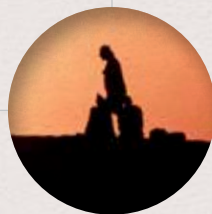
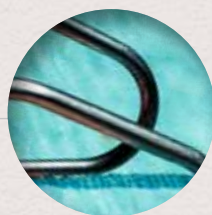




Genesis 20–50 | *Leader Guide*



EXPLORE THE BIBLE®

Adults • Spring 2024 • CSB

FAMILY TIES

When families get together for reunions or holidays, the generations can run deep. For example, a father and mother might represent the roots of family tree, serving as the patriarch and matriarch of the group. Their children represent the next row of branches. Over time, the tree continues to grow as grandchildren—and even great-grandchildren—join the brood. That kind of generational legacy can be a tremendous source of pride and gratitude!

It's also amazing to think about how far back these lines can stretch. In some cases, the oldest members of the family may have been born before the Second World War began. Meanwhile, the youngest may have come along after the most trying days of the COVID-19 pandemic had passed. If so, nearly a century of history can gather under one roof. That's a lot of years and a lot of family stories to share.

Family lines are a big part of the book of Genesis, as well. Several times in the earliest chapters of the Bible, the human writer, Moses, included the lineage of individuals that readers meet along the way. In chapter 12, though, Moses narrowed his focus to one particular line when he introduced us to Abram (later known as Abraham).

Genesis 20–50 follow the adventures—and, sometimes, misadventures—of Abraham and his descendants. We meet his son, Isaac, and his grandson, Jacob. We read about the dysfunctional relationship between Jacob's sons, especially toward their brother, Joseph. That's four generations of one important, albeit imperfect, family.

The focus on Abraham's family isn't just for entertainment purposes, though. God inspired Moses to share these biographical narratives for a very significant reason. Those twelve sons of Jacob—the offspring of Abraham—were the founders of the twelve tribes of Israel. And, through the nation of Israel, God later provided the greatest gift in the world, His Son, Jesus Christ.

When you think about it, through Jesus, God has completed the circle of family. Through one earthly family, He's made it possible for every person to become a member of His family. Even the most broken human can be adopted as His son or daughter if they will just accept Jesus's sacrifice for their sins. If you're ready to accept the salvation that only He can provide, here's what you need to do . . .

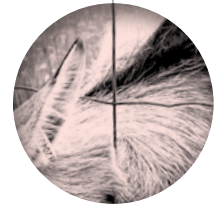
- **Admit** to God that you are a sinner. Repent, turning from your sin.
- **By faith receive** Jesus as God's Son and accept His gift of forgiveness from sin. He took the penalty for your sin by dying on the cross.
- **Confess** your faith in Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord. You may pray a prayer similar to this as you call on God to save you: "Dear God, I know that You love me. I confess my sin and need of salvation. I turn away from my sin and place my faith in Jesus as my Savior and Lord. In the name of Jesus I pray, amen."

After you have received Jesus Christ into your life, tell a pastor or another Christian about your decision. Show others your faith in Christ by asking for baptism by immersion in your local church as a public expression of your faith.

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THE WEEK OF

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*Evangelistic Emphasis

MEET THE WRITERS

Janice K. Meier wrote the commentary for this quarter's studies on Genesis 20–50. Dr. Meier earned a doctorate in Old Testament and Hebrew from New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary. She also served at Lifeway as a content editor for more than eighteen years, including several years on the Adult Explore the Bible team. In addition she was part of the translation team of the Holman Christian Standard Bible and has contributed articles to various publications, including *Biblical Illustrator*, *Holman Illustrated Bible Dictionary*, and *The Woman's Study Bible*. Janice is a member of Hickory Hollow Baptist Church in Antioch, Tennessee, where she leads an adult Bible study group.

Liz Sherrer wrote the group plans for this quarter's studies on Genesis 20–50. Liz is a retired teacher and educational consultant. She has had the privilege of providing staff development and consulting for schools across the nation to improve literacy skills. She has degrees from Oklahoma State University and the University of Central Oklahoma. She and her husband, Joe, a professor at New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary, are members of Capitol Hill Baptist Church in Oklahoma City.

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We believe that the Bible has God for its author; salvation for its end; and truth, without any mixture of error, for its matter and that all Scripture is totally true and trustworthy. To review Lifeway's doctrinal guideline, please visit Lifeway.com/doctrinalguideline.

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A WORD FROM **THE TEAM LEADER**

Relationships are key to a happy life. Strong relationships bring joy, while challenging ones can usher in seasons of stress or worry. Trust lies at the center of all good relationships. Without trust, a friendship will only deepen so far before reaching a plateau. Without an assurance that our coworkers can be relied upon, a work project will fall short of what it could be.

In Genesis 20–50, we read of God’s relationship with His people. God’s character is revealed through His actions and purposes, offering us a clear understanding of His identity and nature. We see His heart for people and His willingness to extend mercy; through it all we see His trustworthiness. Simply, God does what He says He will do. What began as a promise to Abram in Genesis 12 unfolds in unexpected ways that only God could have orchestrated. Through it all, His faithfulness is unmistakable.

This is indeed good news. God’s faithfulness extends to His people today. We can be assured that every promise He has given to us in His Word will be kept. He is trustworthy!

In Him,

Amber Vaden

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Three Ways We Can Encourage Praying Scripture

G. Dwayne McCrary

When growing up, the worship service in my church featured the reading of a Bible passage followed by a pastoral prayer. The Bible passage may have been “read” in one of several ways. We may have listened to a passage read, been asked to locate the passage in our Bibles and encouraged to follow along, or read the passage in some type of responsive format. The person leading that time would then voice a prayer that was based on the Bible passage we had just reviewed. For example, if we had read 1 Corinthians 13, the person praying may have emphasized the unfailing love of God, thanking Him for loving us, even when we fail to love Him back in the same way. This person may have included a confession that our love was incomplete compared to His love. The individual may have asked for help to demonstrate to God through our worship the same kind of love He demonstrates to us. I did not know it at the time, but our church was being taught to pray Scripture through that element in the worship service.

Why was it so important for us to let Scripture inform our prayers as a church? One of the challenges of prayer is aligning our hearts with the heart of God. We know what we want, but we may not be sure about what God wants. When we use Scripture as the basis for our prayers, we are aligning with God’s heart and His wants. One example of how this can work is seen in Jeremiah 12. The prophet Jeremiah began his prayer with a statement about God being righteous and fair when a case is brought to Him. Jeremiah would know this by experience and through studying the Scriptures. Scripture informed his prayer as he praised God for His consistent character and trustworthiness.



Jeremiah then followed with a complaint about wicked people being blessed while he and God’s people suffered. The prophet was trying to align his heart (what he wanted and viewed as fair) with the heart of God (what God wanted and viewed as fair).

