

What You Can't Live Without
Genesis 22
Growth Group Discussion Guide

Begin with prayer. Invite the Holy Spirit to speak to you all through God's word, and to lead your discussion.

Opening Question (try to get everyone involved in discussion):

- *Do you remember the first time that you felt that there was someone or something you just couldn't live without? Please explain.*

Read Genesis 22:1-18, then discuss the questions below.

- In verses 1-3, what do you discover about Abraham's character even before his test took place?
- God's test was to ask Abraham to sacrifice Abraham's only son Isaac. What is significant about Isaac that might make this sacrifice doubly hard?
- Pastor Josh pointed out that God's demand seemed to conflict with God's promise. You may be experiencing tests, troubles, defeats, or wounds right now. What do we do when God's demands seem to conflict with his promises? Can you think of an example of how you have experienced this conflict?
- What is the reason for God's test of Abraham? (Hint: consider the words of the angel in vv. 15-18).
- Josh claimed, "**God will ask you to offer up to him whatever is your greatest treasure.**" Do you agree with this statement? Why or why not? Is anyone willing to share an example of how this principle has played out in their life?
 - Before answering the next question, what are some signs that something is competing with God as your greatest treasure or first priority? Discuss.
 - For reflection, or if you're comfortable, discussion: what kinds of things tend to "compete" with God for first place in your heart?
- What positive hint does God give Abraham when he says, "Take your son... to the region of **Moriah**..."? (v. 2).
- Is there a relationship between a readiness to listen to God, and being able to perceive his hints of provision in your tests? Discuss.
- What evidence do you find of Abraham's faith before the final test is required (before Abraham raised the knife to his son)? What might have helped Abraham to have this radical faith?
- Sunday's sermon made the point, "**You can do what God asks today when you remember what God has done in the past.**" Let's practice remembering: what is one significant way that God has come through for you in a difficult situation in your past? Describe.
- Once Abraham passed the test, how was he affirmed? Why is this important?
- God can seem cruel in testing our false priorities out of us. However, what if God knows that we will only be truly happy if he is first in our hearts? How could we live out this reality?

- Look again at this passage and find all the ways it foreshadows Jesus' death and resurrection for our sins. Pastor Josh stated, "It was only in the cross that the conflict could be resolved, between the God of promise and the God of the demand. Only here can we see how God could be both holy and gracious." What is your emotional response to hearing this?
 - How does this story help us to understand what God has done for us in Christ?
 - The ultimate claim of the sermon was, "**God becomes your greatest treasure when you see how much he treasures you.**" How can this truth become a heartfelt reality? How has it happened in your life?
 - Josh hinted that when we offer our other "treasures" back up to God, treasuring God above all, God sometimes gives us back those things in a healthier way than we ever had them before. What does this mean, and how does it work out in life?

Sharing/Prayer

- As always, take some time to share areas where you need people to pray for you. Spend time praying for one another.
- Among our usual prayer requests, let's pray that we would identify what competes with God for priority in our hearts, and that we would relinquish it before God has to "test" it out of us!