyed, and waited on God.

But in Genesis 22, his faith was tested, in a deeper way.

- God commanded him to offer Isaac, the son whom he loved.
- Abraham obeyed, trusted God's promise, and trusted God to provide.

Lessons learned:

Faith may be tested.

- God may allow faith to be proved, not to destroy it, but to show whether it truly trusts Him. ([Gen.22:1](#); [Jas.1:13-14](#); [1Pet.1:7](#))

Faith listens when God speaks.

- Abraham said, "**Behold, here I am.**" ([Gen.22:1](#); [22:11](#))

Faith obeys promptly.

- Abraham "**rose up early in the morning.**" ([Gen.22:3](#))

Faith surrenders what is most precious.

- Abraham did not withhold his son from God. ([Gen.22:12](#), [16](#))

Faith trusts God's promise.

- Abraham believed God was able to raise Isaac, if necessary. ([Heb.11:17-19](#))

Faith trusts God to provide.

- Abraham said, "**God will provide Himself a lamb.**" ([Gen.22:7-8](#))

Faith and obedience belong together.

- James says, "**faith wrought with his works.**" ([Jas.2:21-24](#))

God must come first.

- No person, possession, relationship, or desire, can be placed above the Lord ([Lk.14:26-27](#); [Matt.10:37](#); [Matt.6:33](#)).

This lesson, should cause every hearer to ask:

- Do I trust God, only when obedience is easy?
- Do I obey, only when I understand every detail?
- Am I withholding something, from God?
- Does my faith obey, what the Lord has spoken in Scripture?

Abraham's faith was tested, and Abraham obeyed.

But now we must bring the lesson home to ourselves.

God does Not give us direct, individual commands today, as He gave Abraham in Genesis 22.

Today, God speaks to us, through His Son's revealed Word ([Heb.1:1-2](#); [2Tim.3:16-17](#)).

So, **Abraham-like faith** today, does not wait for a direct voice from heaven.

It hears, believes, and obeys what God has already spoken in Scripture.

This also means, we must be honest with God's Word.

There is a difference, between asking **sincere questions**, to understand Scripture, and **questioning Scripture**, in order to avoid obeying it.

- An **honest heart**, asks "What has God said?"
- A **resistant heart**, keeps questioning, Not to understand, but to avoid surrender, asking, "How can I get around what God has said?"

Paul said, he did Not handle "**the word of God deceitfully**" ([2Cor.4:2](#)).

Peter warned, that some "**wrest**" (or twist) the Scriptures, "**unto their own destruction**" ([2Pet.3:16](#)).

So, we must Not use Scripture,

merely to **Win** an argument, **Defend** a desire, or **Escape** obedience.

- If God has spoken in Scripture, we must **Listen**.
- If Christ has commanded, we must **Obey**.
- If the Word corrects us, we must **Change** (or repent).
- If our desire conflicts with Scripture, our desire must **Surrender**.

That is what, Abraham-like Faith, looks like today.

The Lesson is yours!

It is the Lord, Who invites, and we await to assist.

Won't you come...

- **Hearing** the gospel ([Rom.10:17](#)), **Believing** in Christ ([Heb.11:6](#); [Jn.8:24](#)),
- **Repenting** of sins ([Lk.13:3](#); [Acts 17:30](#)), **Confessing** your belief ([Acts 8:37](#); [Rom.10:9-10](#)),
- And be **Baptized** for the forgiveness of sins ([Acts 22:16](#); [Mk.16:16](#); [Acts 2:38](#); [1Pet.3:21](#); [Gal.3:26-27](#)).

...While we stand and while we sing.