Praying Scripture also keeps prayer from being the same thing week in and week out. Prayer times can become routine and border on boring. We read the list, update the list, add to the list, read the list to God, or invite someone else to read the list to God, then dismiss the group. It is an easy pattern to follow, so we keep on doing it. If we use the Bible passage studied that day to guide our prayer time, we remove the routine and potential boredom that comes with a routine.

As Bible study leaders, we can take the same initiative as the leaders in the local church in which I grew up in helping the people in our groups learn to pray Scripture.

1. MODEL PRAYING SCRIPTURE

If we are not careful, we can fall into the habit of treating a prayer time as an exercise in creating a To Do list for God over the next week. We collect the needs and then organize them so God will be aware of what He is to do for us before we regather to create another To Do list for Him. We may still collect prayer needs, but we may do so focused on the passage studied that day. For example, if we were studying Jeremiah 12, we may ask for people to share a recent event in which God's righteousness was seen, and then ask for the group to identify something going on in their lives that challenges their faith in God. We may then lead the prayer time stating that, like Jeremiah, we too know that God is righteous and point to what was shared. We could then explain, like Jeremiah, we too face some challenges that confuse us and voice the challenges shared by the group. We would want to make sure to conclude the prayer time by stating that, like Jeremiah, we bring these requests with a desire to know God's heart and a commitment to follow Him faithfully. With this approach, we are letting the passage examined that day inform how we pray, providing a model for the group.

How could you use the Bible passage being studied in your next group time as an outline for gathering prayer requests from the group?

2. PROVIDE PRAYER PROMPTS

One thing discovered while teaching preschoolers is that they expect you to stop and pray for someone when they mention it. They would rather not wait until the end of class to do so but would rather you pray for their need in the middle of walking, making a temple out of blocks, or forming two fishes and five loaves out of modeling clay. Why should we feel the need to wait when it comes to teaching adults?

As we prepare to lead the group time, we can look for natural ways to encourage the group to pray based on the Bible text being studied. Let's go back to Jeremiah 12. Suppose the group plans direct us to lead the group to identify situations that

might cause you to wonder if God is just. What if we added a prayer prompt at this point? We could direct the group to silently express to God why the situations listed cause them to question God's justice. We may direct the group to pray something like, "God, I know You are _____ (just, righteous, all powerful, and so forth), but _____ makes me wonder and I need your assurance." We could then point out that God answered Jeremiah and lead the group to examine verses 5 and following of Jeremiah 12.

Review the group plans for the next group time you will lead, looking for a place to add a prayer prompt. Record a potential prayer prompt.

3. GIVE OPPORTUNITIES TO READ ALOUD

We could certainly invite people to pray silently, but we should not ignore the value of inviting people to voice their prayers aloud within the group. Our overusing silent prayer may unknowingly communicate that we believe prayer to be strictly private when we find the early church involved in prayer as a community. Allowing people to respond to the prompts aloud can encourage others in the group who may be timid or less confident and helps the group hear an actual example of what praying Scripture looks like. We will want to remind people to be concise and current when responding aloud. Providing a clear prompt like the one suggested above can help.

How can you encourage more people in your group to voice a prayer aloud? What barriers might you need to address?

Imagine for a moment what might happen in your church if every adult group found a way to encourage the group to pray based on the passage studied in each group. What might that do in the life of your church? What if that happened in other churches? How might that impact the cause of Christ across our cities, states, and regions? As Bible study leaders, we can help our group be more in tune with God's heart and desires as we lead them to pray Scripture, using the Bible passages we study.

G. Dwayne McCrary is manager of Adult Ongoing Bible studies at Lifeway.

WORD WISE

Terms listed here are identified in the Bible commentary with a dot (•).

Allon-bacuth [al lahn-BAK uhth]—burial place of Rebekah’s nurse, Deborah; means “oak of weeping” (Gen. 35:8)

Beer-sheba [bee ehr-SHEE buh]—place where Abraham made a covenant with Abimelech (Gen. 21:22-33) and settled and lived for a time (21:33; 22:19); where God appeared to Isaac (26:23-25), a stopping place for Jacob as he journeyed to Egypt (46:1-5)

Bethel [BETH-uhl]—place name meaning “house of God,” where Abraham built an altar (Gen. 12:8; 13:1-4) and where God appeared to Jacob twice (28:10-22; 35:1-16); originally called Luz (Gen. 28:19)

Bethuel [beh THYOO uhl]—nephew of Abraham and son of Nahor (Gen. 22:22), father of Rebekah (24:15,24); town where the children of Shimei lived (1 Chron. 4:30)

Goshen [GOH shuhn]—land the Pharaoh assigned to Joseph’s family when they entered Egypt (Gen. 47:6,11) and occupied by the Hebrews from the time of Joseph until the exodus

Haran [HAY ran]—the place where the Lord spoke to Abraham and called him to leave his family and go to the land of Canaan (Gen. 11:31-12:5); the place where Jacob went to marry (28:10; 29:4)

Ishmaelites [ISH may el ights]—descendants of Ishmael; the people to whom Joseph was sold by his brothers (Gen. 37:25)

Laban [LAY buhn]—Rebekah’s brother (Gen. 24:29); father of Leah and Rachel (29:16)

Luz [LUHZ]—place name meaning “almond tree”; original name of Bethel (Gen. 28:19)

Milcah [MIL kuh]—Abraham’s niece, wife of Nahor, Abraham’s brother, and mother of Bethuel, Rebekah’s father (Gen. 11:29; 24:15)

Moriah [muh RIGH uh]—place Abraham would have sacrificed Isaac as a burnt offering, but God intervened and provided a ram (Gen. 22:2,13)

Nahor [NAY hawr]—the name of Abraham’s brother and grandfather (Gen.11:22-26); town in Mesopotamia where Abraham’s servant sought a wife for Isaac (Gen. 24)

Peniel [PEN ih el]—site on River Jabbok where Jacob wrestled with the stranger (Gen. 32:24-32); alternate form of Penuel (32:30-31)

Shechem [SHEK uhm]—place Abram stopped when arriving in the land (Gen. 12:6-7); Jacob settled there after returning from Paddan-aram (33:18-19); name of the chieftain of the city of Shechem who defiled Dinah (34:2-5)

