

When God Tests Us

Genesis 22:1-15

Genesis 22 provides **three instructions** for those going through the testing process.

- **Instruction #1: EXPECT TESTS FROM GOD.**

Some time later God tested Abraham. He said to him, "Abraham!" "Here I am," he replied. ²Then God said, "Take your son, your only son, Isaac, whom you love, and go to the region of Moriah. Sacrifice him there as a burnt offering on one of the mountains I will tell you about." Genesis 22:1-2 (New International Version)

Two Major Kinds of Tests

- Test #1: When a hardship or adversity is used to prove and strengthen a believer's heart

Blessed is the man who perseveres under trial, because when he has stood the test, he will receive the crown of life that God has promised to those who love him. James 1:12 (NIV)

For you, O God, tested us; you refined us like silver. Psalm 66:10 (NIV)

We are not trying to please men but God, who tests our hearts. 1 Thessalonians 2:4b (NIV)

- Test #2: The test of obedience

"I the LORD search the heart and test the mind, to give every man according to his ways, according to the fruit of his deeds." Jeremiah 17:10 (English Standard Version)

Three Reasons Why God Tests Believers

- Reason #1: To help perfect a believer's character

Consider it pure joy, my brothers, whenever you face trials of many kinds, ³because you know that the testing of your faith develops perseverance. ⁴Perseverance must finish its work so that you may be mature and complete . . . James 1:2-4 (NIV)

- Reason #2: To purify a believer's faith

In this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while you may have had to suffer grief in all kinds of trials. ⁷These have come so that your faith—of greater worth than gold, which perishes even though refined by fire—may be proved genuine and may result in praise, glory and honor when Jesus Christ is revealed. 1 Peter 1:6-7 (NIV)

- Reason #3: To expand a believer's experiential knowledge of God

- **Instruction #2: OBEY GOD AND TRUST THAT HE WILL PROVIDE. Genesis 22:3-10 (NIV)**

By faith Abraham, when God tested him, offered Isaac as a sacrifice. He who had received the promises was about to sacrifice his one and only son, ¹⁸even though God had said to him, "It is through Isaac that your offspring will be reckoned." ¹⁹Abraham reasoned that God could raise the dead, and figuratively speaking, he did receive Isaac back from death. Hebrews 11:17-19 (NIV)

- **Instruction #3: LEARN THE LESSONS GOD INTENDS.**

But the angel of the LORD called out to him from heaven, "Abraham! Abraham!" "Here I am," he replied. ¹²"Do not lay a hand on the boy," he said. "Do not do anything to him. Now I know that you fear God, because you have not withheld from me your son, your only son." Genesis 22:11-12 (NIV)

First lesson learned: Abraham learned that he could obey God in the most difficult of circumstances.

Abraham looked up and there in a thicket he saw a ram caught by its horns. He went over and took the ram and sacrificed it as a burnt offering instead of his son. ¹⁴So Abraham called that place The LORD Will Provide. And to this day it is said, "On the mountain of the LORD it will be provided." Genesis 22:13-14 (NIV)

Second lesson learned: Abraham learned that he could always choose obedience because the Lord Himself would provide.

Early the next morning Abraham got up and saddled his donkey. He took with him two of his servants and his son Isaac. When he had cut enough wood for the burnt offering, he set out for the place God had told him about. ⁴On the third day Abraham looked up and saw the place in the distance. ⁵He said to his servants, “Stay here with the donkey while I and the boy go over there. We will worship and then we will come back to you.”

⁶Abraham took the wood for the burnt offering and placed it on his son Isaac, and he himself carried the fire and the knife. As the two of them went on together, ⁷Isaac spoke up and said to his father Abraham, “Father?”

“Yes, my son?” Abraham replied.

“The fire and wood are here,” Isaac said, “but where is the lamb for the burnt offering?”

⁸Abraham answered, “God himself will provide the lamb for the burnt offering, my son.” And the two of them went on together.

⁹When they reached the place God had told him about, Abraham built an altar there and arranged the wood on it. He bound his son Isaac and laid him on the altar, on top of the wood.

¹⁰Then he reached out his hand and took the knife to slay his son. Genesis 22:3-10 (NIV)