

*Then Abraham reached out his hand and took the knife to slaughter his son. But the angel of the Lord called to him from heaven and said, "Abraham, Abraham!" And he said, "Here I am." He said, "Do not lay your hand on the boy or do anything to him, for now I know that you fear God, seeing you have not withheld your son, your only son, from me."*

- GENESIS 22:10-12

## FELLOWSHIP

(Start the conversation and get to know more about the people in the group. You can choose to answer one question.)

1. *Growing up, what kind of gift did you like to receive the most?*
2. *Do you like instructions to be given more visually or verbally?*

## MEDITATE AND PROCLAIM

(Scripture to be gleaned from and how we can apply the Word in our lives and encourage others to do the same)

Abraham reaches the place where God told him to offer the sacrifice, his only son Isaac. At every step, Abraham must have hoped for some change of plans, some other option. The altar was built and the wood arranged. At last there was nothing left but to bind Isaac, place him on the wood and plunge the knife into his heart.

One phrase that stands out in this account is what the angel of the Lord said, "*for now I know that you fear God.*" What does it mean to fear God? What does that fear enable us to do?

### FEAR OF GOD MAKES US OBEY

*When they came to the place of which God had told him, Abraham built the altar there and laid the wood in order and bound Isaac his son and laid him on the altar, on top of the wood. - GENESIS 22:9*

If Abraham debated all these in his mind, the text does not record it. It shows him as simply obeying God. He obeyed promptly: he "rose early in the morning." (see verse 3) He made the necessary preparations. He could have conveniently "forgotten" to take the wood or the fire, and then made up an excuse for his

disobedience. He could have made excuses about Moriah being too far away. But Abraham did not do that.

Abraham's focus was not on his great sacrifice, but on his great God. He had the fear of God and was awed by the majesty and worthiness of the Almighty, realising that no gift is too great to offer Him.

If we hesitate to obey the difficult commands of God, it may be that we have lost sight of God's greatness and have become too focused on ourselves. Worship is at the heart of wholehearted obedience.

*If you keep my commandments, you will abide in my love, just as I have kept my Father's commandments and abide in his love. - JOHN 15:10*

*And this is love, that we walk according to his commandments; this is the commandment, just as you have heard from the beginning, so that you should walk in it. - 2 JOHN 1:6*

## DISCUSS: HOW HAVE YOU SHOWN OBEDIENCE TO THE LORD RECENTLY?

### FEAR OF GOD MAKES US LISTEN WELL

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

Imagine if Abraham was overrun with his emotions and not being attentive to the Lord. He could have plunged the knife straight into Isaac's heart! Though that was the initial instruction, that was not the Lord's intention. All these were part of Abraham's test, including listening and obeying. The angel of the Lord even mentions his name twice, for urgency and emphasis. Abraham again responds, "here I am", in a way, saying, "I am here, at this moment, ready to listen and obey."

More than the instructions or commands God gives, what really is important is growing in our relationship with Him. If we just follow commands without the relationship, that's nothing compared to a robot executing the programmed orders. Communicating with the Lord every single moment is very important to know His fresh instructions and for us to respond lovingly. Because if we do not, we might end up following commands that are "outdated" and not His best for us

at the particular moment. The Lord speaks to us through His Word, let us spend more time with Him.

*But he answered, "It is written, "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God." - MATTHEW 4:4*

*But he said, "Blessed rather are those who hear the word of God and keep it!"  
- LUKE 11:28*

## DISCUSS: WHAT ARE PRACTICAL THINGS YOU DO IN ORDER TO LISTEN TO THE LORD WELL?

### FEAR OF GOD MAKE US TRUST

*And Abraham lifted up his eyes and looked, and behold, behind him was a ram, caught in a thicket by his horns. And Abraham went and took the ram and offered it up as a burnt offering instead of his son. So Abraham called the name of that place, "The Lord will provide"; as it is said to this day, "On the mount of the Lord it shall be provided." - GENESIS 22:13,14*

At the point of total obedience came the provision of God. God did not halt the act of sacrifice; He provided a ram as a substitute for Isaac. From this experience, it was seen that Abraham's faith that God would provide a sacrificial offering (see verse 8) was proven and that God does indeed provide. The Lord reveals a new characteristic or name of His to Abraham, "Jehovah Jireh."

God wants to bring each one of us to the place where we surrender everything to Him and trust Him fully with all that is valuable to us. When you have surrendered all to Jesus as Lord, then you will obey Him wholeheartedly, even when He asks you to do that which is most difficult.

Obedience to the difficult commands of God always stems from a confident, genuine faith. When you come to know God as your loving Heavenly Father, who cares and wants His best for you more than any earthly father ever could, you can give Him everything in your life. He will not destroy you, in spite of how circumstances may seem, but strengthen you and your trust in Him.

*Then Jesus told his disciples, "If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. For whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will find it. - MATTHEW 16:24,25*

*Let not your hearts be troubled. Believe in God; believe also in me. - JOHN 14:1*

*fear not, for I am with you;*

*be not dismayed, for I am your God;*

*I will strengthen you, I will help you,*

*I will uphold you with my righteous right hand. - ISAIAH 41:10*

**DISCUSS: WHAT IS THE MOST DIFFICULT AREA YOU'VE HAD TO SURRENDER TO GOD AND TRUST HIM FULLY FOR IT?**

## **PRAY**

(Remember to do this. Pray for one another; for everyone to live out the Word and for any other specific prayer needs)

Pray for a fear of God in how we live our lives. May we trust in the Lord with all our hearts and lean not on our own understanding (see Proverbs 3:5).



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