BIBLE READING PLAN

MARCH

- 1. Genesis 20:1-8
- 2. Genesis 20:9-18
- 3. Genesis 21:1-7
- 4. Genesis 21:8-21
- 5. Genesis 21:22-34
- 6. Genesis 22:1-11
- 7. Genesis 22:12-24
- 8. Genesis 23:1-11
- 9. Genesis 23:12-20
- 10. Genesis 24:1-11
- 11. Genesis 24:12-27
- 12. Genesis 24:28-41
- 13. Genesis 24:42-54
- 14. Genesis 24:55-67
- 15. Genesis 25:1-11
- 16. Genesis 25:12-26
- 17. Genesis 25:27-34
- 18. Genesis 26:1-11
- 19. Genesis 26:12-22
- 20. Genesis 26:23-35
- 21. Genesis 27:1-13
- 22. Genesis 27:14-25
- 23. Genesis 27:26-35
- 24. Genesis 27:36-46
- 25. Genesis 28:1-9
- 26. Genesis 28:10-22
- 27. Genesis 29:1-12
- 28. Genesis 29:13-20
- 29. Genesis 29:21-35
- 30. Genesis 30:1-15
- 31. Genesis 30:16-24

APRIL

- 1. Genesis 30:25-34
- 2. Genesis 30:35-43
- 3. Genesis 31:1-9
- 4. Genesis 31:10-21
- 5. Genesis 31:22-35
- 6. Genesis 31:36-44
- 7. Genesis 31:45-55
- 8. Genesis 32:1-12
- 9. Genesis 32:13-23
- 10. Genesis 32:24-32
- 11. Genesis 33:1-11
- 12. Genesis 33:12-20
- 13. Genesis 34:1-12
- 14. Genesis 34:13-23
- 15. Genesis 34:24-31
- 16. Genesis 35:1-7
- 17. Genesis 35:8-15
- 18. Genesis 35:16-29
- 19. Genesis 36:1-19
- 20. Genesis 36:20-43
- 21. Genesis 37:1-11
- 22. Genesis 37:12-23
- 23. Genesis 37:24-36
- 24. Genesis 38:1-11
- 25. Genesis 38:12-19
- 26. Genesis 38:20-30
- 27. Genesis 39:1-9
- 28. Genesis 39:10-23
- 29. Genesis 40:1-11
- 30. Genesis 40:12-23

MAY

- 1. Genesis 41:1-13
- 2. Genesis 41:14-24
- 3. Genesis 41:25-36
- 4. Genesis 41:37-46
- 5. Genesis 41:47-57
- 6. Genesis 42:1-9
- 7. Genesis 42:10-17
- 8. Genesis 42:18-26
- 9. Genesis 42:27-38
- 10. Genesis 43:1-14
- 11. Genesis 43:15-22
- 12. Genesis 43:23-34
- 13. Genesis 44:1-9
- 14. Genesis 44:10-17
- 15. Genesis 44:18-34
- 16. Genesis 45:1-15
- 17. Genesis 45:16-28
- 18. Genesis 46:1-7
- 19. Genesis 46:8-27
- 20. Genesis 46:28-34
- 21. Genesis 47:1-12
- 22. Genesis 47:13-22
- 23. Genesis 47:23-31
- 24. Genesis 48:1-12
- 25. Genesis 48:13-22
- 26. Genesis 49:1-12
- 27. Genesis 49:13-21
- 28. Genesis 49:22-33
- 29. Genesis 50:1-14
- 30. Genesis 50:15-21
- 31. Genesis 50:22-26

USING THIS GUIDE TO LEAD



BEFORE THE GROUP TIME

1. STUDY THE CORE PASSAGE.

Prepare early. Read the passage, listing key people, places, words, phrases, and actions. Use the commentary included in the *Explore the Bible Leader Guide* and the *Explore the Bible Adult Commentary* to dig deeper into the items you listed. If a QR code is available in a lesson, scan it to gain additional information on what's found in the passage. Write a summary of the session's main idea. Use the statement printed under each session title as a starting place.

2. CREATE A GROUP TIME PLAN.

Craft a group plan that helps adults discover and respond to the main idea. Consult the Group Plans in the *Explore the Bible Leader Guide*, which include ideas for integrating the *Explore the Bible Personal Study Guide*. Page numbers for related PSG content are provided in the Group Plans. These page numbers correspond to the regular print version of the PSG and may differ from large print versions. Identify ways to engage adults, explore the text, summarize the lesson, and challenge the group.

For additional ideas or questions, consult *Explore the Bible QuickSource* and *Explore the Bible Extra* (which identifies a current event to introduce and conclude the lesson and is found at goExploreTheBible.com/LeaderExtras).

Review the items available in the *Explore the Bible Leader Pack*. Look at the Lifeway Sunday School blog and Groups Ministry blog for additional helps on leading an ongoing Bible study group.

3. GATHER AND REVIEW.

Review the group plan and options again and collect any supplies you will need. Make sure you have additional copies of the *Explore the Bible Personal Study Guide* for guests.

DURING THE GROUP TIME

4. ARRIVE EARLY.

Make sure you are the first person to arrive. Pray as you set up the area. Greet adults as they arrive and focus their attention on the Bible study.

5. LEAD THE GROUP IN A TIME OF BIBLE STUDY.

Use the plan you created, recording notes of how the group responded. Remember, every group experience takes a few unexpected twists and turns, so be flexible.

AFTER THE GROUP TIME

6. EVALUATE AND RECORD.

Review and implement the After the Session idea to encourage the group to put the truths they discovered into practice. Record prayer requests and other insights you gained about the group and specific participants. Use these notes to help you grow as a leader.

7. START PREPARING TO LEAD THE NEXT GROUP TIME.

MEETING THE EXPLORE THE BIBLE FAMILY OF ADULT RESOURCES

CORE RESOURCES

Use the *Daily Discipleship Guide* or *Personal Study Guide* and *Leader Guide* as the core resource for your group.

Daily Discipleship Guide

Resource for both the group members and the group leader. An alternative to the *Personal Study Guide/Leader Guide* model. Includes key words, commentary and questions for the group, daily Bible readings for personal study after the group time, and ideas for smaller groups to discuss the study. Leader helps with targeted teaching plans included in the back.

Personal Study Guide

Resource for the group members to help them prepare for and study during the group time.

Leader Guide

Resource for leaders of groups using the *Personal Study Guide*. Includes commentary and group teaching plans.

ADDITIONAL LEADER HELPS

Commentary

Provides additional insight into the passages studied.

QuickSource

Resource for leaders, providing additional discussion questions, an object lesson, and dig deeper feature. Also provides ease of use for an individual called on to step in and lead the group on short notice.

Leader Pack

Resource filled with posters, masters for informative handouts, and access to a digital leader pack (includes DOC files of the *Leader Guide* commentary, group plans, the pack items in PDF format, and other helps for the leader).



Find out more or order at [goExploreTheBible.com](https://www.goExploreTheBible.com)

BIBLICAL BACKGROUND

TITLE AND PURPOSE

Genesis is a book of beginnings or firsts. Its Hebrew title *bereshith* comes from the first word of the book in the original language and is generally translated “In the beginning” (Gen. 1:1). This first book of the Bible is also the first of five books known as the Pentateuch or the Law—Genesis through Deuteronomy.

