



CHRIST'S COMMISSION FELLOWSHIP

Los Angeles

Dgroup Discussion Guide
August 3, 2014

Surrender Your Isaac

Word:

Genesis 22:1-2

“Now it came about after these things, that God tested Abraham, and said to him, ‘Abraham!’ and He said, ‘here I am’. He said, ‘Take now your son, your only son, whom you love, Isaac, and go to the land of Moriah, and offer him there as a burnt offering on one of the mountains of which I will tell you.”

Do you like tests? Most of us do not. But we have to understand that tests are not bad, they are actually good if you understand the purpose of the test. Much like medical diagnostic tests – a blood test, an xray, an ultrasound, or a physical exam – these tests are needed to know the quality of a product, the integrity of a structure or the condition of our bodies.

But the more important question is – what do you do with the results?

Similarly, we also have spiritual testing. In Genesis 22, we see God testing Abraham. God took the initiative to test Abraham. In the previous chapters we can see that God had been dealing with Abraham. Abraham's faith was not perfect but it was progressive. Many times in the past he had flunked his tests – he lied about his wife twice! But God wanted to develop the faith of Abraham and that is why God said *after these things*. God kept stretching Abraham's faith --- he asked him to leave his family and his home, later He asked him to leave his nephew Lot, He asked Abraham to let Ishmael go. . . during these times Abraham would sometimes fail and sometimes pass. . . and this was the final testing – God was asking Abraham to sacrifice his son, Isaac.

How do we respond to this kind of testing?

Like Abraham, we will all go through testing – not because God hates you but because He loves you. *“The devil tests us to bring us down, but God tests us to bring us up.”* (anonymous) In James 1:2-4 **“Consider it all joy, my brethren, when you encounter various trials, knowing that the testing of your faith produces endurance. And let endurance have its perfect result, so that you may be perfect and complete lacking in nothing.”**

We need testing even if we don't like it. Our testing is to transform our character. God is more concerned with our character than our comfort. He will willingly sacrifice physical comfort in order to achieve character development because it is our character that will go with us when we enter heaven. Physical comfort is only temporary and temporal. That is why James tells us that our attitude towards testing should be joyful. Why? Because our character develops amidst during trials and crisis. . . during times when things are going fine our character does not develop but when we are going through trials and crisis then we become more sensitive to the voice of the Spirit of God. . . then we begin to be transformed.

In the story, God was asking Abraham to surrender Isaac. Abraham was promised a son when he was 75 years old, and after 25 years Isaac was given to them. He was a promised a son, a blessing. . . and now God was asking Isaac to be surrendered to Him.

SURRENDER YOUR ISAAC.

Your Isaac is something that we love, it does not have to be bad but often times the problem is that it becomes our idol.

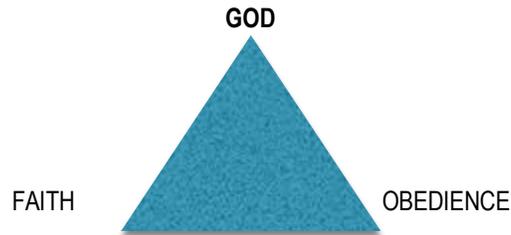
What then is Idolatry?

Idolatry can be something good. Like Isaac, it can be God's blessing. However, idolatry is anything or anyone that takes the place of God in your life. It is anything or anyone that competes with your affection toward God and compromise your walk with Him.

Idolatry can be very dangerous because often times it is not something bad, it can be something good. Idols often give false promises. It can take the form of people, possessions, power, position, money, relationships . . . it is anything that takes the place of God in your life. We all have idols – the question is --- do you what your idols are? That is why God is telling us to *Surrender our Isaac*.

Often our idol is family – but even family will disappoint you. . . by what they do or by what they say, or by what they don't do and don't say. People will make not make you happy, they will always disappoint. Only God can meet the deepest longing of your soul and our life.

So how do we Surrender our Isaac? **SURRENDER YOUR ISAAC IN FAITH.**



This is the triangle of God's blessing. To always be in the center of God's blessing we should always be focused on God and not on our Isaacs. When we are focused on God, we respond in faith. Genuine faith will produce obedience. You cannot separate these three when it comes to a blessed life.

First, focus on God. Not just to get His blessing but God Himself. Then respond to Him in faith. Genuine faith will produce obedience – obedience without faith is not sustainable. Faith without God is blind faith because faith should always have an object. The by-product of being in the center of this triangle is blessing. Are we in the center of the triangle? Abraham would often go out of it, so God would allow problems to keep him on track. If we keep focusing on our Isaacs we won't be able to experience the fullness of God's blessings.

But how do we surrender in faith?

1. Surrender promptly.

Genesis 22:3 says *"So Abraham rose early in the morning and saddled his donkey, and took two of his young men with him and Isaac his son; and he split wood for the burnt offering, and arose and went to the place of which God had told him"*

Do it immediately. Abraham surrender promptly because he knew God. Instance obedience is the only kind of obedience there is. Delayed obedience is also disobedience. When God tells us to do something it is for our own good, that is why we have to surrender our Isaacs freely. If we delay, if we fight God. . . it will just be more painful for us.

