

Study Hints for Discussion and Thinking Further
International Bible Lessons

Genesis 22:1-14
Sunday, March 4, 2018
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Some Bible study groups or classes can further discussion by asking some or all of the **Questions for Discussion and Thinking Further** below. Others may want to send the bulletin size *International Bible Lesson* home with their students for further study in the coming week to encourage continuing Bible study. The *Study Hints for Discussion and Thinking Further* below are not actually intended to be *the answers* to the discussion questions. These indeed are “hints” a teacher may use to help students think through and discuss the questions in class. The *Class Preparation Guide* includes the questions below, and it can be given to students at the end of the previous class so they can pray, read, and think ahead to prepare for the next week’s Bible class.

Questions for Discussion and Thinking Further

1. Describe the type of faith a person must have to obey God immediately and without question?

A person must have an intelligent and mature faith. His knowledge of God includes knowing that God has a perfect moral character and will always command what is holy, loving, right, and perfect (unlike what is possible for human beings to always command in this life). His knowledge of God will include knowing that God is all wise and infinite; therefore, God never makes a mistake. God knows what is best and God knows the consequences of every decision and action that He and every being will ever take.

Therefore, an intelligent and mature faith will influence a person to trust God in every situation with everything, and to obey every command of God, knowing that God will

only command what is best for all concerned. When one trusts God to this extent, he does not need to know God's reasons for what God commands or requires, but usually this confident faith is developed over time from understanding many of God's reasons for His prior actions and commands (which we learn more and more from Bible study). Just as an obedient child who trusts their parents will stop immediately when a parent shouts "Stop!" (for they know it is for their safety), so the children of God know that it is best to obey God immediately. The child learns trust in their parents, which leads to obedience; and God's children learn trust in God their heavenly Father, which leads to obedience.

2. How can people develop and maintain the strong type of faith that Abraham demonstrated?

People can study the Bible to learn more about God; how God thinks, how God acts, how God loves, how God extends justice and mercy. Then, by prayer and obedience, they will develop a depth of experience to keep on growing in their faith. They can also read inspirational biographies about how others have obeyed God sacrificially and how God met their needs and empowered them to serve God. They can keep trusting God when they experience difficulties, and then after God has seen them safely through and been present with them, their faith will become stronger still.

3. Why do you think God tested Abraham?

To show Abraham how much he had grown in his faith, because this test was only after a period of time and not at the beginning of Abraham's walk of faith in God. To serve as an object lesson for believers over generations of time. To show the faithfulness of God and how God keeps His promises. To show how God rewards those who trust and obey God. God knew Abraham well enough to know that Abraham was capable of passing the test and that his passing the test would become an object lesson that would point to the sacrifice of Jesus Christ, God's own Son, who would die on the cross as the ultimate sacrifice for our sins.

4. If you were Abraham, what might you have talked with Isaac about during your three days journey and climb up the mountain?

While walking during the day, and in the evenings while resting, I would have reminded Isaac about all the things God had done in the past, in the lives of our ancestors, and in my own life, to build up Isaac's faith and trust in God. I would assure Isaac of God's love and of my love for him, and that no matter what should ever happen that God loves him and I love him too. I would talk about how God might test our faith sometimes, and about how my faith had been tested to keep on believing God's promise as I waited past the child-bearing age of Sarah for him to be

born after being conceived by Sarah (that he was not to be conceived by Hagar, and that my having a son by Hagar was a mistake that came from my lack of faith), and that God had kept His promise to bless me and generations to come through Isaac and his children, though he had no children as yet, but he would have children. All parents can teach their children in ways similar to this.

5. If you were Isaac, how might you have felt from the time Abraham raised his knife to the time God provided the lamb as a substitute? How might this experience have an effect upon your faith?

I think I would have been terrified, for Isaac had no Bible yet as we have. He had only the faith that Abraham had shared with him and his own experiences with God. I might have thought that Abraham had lied to me about God providing the lamb, or that I was the lamb that God had provided in spite of what I had thought. I might have started to pray to God for help as I was being tied up by Abraham and laid upon the wood. I would see that Abraham would obey God, and that God providing a different lamb was my only hope to avoid being sacrificed. I would see how important it was to obey God, and how important Abraham thought it was to obey God, for Abraham was going to sacrifice his beloved son rather than disobey God.

I think I would have or develop a great fear of or reverence for God, which would influence me to want to be absolutely obedient to God no matter what. I would have great regard for the importance of obeying God, and then leave the results of my obedience with God, Who does all things well. I would think about what might have happened to Abraham and to me if Abraham had refused to obey God or if I were to refuse to obey God sometime. I think I would want to stay as close to God as I could and be careful to obey Him in everything. I would want to pass on everything I had learned to my children and entire family, to encourage them to have an obedient faith in God.