As a book of beginnings, Genesis lays the foundation for what we read in the rest of the Bible. Genesis helps us understand our origins as people created in God’s image, humanity’s fall into sin, and the beginning of God’s redemptive work on our behalf. In Genesis, God reveals His original purpose for human beings. Genesis also provides the foundation that helps us understand the Lord’s later covenant with Israel, established when He gave them the Law at Mount Sinai (Ex. 19–20).

WRITER AND DATE

Since before the time of Christ, Moses has been recognized as the divinely inspired writer of Genesis, as well as of the rest of the Pentateuch. Both Old and New Testaments unanimously identify Moses as the communicator of the Law and the human agent who wrote Genesis (Josh. 8:34–35; 2 Chron. 23:18; Neh. 8:1; Mark 12:19,26; Luke 2:22; Rom. 10:5; Heb. 10:28).

Moses’s life began during a time of Israelite bondage in Egypt, when the Pharaoh placed newborn Hebrew sons under the judgment of death. Jochebed, Moses’s mother, took the initiative to protect her newborn baby.

When she could no longer hide him, she placed him in a papyrus basket and set it among the reeds along the Nile River. Pharaoh’s daughter found the little boy and adopted him. Moses received an education in Egypt that equipped him well for the task of recording God’s revelation (see Acts 7:22).

After Moses grew, he observed his own people engaged in forced labor. When he saw an

Egyptian taskmaster striking a Hebrew slave, Moses killed the Egyptian. The next day Moses learned that his deed had been witnessed. Fearing for his life, he fled to the land of Midian. There, he married Zipporah and herded sheep for his father-in-law.

When Moses was eighty years old, the Lord called him from a burning bush to lead His people out of Egyptian bondage. Instead of leading sheep, he would shepherd the Israelites through the desert to the promised land of Canaan. Moses reluctantly accepted the assignment and, along with his brother Aaron, confronted Pharaoh with the Lord’s command to let His people go. The exodus from Egypt occurred only after a series of ten plagues the Lord sent on the Egyptians.

The Lord brought His people out of Egypt by great signs and wonders and parted the sea to rescue them from Pharaoh’s forces. The Lord provided manna and water for the Israelites in the wilderness. He guided them by a pillar of cloud and a pillar of fire. He brought them to Mount Sinai where He revealed His law to them. He led them to the borders of the promised land, but they refused to enter.

As a result, God sentenced them to forty years of wandering in the wilderness until every member of the adult generation died, except for Joshua and Caleb. Moses, the faithful servant of the Lord, died at the age of 120 after viewing the promised land from the top of Mount Pisgah (Deut. 34:1–8).

The most likely time for Moses to have composed the book of Genesis would have been during the years of the Israelites’ wilderness wanderings. This would probably place the composition somewhere around 1446–1406 BC.

RECIPIENTS

Moses initially wrote Genesis for the Israelites who were with him in the wilderness. These first recipients likely included members of both the generation who left Egypt as part of the



exodus (but did not enter Canaan) and the later generation who would enter the promised land under Joshua's leadership. Moses likely wrote the book to encourage the Israelites to trust their all-powerful, faithful Lord. This would have been a valuable resource for a nation caught between the idolatry of Egypt/Canaan and the calling of the God who rescued them.

This initial audience, however, was not the book's only readers. The message of Genesis has remained relevant for all people across all generations—including our own. It not only helps us understand the origins of the world and humanity, but it also aids us in clarifying the teachings found in the rest of Scripture, including the New Testament. Genesis provides the basis for understanding ourselves, our sin, and our relationship to God.

CONTENTS

The events recorded in the book of Genesis stretch historically from creation to the family of Jacob (Israel) moving to Egypt. The book's first eleven chapters have been identified as “primeval history” or the history of the earliest ages. This appropriately begins with God's creation of the world. Chapter 12 introduces the history of the patriarchs beginning with Abram (later known as Abraham) and ending with Joseph's death in chapter 50.

This quarter's sessions from Genesis focus on “patriarchal history.” These accounts begin with Abraham and the promised son, Isaac. Through them, the Lord's covenant promises extended to multiple generations.

Isaac's younger son, Jacob, built a large family, including twelve sons who would be the forerunners of Israel's twelve tribes. One son, Joseph, receives focused attention in Genesis, as God used him to preserve His people despite initially being sold as a slave and sent to Egypt.

Interestingly, Joseph's final request was for his bones to be removed from Egypt and buried in Canaan once God led His people toward the

promised land. Moses honored this request (Ex. 13:19), meaning the original audience of Genesis had a daily, physical reminder of the truth of these words. Joseph's final request was granted when his bones were buried in a parcel of land that Jacob had purchased centuries earlier in the promised land (Josh. 24:32).

MAJOR THEMES

Faith. The patriarchs learned the importance of following God in faith. The writer of Hebrews celebrated this faith (Heb. 11:8-22).

Salvation. Even as God provided a ram for Abraham to offer instead of Isaac (Gen. 22), He offers salvation to those who believe today.

Guidance. God consistently directs the steps of those who seek Him. In addition, He is actively involved in His people's lives, as demonstrated in His revelation to Jacob at Bethel (Gen. 28) and His control over the events in Joseph's life in Egypt (Gen. 39–50).

Spiritual transformation. God is faithful to bless His people, as seen in His multiplication of Jacob's flocks (Gen. 30). Yet, God is also faithful to transform His people when they encounter Him (Gen. 32).

Identity. God expects His people to follow Him and to fulfill His purposes for their lives, as revealed in His covenant renewal with Jacob at Bethel (Gen. 35).

God's sovereignty. God works out His plans in the lives of those who trust Him. Acknowledging His sovereignty helps us seek reconciliation with others and leads us to filter our experiences—both good and bad—through His plans and purposes.

OUTLINE

- I. God's Perfect Creation (Gen. 1:1–2:25)
- II. Humanity's Fall (Gen. 3:1-24)
- III. Adam's Family and Sin's Results (Gen. 4:1–6:8)
- IV. Noah's Family and the Flood (Gen. 6:9–9:29)
- V. The Nations and the Tower of Babylon (Gen. 10:1–11:26)
- VI. Abraham and God's Covenant (Gen. 11:27–19:38)
- VII. Isaac and the Promise (Gen. 20:1–25:11)
- VIII. Ishmael's Family (Gen. 25:12-18)
- IX. Rivalry: Esau and Jacob (Gen. 25:19–35:29)
- X. Esau's Family: Father of the Edomites (Gen. 36:1–37:1)
- XI. Jacob's Family: Joseph and His Brothers (Gen. 37:2–50:26)

A Substitute

SESSION 1

Genesis 22:1-14

Memory Verse: Genesis 22:8

God provides the means for salvation.

