

WHO'S ON FIRST

CLOSER: A SERIES ON WORSHIP – PART 5

START TALKING. WITH AN ICEBREAKER QUESTION:

- What is something you won a medal or a trophy for?

START THINKING. ASK QUESTIONS THAT WILL GET YOUR GROUP THINKING.

- We live in a “look out for Number 1” culture. In what ways are we encouraged to place ourselves in First Place in our lives?
- Read the scriptures on the next pages in preparation for the following conversation.

START SHARING. CHOOSE THE QUESTIONS THAT WILL CREATE OPENNESS.

- At an initial reading, how does this passage offend you?
- How much is God allowed to ask of humans?
- As you move forward in this discussion, remember that we should not try to understand Genesis 22 without grasping all the miraculous things Abraham experiences throughout Genesis chapters 12-21. Genesis 22 is not replicable, so let's look at what is applicable.
- Abraham didn't hesitate (vs 3). What causes you to procrastinate in obeying God?
- Why do you think we focus on the costs, and not the rewards of obedience?
- Mark listed three main areas we sin and disobey God. Compromise, capitulation, and cowardice. Which one do you find yourself caving in to most frequently?
- Point: Worship is a marathon, not a sprint. Abraham had a long way to go to obey God (vs 4-5). What is an area you are obeying God in that is taking a long time?
- As Abraham is reaching out to grab his knife (vs 10) what might be going through his mind? Remember, that He is trusting what God just said, (sacrifice Isaac) as well as what God had said previously (Through Isaac your offspring shall be).
- Abraham's worship resulted in concrete action, not just an emotional event. He gave back to God what God had given him. What might you be unwilling to give back to God?
- Abraham could have done a lot of other things than to obey. He could have sacrificed more of something else. Share of times you've been willing to sacrifice instead of obey.
- Point: Worship + Obedience = Blessing. Read vs 15-18. Make note of the word “because.” What might be on the other side of obedience for you?

START PRAYING. BE BOLD, AND PRAY WITH POWER.

- Father. As I am offended at what I read, I now grasp better how offensive the cross of your Son was to you. I am willing to be obedient. Amen.

START DOING. COMMIT TO A STEP AND LIVE IT OUT THIS WEEK.

- When compromise, capitulation, and cowardice show up this week, confess it.

James 4:8 (NIV)

⁸ Come near to God and he will come near to you. Wash your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you double-minded.

Mark 12:30 (NIV)

³⁰ Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.'

Genesis 22:1-13 (NIV)

¹ Some time later God tested Abraham. He said to him, "Abraham!" "Here I am," he replied.

² Then 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."

³ 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.

⁴ On the third day Abraham looked up and saw the place in the distance.

⁵ He 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."

⁶ Abraham 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,

⁷ Isaac 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?"

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

⁹ When 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.

¹⁰ Then he reached out his hand and took the knife to slay his son.

¹¹ 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."

¹³ 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.

Hebrews 11:17-19 (NIV)

¹⁷ 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,
¹⁸ even though God had said to him, "It is through Isaac that your offspring will be reckoned."

¹⁹ Abraham reasoned that God could raise the dead, and figuratively speaking, he did receive Isaac back from death.