

# The Year of Discipleship in 3-D

*(Further Developing Devoted Followers of Christ)*



Welcome! Thanks for choosing to dive more deeply, as a Christian, into a three-dimensional discipleship! Using the diversity and wonder of God's Word, powered by the Holy Spirit and the witness of one another, this time together seeks to raise up more fully-devoted followers of Christ.

Our prayer is that we might all:

**Grow Upward** in an ever-maturing personal relationship to Christ by becoming more fluent in the "first language of the faith," God's Word!  
**Grow Outward** to neighbor and world – learning to love well, to share faith and witness to others we encounter, and to lead in more in that which matters to God!  
And, **Grow Inward** by discovering a more contemplative prayer and devotional life enriched by silence, listening, and quiet reflection!

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The Scripture for Sunday, September 19, 2021 ~ 17<sup>th</sup> Sunday after Pentecost

## [STUDY LESSON 2]

### THE OLD TESTAMENT READING:

*Genesis 21:1-3; 22:1-14*

{1} The LORD dealt with Sarah as he had said, and the LORD did for Sarah as he had promised. {2} Sarah conceived and bore Abraham a son in his old age, at the time of which God had spoken to him. {3} Abraham gave the name Isaac to his son whom Sarah bore him.

{22:1} After these things God tested Abraham. He said to him, "Abraham!" And he said, "Here I am." {2} He said, "Take your son, your only son Isaac, whom you love, and go to the land of Moriah, and offer him there as a burnt offering on one of the mountains that I shall show you." {3} So Abraham rose early in the morning, saddled his donkey, and took two of his young men with him, and his son Isaac; he cut the wood for the burnt offering, and set out and went to the place in the distance that God had shown him. {4} On the third day Abraham looked up and saw the place far away. {5} Then Abraham said to his young men, "Stay here with the donkey; the boy and I will go over there; we will worship, and then we will come back to you." {6} Abraham took the wood of the burnt offering and laid it on his son Isaac, and he himself carried the fire and the knife. So the two of them walked on together. {7} Isaac said to his father Abraham, "Father!" And he said, "Here I am, my son." He said, "The fire and the wood are here, but where is the lamb for a burnt offering?" {8} Abraham said, "God himself will provide the lamb for a burnt offering, my son." So the two of them walked on together.

{9} When they came to the place that God had shown him, Abraham built an altar there and laid the wood in order. He bound his son Isaac, and laid him on the altar, on top of the wood. {10} Then Abraham reached out his hand and took the knife to kill his son. {11} But the angel of the LORD called to him from heaven, and said, "Abraham, Abraham!" And he said, "Here I am." {12} He said, "Do not lay your hand on the boy or do anything to him; for now I know that you fear God, since you have not withheld your son, your only son, from me." {13} And Abraham looked up and saw a ram, caught in a thicket by its horns. Abraham went and took the ram and offered it up as a burnt offering instead of his son. {14} So Abraham called that place "The LORD will provide"; as it is said to this day, "On the mount of the LORD it shall be provided."

### DISCUSSION GUIDANCE AND QUESTIONS:

For an overview of Genesis 12-50 consider watching: <https://bibleproject.com/explore/video/genesis-12-50/>

For an overview of "The Test" theme consider watching: <https://bibleproject.com/explore/video/the-test/>

1. Open (*or have someone in the group open*) with a prayer inviting the work of the Holy Spirit to open up the hearts and lives of any and all to shape believers into more fully devoted following of Christ.

2. Read (*or have one or more persons read*) the passage printed above (*or from a bible*).
3. Share any of the more-challenging, memorable, and/or difficult “tests” that you have had in life.
  - a. Academically? Vocationally?
  - b. Relationally? Physically?
  - c. Professionally? Interpersonally?
  - d. Health related? Spiritually?
  - e. Other?
4. What is some of your reaction to the “severity” of God’s testing of Abraham in this story? Do you approve? What questions for God arise from it for you?
5. Paralleling the call of Abram (*Gen. 12:1*) when the Lord calls Abram to go “to the land that I will show you” (*Gen. 22:2*), here again, God in testing Abraham instructs him to go to “one of the mountains that I shall show you.” When and how have you ever felt as if you’ve been led or called by God to a place that you’ve never been to and you tried solely to trust God? What was that experience like for you?
6. This mountain in “the land of Moriah” is believed by some biblical scholars and others to also be that of Mt. Zion, or the location of the Temple Mount in Jerusalem (where Solomon’s Temple and Herod’s Temple were constructed). Not far from this location, historians and archeologists believe are also the places where Jesus was crucified and buried. Give this possibility, what similarities or parallels might exist between this story and that of Jesus in Jerusalem and His death and resurrection?
7. Can you recall a time when you understand an experience in life where God called upon you, in your following of Him, to do a “hard thing?” With that, do you sense such “hard things” from God as mostly optional, avoidable, or something one ought to expect and anticipate as a follower of Christ in the world?
8. Enter into, if you are able to imagine this, the experience of Isaac. What could be going through his mind during this ordeal? How might he be shaped? What could he discern about being a father? About who God is?
9. Are you able to rest in the assurance, as you follow Christ, that “The LORD will provide?” How has that happened for you and/or when was a notable time you sensed that assurance or God’s provision?
10. Following (or discipleship) obviously implies some element of being on a journey (externally as well as internally). In what ways do you sense Abraham being molded and shaped as the first patriarch as a result of what the LORD put him through (and he was obedient to agree to)?
11. Spend some time talking or reflecting upon simple obedience as an aspect of discipleship. If willing, share (*or personally identify within yourself*) an aspect of your life where you believe God is calling upon you to exhibit greater obedience.
12. What is your main discipleship “takeaway” from this text?
13. Can you identify any particular ways your Christian faith and **following** might be inspired to change in light of this passage from the Bible (and any discussion and/or reflection that may have taken place)?
14. (*Optional*) Read the passage once more. Then, take some time to close (or have someone close) with a prayer.