In both Old and New Testaments, Abraham stands out as a model of faith (Gen. 15:6; Rom. 4:3; Gal. 3:3-9; Heb. 11:8-10). When the Lord called him to leave his homeland, Abram obeyed (Gen. 12:1-4). As Abraham repeatedly met challenges in his faith, he learned the importance of obeying God. He also discovered that the Lord provides a way of deliverance or salvation when no way seems apparent. The supreme example in Abraham's life focuses on the Lord's command to sacrifice Isaac, the son of promise.

As leaders of Bible study groups, we know people who need a personal relationship with God, and we know believers who are facing challenges to their faith. As you prepare for this week's session, pray that people in your group who still need to accept Jesus as Savior will recognize and embrace His offer of salvation. Also pray for those who are experiencing tests of their faith. Pray that the Lord will help them remain faithful to Him as Abraham was faithful.



Weekly Podcast: Group Leader Training

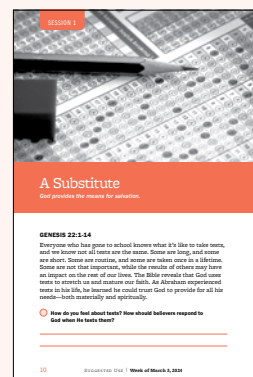
Scan here to gain insights about this week's study on Apple podcasts, Spotify, Google Podcasts, or at goExploreTheBible.com/adults-training.



Everyone who has gone to school knows what it's like to take tests, and we know that not all tests are the same. Some are long, and some are short. Some are routine, and some are taken once in a lifetime. Some are not that important, while the results of others may have an impact on the rest of our lives. The Bible reveals that God uses tests to stretch us and mature us in our faith. As Abraham experienced tests in his life, he learned he could trust God to provide for all his needs—both materially and spiritually. (PSG, p. 10)

How do you feel about tests?

How should believers respond to God when He tests them?



Understand the Context (Genesis 20:1–23:20)

Chapters 20–23 of Genesis record tests of faithfulness Abraham faced as he journeyed with the Lord. Responding obediently to God’s call to leave his land, father’s house, and relatives (Gen. 12:4), Abram “went out, even though he did not know where he was going” (Heb. 11:8). The Lord later changed his name from Abram, meaning “exalted father,” to Abraham, meaning “the father of a multitude” (Gen. 17:5).

In Genesis 20, the father of the faithful demonstrates a lack of faith. While Abraham resided temporarily in Gerar, a city in the southern part of the promised land, King Abimelech wanted to include Sarah in his harem. The king did not know that Sarah was Abraham’s wife because Abraham had introduced her as his sister, a half-truth (see 20:12). God revealed the truth of Sarah’s identity to Abimelech in a dream. God protected Sarah, and Abimelech verbally chastised Abraham for his deception.

Chapter 21 begins with Isaac’s birth (21:1-7). This son of promise, whose name means “laughter,” brought joy to Abraham and Sarah. The name also reflects the couple’s unbelieving laughter when the Lord announced they would bear a son (17:17-19; 18:11-15). Abraham circumcised Isaac when he was eight days old in accord with the Lord’s covenant (17:9-14).

Genesis 21:8-21 recounts the sending away of Hagar, Sarah’s slave, and Ishmael, Abraham and Hagar’s offspring. Ishmael’s birth had resulted from Abram’s and Sarai’s (Sarah’s) attempts to fulfill the promise of multiplied descendants by their own

plans (see 16:1-4). Abraham had failed this test. Even though he sent Hagar and Ishmael away as God commanded, God also promised Abraham that he would make Ishmael’s descendants into a nation because he was Abraham’s offspring (21:13). The Lord continued to care for Hagar and Ishmael in the wilderness.

The final portion of Genesis 21 documents a covenant between Abraham and Abimelech, king of the Philistines. This king may have been the same one mentioned in chapter 20 or a relative of that king. In either case, Abimelech argued with Abraham over the ownership of a well at Beer-sheba. To settle the quarrel, they made a covenant of peace.

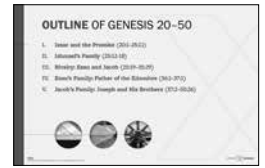
In chapter 22, Abraham faced the supreme test when the Lord commanded him to sacrifice Isaac. In chapter 12, Abram had successfully met the test of cutting himself off from his past to follow the Lord. In chapter 22 he faced the challenge of trusting the Lord totally with his future. Isaac was the son of promise. Would Abraham’s faith lie only in the Lord’s promises or would it reside in the Promise Maker Himself?

Chapter 23 records Sarah’s death and burial. With the purchase of the cave of Machpelah and its field, the patriarch gained title to a portion of the promised land. Abraham’s acquisition of the land expressed his confident faith that the Lord would fulfill all His promises.

As you read Genesis 22:1-14, consider how God has provided the means for our salvation. (PSG, p. 11)



PRIOR TO THE SESSION: Display **Pack Item 2** (Poster: Outline of Genesis 20–50) and **Pack Item 3** (Poster: The Patriarchs) for reference during the next few sessions. On a large sheet of paper, write the following words: *assess, evaluate, rate, examine, and test*



GUIDE:

Direct attention to the words on the board or paper and encourage adults to suggest what the words have in common. (Note: All of them indicate that something is being compared to or measured by a particular standard.) Record the group’s responses on the chart.



ASK:

How do you usually feel before, during, and after a test or evaluation?

EXPLAIN:

Read the session introduction on page 10 of the PSG. Affirm that the Bible reveals how God uses tests to stretch us and help us mature in our faith. Highlight verses about tests, such as Job 23:10; Zechariah 13:9; Romans 5:3-4; and James 1:2-4.

DISCUSS:

How should believers respond to God when He tests them? (PSG, p. 10)

TRANSITION:

Today, we continue our study in Genesis as Abraham faced the unfathomable test of sacrificing his only son. During the session, focus on how God provided for Abraham and Isaac and how He offers the means for salvation to us as we respond with faith and obedience.

NOTES

Group Activity Option

Music

Read aloud the lyrics of the song “Hills and Valleys” by Tauren Wells or lead the group to listen to the lyrics as you play a recording of the song. Lead the group to reflect on the hills and valleys in their lives and how they are not alone. Share that Abraham dealt with plenty of hills and valleys in his life. Challenge adults to look for how Abraham responded to the challenges of his life as they study Genesis 22.

The Command (Genesis 22:1-3)

1 After these things God tested Abraham and said to him, “Abraham!” “Here I am,” he answered. **2** “Take your son,” he said, “your only son Isaac, whom you love, go to the land of Moriah, and offer him there as a burnt offering on one of the mountains I will tell you about.” **3** So Abraham got up early in the morning, saddled his donkey, and took with him two of his young men and his son Isaac. He split wood for a burnt offering and set out to go to the place God had told him about.

