

LIFE LESSONS – Making It Live

David Welsh | “The Ultimate Test” | Genesis 22 | February 26, 27, 2011

Tested – Genesis 22:1-2

What hard thing might God ask us to do today? Do you remember a time when God asked you to do something very hard? How did you respond? Did you put it off, hoping that God might change His mind? Did you ignore it or maybe partially obey what God asked? God knew what it would cost Abraham to give up his son and yet that’s exactly what He asked him to do. Abraham might have answered, “What? But what about the promises you made to me concerning Isaac?” **Discuss:** If you are a child of God and have faith in Him, at some point, that faith will be tested. God refines us through difficult circumstances. Our faith is not really tested until God asks us to bear what seems unbearable, do what seems unreasonable, and expect what seems impossible. Share how your faith might be ready for that.

Explanations or promises? – Genesis 22:3-5

What can you do to show that you are willing to follow God? Whatever may have been the questions in Abraham’s heart, he obeyed God’s commandment without any outward reluctance. He did not even delay. If God were to ask you to do something very difficult or even unthinkable, would you want Him to explain why? Abraham obeyed immediately, without questions. **Discuss** how we might be willing to move that quickly when God asks us. You notice that Abraham even took the wood, not knowing if there would be some available. He was not looking for an escape from what God had asked him to do. **Discuss** how we can be ready to rely on God’s promises to us.

Ready or not? – Genesis 22:6-10

Have you ever experienced joy even when obeying God meant personal sacrifice? Even in the midst of personal agony, only the person who gives all to obey God’s clear command experiences unspeakable joy because of unshakable faith in God’s tender love and faithfulness. **Discuss:** You may think you are not ready and you may know it may be painful but God knows what you need, when you need it and what the test should be. The test may seem cruel or unfair but God is preparing you for your future by testing you now. **Read Romans 12:1-2.** Share some ways you can choose to offer yourself as a living sacrifice to God.

Rewards and Blessings – Genesis 22:11-18

Have you ever been given a test and decided not to do it? Was it because it was too painful? Did it cost too much? What did you discover was the result of not going through the test? Were you asked to repeat it? **Discuss:** If we disobey God and avoid the tests of faith, not only will we eventually have to face it again, we will also forfeit the rewards and blessings of faith. Suppose Abraham had refused to do what God commanded. What blessings might he have missed? Share how we might be missing God’s blessing by not doing what He has asked us to do. Share what you might ask God to help you do.

Unquestioned Obedience – Genesis 22:1-18 – 1 Samuel 15:22

Discuss how you know what God’s will is for you. Often as believers we wonder how we might know the will of God. **Discuss:** 99% of knowing the will of God is the willingness to do it before we know it. Abraham had demonstrated that he believed God and loved and trusted Him so much that he would not even withhold his only son from Him. Can you share what has God asked you to give up to prove your love and trust of Him? How is God asking you to show where your priorities are? **Read 2 Samuel 24:24.** Will you offer a sacrifice to God, which costs you nothing? **Discuss** how each of the following is true: Abraham’s obedience was immediate, sustained, willing, settled, complete, contagious and finally rewarded. **Discuss:** The heart that is obedient when the command is difficult will ultimately know the joy of the Lord.

Written by Sandy Hooper