2. Surrender in faith.

Genesis 22:4 says *"On the third day Abraham raised his eyes and saw the place from a distance. Abraham said to his young men. "stay here with the donkey, and I and the lad will go over there; and we will worship and return to you."*

In the mind of Abraham, surrendering Isaac was not goodbye. It was an act of faith. He believed that even if God asked him to surrender Isaac, God would still return Isaac to him. Abraham believed God and His promise that his descendants will come from Isaac. Abraham is learning to trust God, he had been walking with God for almost 50 years. When God tests us he calibrates the tests, he knows how much you can take. It is impossible to surrender your Isaac if you do not really know God. Faith is impossible if you do not know God. If you cannot trust Him, how can you obey Him?

Hebrews 11:17-19 *"By faith Abraham, when he was tested, offered up Isaac, and he who had received the promises was offering up his only begotten son; it was he to whom it was said 'in Isaac your descendant shall be called'. He considered that God is able to raise people even from the dead, from which he also received him back as a type."*

Abraham could offer up Isaac because of his faith. He put two and two together, God was asking him to offer up Isaac but God had also promised him that his descendants would come from Isaac – so he believed that God must be doing something that he did not understand but he knew that God will keep his promise. It is important for us to know God's promises – not just in the mind but also by heart. It is when we know God by heart that our faith begins to grow. Our faith should be progressive.

3. Surrender with anticipation.

Genesis 22:6-8 *"At this time Isaac was about 20-22 years old. The story continues in Genesis 22:6-7 "Abraham took the wood of the burnt offering and laid it on Isaac his son, and he took in his hand the fire and the knife. So the two of them walked on together. Isaac spoke to Abraham, his father and said ' My father' and he said ' here I am, my son'. And he said, ' behold, the fire and the wood, but where is the lamb for the burnt offering?' God will provide for Himself the lamb for the burnt offering, my son.' So the two of them walked on together."*

When you surrender your Isaac, faith means to surrender with expectation. Many people offer up their Isaac without expectations and then feel sorry for themselves. Abraham offered up his son in faith, knowing that God is faithful. It is difficult for us to offer up our Isaac until we

understand that God has our best interests at heart. We cannot offer up our Isaac until we are convinced that God is good. Even when we don't understand whatever He does, and we might not understand why but we know that ultimately it is the best – that is real faith.

Genesis 22:9-10 *“Then they came to the place of which God had told him; and Abraham built the altar there and arranged the wood, and bound his son Isaac and laid him on the altar, on top of the wood. Abraham stretched out his hand and took the knife to slay his son.”* And yet Isaac did not put up a fight. He could have easily out ran his father, he was stronger than Abraham. . . and yet he did not put up a fight. Isaac believed in his father and in God, he believed he was the promised son to his father. Abraham had mentored his son well. He had taught Isaac about God. . . this is a great picture of discipleship. Isaac loved God and he loved his father. Isaac was taught that God was faithful. He trusted God and he trusted his father . . . and was willing to be sacrificed.

In verses 11-14, we see God's intervention. Jireh. Jehovah – Jireh means the Lord will provide. There are certain things in life we will never understand until we surrender our Isaac. God's timing is always perfect. The ram appeared at the exact time. God will provide but never too early and never late. When we surrender our Isaac, it is only then will we realize God knows what He is doing. We will never know that God will provide until we allow Him an opportunity in our life. The word “provide” comes from two Latin words: *pro* (meaning before) *vider* (vision). God sees our need in advance and He will provide.

It was when Abraham chose to trust and obey God. . . and he did not withhold his son Isaac from Him that God promised him this blessing. *“By myself I have sworn, declares the Lord, because you have done this thing and have not withheld your son, your son, indeed I will greatly bless you, and I will greatly multiply your seed as the stars of the heavens and as the sand which is on the seashore; and your seed shall possess the gate of their enemies. In your seed all the nations of the earth shall be blessed, because you have obeyed My voice.”*

When Abraham obeyed God, he did not know what God had in planned for him and Isaac. He had no idea that by his obedience he would become a blessing not just to Isaac and his family but to all the world.

Have you surrendered your Isaac to God? You will never know what you are missing until you obey God all the way. Surrender promptly, in faith and with anticipation. God will greatly bless you to be a blessing to others like what He did to Abraham.

Works: Journaling task

1. *The Isaac Test.* What is the ultimate test God gave to Abraham in Genesis 22:1-2? How did God describe Isaac in the passage?
2. *Jehovah-Jireh.* Remember a time when you obeyed and surrendered your situation to God. How did God provide for your needs? How did it grow your intimacy with God?
3. *Surrender your Isaac.* What is something that you cannot live without? What makes it difficult to surrender your Isaac to God? Write down God's promises in response to your reasons.

Know God First

You cannot obey God unless you know Him from the heart. Unless you know God intimately, you cannot believe Him. Unless you believe Him, you cannot love Him. Unless you love God, you cannot obey Him. It all begins with knowing God intimately from the heart. How well do you know God? How is your intimacy with God?