(v. 1) After these things: This phrase refers to events described in preceding chapters. Sarah had given birth to Isaac, the son of promise. In accordance with the Lord’s command, Abraham had sent Ishmael and Hagar away. Obeying that directive distressed Abraham because he no doubt viewed Ishmael as a substitute if something should happen to Isaac. One of my Old Testament professors in seminary once summarized Abraham’s situation as follows: “No sooner had Abraham got rid of his spare tire, than he had a flat. Now no Ishmael was present to stand in if something should happen to Isaac.”

(v. 1) God tested Abraham: The Hebrew verb rendered **tested** means to prove someone’s quality or character, often through difficulty or adversity. God tests people with the intent of refining their character so that they might walk more closely with Him. It should also be emphasized that this test was not a validation of human sacrifice. Throughout the Old Testament, God made it clear that He abhorred human sacrifice and forbid it among His people.

(v. 1) Here I am: Abraham immediately answered God’s call with an open and available heart. In fact, he used this phrase three times in Genesis 22, suggesting that he was always open to what God was saying to him, even through other people (see also vv. 7,11). The Lord expects this response from His people when He calls them. Moses (Ex. 3:4) and Isaiah (Isa. 6:8) also responded to the Lord using this expression.

(v. 2) Your only son: The Hebrew word rendered **only** designates a unique or one-of-a-kind **son**. Although Isaac was not the only son Abraham had fathered, he was the only son of promise. We can observe a connection between this description of Isaac and the description of Jesus as “the one and only Son from the Father” (John 1:14), a reference to Jesus’s unique conception through the Holy Spirit. Both pregnancies were miracles and fulfilled prophecies, though Isaac’s birth only served as a precursor of what was to come in Jesus.

Key Person

Isaac

Personal name meaning “laughter.” This could indicate the joy that his parents felt after decades of waiting on God’s promise. It also could refer to their snickers when God announced his upcoming birth (Gen. 17:17; 18:11-15). While the Bible reveals less about Isaac than other patriarchs, he received the covenant promises and extended the line of promise to his son, Jacob. In the New Testament, Isaac appears in the line of Jesus (Matt. 1:2; Luke 3:34) and is highlighted in Hebrews as an example of godly faith (Heb. 11:20).

(v. 2) Moriah: This area has traditionally been located just north of the ancient Jebusite city of Salem. Abraham traveled to **Moriah** from Beer-sheba, located approximately 60 miles to the south. Centuries later, David conquered the Jebusite city and made it his capital. Jerusalem is where he wanted to build a temple .

(v. 3) Got up early: The Hebrew verb relates to a noun meaning “shoulder.” Perhaps the original relationship between the two words developed from the early morning activity of breaking camp and loading burdens on the shoulders of men and beasts to begin a day’s journey. The Hebrew people rose early for several reasons: (1) to get a good start on a long journey, (2) to start the day off right in worship, or (3) to participate in battle. In Genesis 22, both the journey and worship elements were involved.



The Patriarchs

God fulfilled His covenant promises to Abraham through his descendants. Learn more about the founding fathers of Israel here.

EXPLORE Genesis 22:1-3



APPLICATION POINT: Believers are to be obedient to God alone.

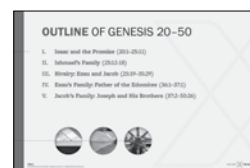
CONTEXTUALIZE: Distribute copies of **Pack Item 7** (*Handout: Genesis Time Line*) and briefly summarize the events in Genesis 1–21. Highlight where today’s session falls on the time line. Referencing **Pack Item 2** (*Poster: Outline of Genesis 20–50*) and **Pack Item 3** (*Poster: The Patriarchs*), set the context for the session.

REVIEW: On the board, draw a quick sketch of hills and valleys. Utilizing *Understand the Context*, label Abraham’s ups and downs in Genesis 12–21. Distribute copies of **Pack Item 8** (*Handout: Background of Genesis*). Direct the group to keep the handout for future sessions. Explain that in Genesis 22, Abraham received a very specific command from God.

READ: Invite a volunteer to read aloud **Genesis 22:1-3** while the group listens for the command and Abraham’s response.

EXPLAIN: Remind the group that this is not a validation of human sacrifice. Guide the group to turn to a neighbor and address the question on page 14 of the PSG: **Why does God ask His people to do difficult things?** After a few minutes, allow volunteers to share what they talked about.

GUIDE: Lead the group to examine the information about Genesis 22:3 (PSG, p. 13) to identify the actions Abraham took to prepare for his difficult task. Record the actions on the paper.



NOTES

Group Activity Option

Relational/Reflective

Read the definition for the word “tested” from a dictionary and 1 Peter 1:3-9. Direct attention to the Bible Skills activity (PSG, p. 13). Encourage adults to work in groups of two or three to address the questions in the activity. After a few minutes, discuss this question: **What is the Lord’s goal in testing His people?**

The Climb (Genesis 22:4-8)

4 On the third day Abraham looked up and saw the place in the distance. **5** Then Abraham said to his young men, “Stay here with the donkey. The boy and I will go over there to worship; then we’ll come back to you.” **6** Abraham took the wood for the burnt offering and laid it on his son Isaac. In his hand he took the fire and the knife, and the two of them walked on together. **7** Then Isaac spoke to his father Abraham and said, “My father.” And he replied, “Here I am, my son.” Isaac said, “The fire and the wood are here, but where is the lamb for the burnt offering?” **8** Abraham answered, “God himself will provide the lamb for the burnt offering, my son.” Then the two of them walked on together.

(v. 4) On the third day: This phrase need not require three full days of travel. The group may have traveled on only portions of days one and three. Three days also may have been a common way of referring to any journey (see Gen. 31:22). The designation also could have signified a critical event (see 40:12-13,18-19).

In biblical thought the number three frequently symbolized completeness. When we as Christians think of the number’s symbolic significance, we cannot help but recall that Jesus arose from the grave on the third day (Luke 24:46).

(v. 5) Boy: The Hebrew term can refer to any male from an infant to a young man. Bible scholars typically view Isaac as a healthy teenager. Thus, he could have refused or resisted the whole process if he had chosen to do so. If this picture is accurate, the scenario revealed the faith and submission not only of Abraham, but also of Isaac.

(v. 5) Worship: The Hebrew verb literally means “to bow down” or “to prostrate oneself.” The English word refers to attributing “worth ship,” honor, or reverence to the Lord. Worship is the appropriate human response to God’s revelation of Himself.

Worship can be understood in the broad context of presenting one’s whole life and being as an act of service to God (Rom. 12:1). It can also be viewed in a more narrow sense of encountering the Lord alone or assembling with other believers to honor Him. Elements in such worship often include praying, Bible reading, singing, preaching, and giving.

(v. 5) Come back to you: Abraham’s parting words to his servants expressed his confident faith in the Lord’s provision. We have no clue from Genesis as to what Abraham was thinking when he uttered these words. However, the anonymous writer of Hebrews, under divine inspiration, stated that Abraham believed that God was powerful enough to bring Isaac back from death if necessary (Heb. 11:19a).

(vv. 6,8) The two of them walked on together: This recurring phrase expresses the harmony that existed between father and son. We don’t know Isaac’s age, but he was old enough to carry the wood. He also was old enough to raise a question about the absence of the lamb for a burnt offering. Yet even Isaac’s questioning does not break the fellowship between father and son. He trusted his father. We can see a parallel between the unity of Abraham and Isaac and that of the Father and the Son when Jesus went to the cross. Jesus humbly submitted to the Father’s will (Luke 22:42; 23:46; 2 Cor. 5:19).

(v. 8) God himself will provide: The Hebrew verb translated **will provide** literally means “will see.” Making provision involves foresight. It means seeing ahead.

The Lord had previously revealed Himself to Hagar, Sarah’s slave, as *El-roi*, the God who sees (Gen. 16:13). The all-seeing God not only had heard Hagar’s cry of affliction and made provision for her, but He also would provide a substitute for Isaac because of Abraham’s obedience. At this point, Abraham did not know precisely how the Lord would provide, but he trusted that He would do so.

EXPLORE Genesis 22:4-8



APPLICATION POINT: Believers can have confidence that God has a plan for them.

READ: **Read aloud Genesis 22:4-8**, directing the group to imagine what it was like for Abraham and Isaac to walk together up the mountain. Encourage adults to reflect on how Abraham's words to the young men and to Isaac indicated his faith in God.

STATE: *Abraham put the matter entirely in God's hands. Likewise, Isaac put himself in Abraham's hands.*

HIGHLIGHT: Reread Genesis 22:4-8 noting Abraham's confidence as he assured the young men of their return. Direct the group to examine the information for verses 6-8 on page 15 of the PSG. Lead a brief discussion on why Abraham could be so confident that God would provide. Invite a volunteer to read aloud Hebrews 11:17-19. Emphasize God's power to raise someone from the dead and why that was important in Genesis 22.

LIST: Add the actions Abraham took in verses 4-8 to the list on the paper.

TRANSITION: *When Abraham and Isaac arrived at the place God indicated, it was time for the final preparations.*

NOTES

Group Activity Option

Object Lesson: Photo of a Loved One

Prior to the session select a picture of a special person in your life. During the session, direct attention to the picture. Share who the person is and why he or she is special to you. Lead the group to consider how Isaac was Abraham's beloved son, yet he was asked to offer him as a sacrifice. *If we were asked to make the same sacrifice, how would we likely respond?*

The Test (Genesis 22:9-12)

9 When they arrived at the place that God had told him about, Abraham built the altar there and arranged the wood. He bound his son Isaac and placed him on the altar on top of the wood. **10** Then Abraham reached out and took the knife to slaughter his son. **11** But the angel of the LORD called to him from heaven and said, “Abraham, Abraham!” He replied, “Here I am.” **12** Then he said, “Do not lay a hand on the boy or do anything to him. For now I know that you fear God, since you have not withheld your only son from me.”

(v. 9) Altar: The Hebrew word translated **altar** literally means “a place of slaughter.” Altars were used mainly as places of sacrifice. The simplest—and perhaps earliest—kind of altar consisted of earth—either a mound of dirt or a raised platform built of mud bricks.

The most commonly mentioned altar in the Old Testament is the stone altar. The Lord commanded that stone altars must not be constructed of hewn stones nor were they to have steps. The latter instruction differentiated Israelite altars from Canaanite altars (see Ex. 20:25-26).

(v. 10) Took the knife to slaughter: The reference to Abraham’s near sacrifice of Isaac indicates that in early times the sacrificial animals were not killed before being placed on the altar. Instead they were bound to the altar and slaughtered on it. Later the sacrificial victim was killed before being placed on the altar (Lev. 1:2-9). The Hebrew word for **knife** occurs only four times in the Old Testament. Two of those occurrences are in Genesis 22:6 and 22:10.

(v. 11) The angel of the LORD The Hebrew term rendered **angel** here literally means “messenger” and occasionally refers to a human messenger. In general, though, it points to supernatural beings. Angels are created beings whose role is to worship the Lord and to serve Him. From time to time, however, Old Testament writers refer to a distinctive angel identified as **the angel of the LORD**.

He first appears in Genesis 16 where he revealed himself to Sarai’s slave Hagar after she fled from her mistress’s mistreatment. In that passage, the angel of the Lord promised to multiply Hagar’s offspring (Gen. 16:7-10), a promise the Lord had made to Abram in Genesis 15:4-7.

In Genesis 22, the angel of the Lord also seems to be equated with the Lord Himself. For example, He stated that He would bless Abraham because Abraham had not withheld His only son “from me” (v. 12). Additionally, the angel indicated that all nations would be blessed by Abraham’s offspring because the patriarch had obeyed “my command” (v. 18). It was the Lord

who had commanded Abraham to offer up his son. See also Exodus 23:20-23, a passage that implies that the angel who bears the divine name possesses the power to forgive, a distinctive characteristic of deity. Thus it becomes clear that in many Old Testament passages the angel of the Lord is deity. Such an appearance is also known as a “theophany.”

(v. 12) Do not lay a hand on the boy: The angel of the Lord’s instructions were emphatic. Then, taking no chances that Abraham would harm his son, the angel further instructed Abraham not to **do anything to him**. Abraham had done all God expected of him. He had remained faithful and passed the test.

By stopping Abraham, the Lord was proving He was different from the false gods that others worshiped. Some pagan religions required a human sacrifice in order to appease the deities. In Romans 12, Paul noted that God calls his people to become a “living sacrifice,” individuals who will honor Him and point others to Him through their lives.

(v. 12) Now I know: The Hebrew verb translated **know** refers to personal experience. The all-knowing Lord already knew how Abraham would respond. However, that knowledge became real in experience after Abraham successfully passed this test. From that point on, Abraham also could see or know the depth of his loyalty to the Lord.

(v. 12) Fear God: This phrase describes Abraham’s trust and obedience motivated by his love for the Lord (Deut. 10:12-13). We could identify it as reverence.

EXPLORE Genesis 22:9-12



APPLICATION POINT: Believers can demonstrate faith in God.

READ: Invite a volunteer to read **Genesis 22:9-12** as the group listens for the additional actions of Abraham.

RECORD: Encourage the group to review the content for verses 9-12 on pages 15-16 of the PSG. After a few minutes, lead the group in a brief discussion of things that stick out to them from these verses. Highlight the actions taken by Abraham and add those to the list on the paper.

ASK: **How did Isaac respond in these verses?** Point out that Moses did not record any resistance on the part of Isaac. **What does this reveal about the relationship between Abraham and Isaac?** Remind adults that Abraham had been confident the whole time that God was going to do something amazing.

TRANSITION: *Having proven his faithfulness and loyalty, Abraham received Isaac back without harm. But God still had more. As Abraham acted in faith, God provided for their worship experience.*

NOTES

Group Activity Option

Analytical

Begin the session by asking the group to complete the following analogies as a group or by working in pairs:

- A spelling bee tests _____.
- An EKG tests _____.
- An eye exam tests _____.
- A driving exam tests _____.
- A spiritual trial tests _____.

Explain that God uses tests in our lives to stretch and help us mature in our faith. Note that while we may not face the kind of test Abraham did, we can be sure that God will use our tests to shape us into His image.

The Substitute (Genesis 22:13-14)

13 Abraham looked up and saw a ram caught in the thicket by its horns. So Abraham went and took the ram and offered it as a burnt offering in place of his son. **14** And Abraham named that place The Lord Will Provide, so today it is said, “It will be provided on the Lord’s mountain.”

(v. 13) A ram caught in the thicket: This verse continues the wordplay on the verb “see.” On the third day of their journey, Abraham **saw** the place of sacrifice from a distance (Gen. 22:4). The patriarch had later assured Isaac that God would provide (literally “see to”) the lamb for the burnt offering (v. 8). As he was about to slay his son, Abraham saw the **ram** that God had provided as a substitute for Isaac.

Observe the symbolic connection between the ram and the substitutionary death of Christ. Jesus is “the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world” (John 1:29). Without being commanded to do so, Abraham gratefully offered the ram as a **burnt offering in place of his son** (Gen. 22:13).

In reality, God’s provision of the ram was necessary for the future provision of Jesus according to God’s plan. Because the Lord provided a substitute for Isaac, the line of Abraham continued through him and his son, Jacob. That line eventually became the nation of Israel, through which the Messiah was born. God spared Abraham’s only son because He would later sacrifice His only Son for the sins of the human race.

Key Doctrine

God the Son

In His substitutionary death on the cross Jesus made provision for the redemption of men from sin. (See 2 Corinthians 5:19-21; Colossians 1:19-20.)

(v. 13) Burnt offering: The Hebrew term translated **burnt offering** signifies the offering of the whole animal on the altar. With the later institution of Israel’s sacrificial system, the animal for a burnt offering could be a young bull, lamb, goat, dove, or young pigeon.

The kind of animal selected for this offering apparently depended on the financial ability of the one making the sacrifice. Whatever the kind of animal, the Lord required that it be a perfect and complete specimen.

Key Concept

God’s Providence

The mountain highlights more than God’s provision. It also reveals His providence. *The Baptist Faith and Message (2000)* states that “God as Father reigns with providential care over His universe, His creatures, and the flow of the stream of human history according to the purposes of His grace” (II. God, A. God the Father). In other words, God’s providence emphasizes His all-wise authority over all creation, including the way He causes events to work together for our good and His glory. No one is exempt from His providence, regardless of their station in life; and nothing happens by accident or chance.

In verse 8, Abraham told Isaac that God would provide the lamb, and He did provide in a marvelous way. Because God is all-knowing, nothing catches Him by surprise, and He is able to provide whatever is required at the perfect time. This demonstration of His providence on Mount Moriah also points us toward His greatest act of provision and providence: The perfect sacrifice of Jesus on the cross.

(v. 14) The Lord Will Provide: Abraham named the mountain **The Lord Will Provide**. The Hebrew expression can be written in English as *Yahweh-yireh*. From that time and until well beyond the time that Moses wrote these words, the site retained that designation. Moses commented on the significance of that name with these words, “It will be provided on the Lord’s mountain” (v. 14b).

Again, the play on the word “see” comes into focus for the new title literally means “the Lord will see.” Making provision involves foresight. It means having the ability to see ahead, to see things through the eyes of God. Thus, provisions are things that are seen to ahead of time.

EXPLORE Genesis 22:13-14



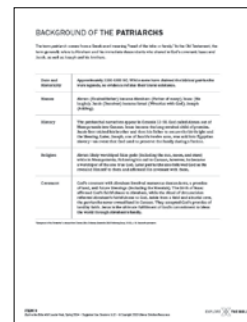
APPLICATION POINT: Believers can trust Jesus as their substitute.

READ: Read aloud **Genesis 22:13-14**, directing the group to listen for God’s provision and Abraham’s response to the provision.

ASK: How does the ram point to the mission of God? (PSG, p. 17)

RECORD: Write the words *obedience*, *faith*, and *worship* across the actions listed previously on the paper. Point out that Abraham’s faith had a direct impact on the lives of his descendants. Distribute copies of **Pack Item 9** (*Handout: Background of the Patriarchs*). Highlight the information about Abraham and Isaac on the list. Point out that future sessions will highlight other patriarchs, but all of them were affected by what happened on Mount Moriah.

TRANSITION: Just as Abraham’s faith was tested, so the faith of believers is tested today. God’s provision of Jesus as our substitute and the Holy Spirit as our advocate leads to confidence that God has a plan for us.



NOTES

Group Activity Option

Testimony

Prior to the session, enlist an adult from outside your group to share their experiences trusting God in the middle of a difficult challenge. Encourage the guest to share some the things he or she learned by going through their circumstances and how their experience strengthened their ability to trust God.

CHALLENGE

- SUMMARIZE:** Review these points from Apply the Text on page 18 of the *Personal Study Guide*:
- *Believers are to be obedient to God alone.*
 - *Believers can have confidence that God has a plan for them.*
 - *Believers can demonstrate faith in God.*
 - *Believers can trust Jesus as their substitute.*
- APPLY:** Call for volunteers to pick one of the above statements and share how they could put that principle into practice this week.
- ASK:** **What makes trusting God for our needs so difficult? What are tangible ways a believer can demonstrate faith in God?** (PSG, p. 18) Direct the group to turn to a neighbor and share an area they would like to strengthen in their lives.
- HIGHLIGHT:** Direct attention to Abraham’s words: “Here I am.” Challenge adults to use “Here I am” as a prayer prompt this week. Encourage them to use it as a way to pray Scripture back to God and as a reminder to listen for His voice.
- PRAY:** Lead in prayer, thanking God for the provision of His Son and for His guidance and direction in our daily lives.

After the Session

Reinforce the session by contacting the group to let them know that the studies in Genesis will continue for the next several weeks. Be sure to let each person know that you are praying for them and encourage them to share requests they have so your prayers can be more specific to them.

LEADER EXTRAS



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