

**Intro:** Somewhere along the line many Christians have fallen into the trap of believing a mistruth. Here is its: The longer you walk with God the easier it gets! You know more, have more experience, more discipline, more wisdom So that after a while you come to a place that you have learned what you need to know to navigate path of discipleship.

Simply not true. Here is the reality. Short of eternity God is going to CONTINUE to refine and purify you to be like Jesus And the early lessons, as hard as they seem, they are in fact the easier lessons! Mostly deal with external actions:

- The way we talk, the things we do, the external sins that need to be cleaned up.
- But as we progress, those get handled...God moves on to things like attitudes, prejudices, thought life
- And finally...when we think we have it all together...God goes after what is most important...The Heart!

Today I want to talk with you about one of the most difficult parts of discipleship..."The Test of The Heart!" You see, God is determined to make you more like Jesus: "He that began a good work in you WILL carry it on to completion! God is fundamentally determined to clean up the exterior...rearrange and correctly align the interior...thoughts And God is Going to purify and refine and sift the heart of those who are His children.

Look with me at life of Abraham and his "Test of the Heart"  
*"The crucible for silver and the furnace for gold, but the LORD tests the heart."* Prov 17:3  
Genesis 22 Pg 14

#### 4 Questions The Test the Heart Always Asks...We Must Answer

##### 1. Will You Surrender To Me The Thing That You Love MOST In This Life? Gen 22:1-2

- After everything else...every other test in Abraham's life...would think he would be done...One more
- Surrender to me, give back to me the son of the promise
  - >The one that represents everything important to you! Future, Legacy, Joy of your life, Fulfillment promise
  - >Abraham...do you love ME more than you love my gifts, my promises, my blessings?
  - >Will you hold what I blessed you with in an open hand...
- Abraham has already surrendered the first son, Ishmael, to Sarah...Now God asks for his second!

##### Understand the Difference between Testing and Tempting

**Tempt:** *To solicit to sin in order to weaken, hurt or destroy* (Always from Satan, never from God) James 1:13

**Test/Prove:** *To put to the test in order to purify, strengthen or build and reveal character* (God, Used of Metal) Deut 8:2-3

The test of the heart is uniquely designed God just for YOU, to show what you love the most. Him...or His blessings? When God asked Abraham for Isaac, that question: "Who do you love the most?" Came center stage

##### 2. Will You Trust Me When You Don't Understand What I Am Doing? Gen 22:3-6

- Abraham NEVER got an explanation from God...and it appears that he never asked for one!
- All you see from him is unquestioning obedience!
  - >Quick obedience: Early the next morning
  - >Complete obedience: Cut wood himself, He set out, took the fire, and knife, three day journey, left servants
  - >Unhesitating obedience: built the altar, bound his son, took the knife in his hand...NEVER FLINCHED!

For most of us, we can walk with God, we can believe God, we can trust God when we UNDERSTAND!

But when we DON'T understand...That is the hard part...THAT TESTS THE HEART!

Then you have to walk by faith!

From the instant God called Abraham and asked for Isaac, until the second that knife was in his hand two things true

1. Abraham NEVER got an explanation from God...He never knew what was going on...no insight
2. Abraham NEVER flinched. Didn't argue, didn't hesitate, didn't linger, didn't question, didn't stall (Momentum)

Heb 11:17-19 "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, even though God had said to him, "It is through Isaac that your offspring will be reckoned." Abraham reasoned that God could raise the dead, and figuratively speaking, he did receive Isaac back from death."

- Reasoned: *To take and inventory and conclude, to reckon, to reason something out*

Will you trust God even when you don't understand?

### 3. Will You Continue To Believe My Promises To You Even When They Seem Impossible? Gen 22:5, 7-11

- Vs 5 *WE will go over and worship and WE will return! Abraham never doubted! He continued to believe!*
- Vs 7 Isaac's question: *Where is the Lamb? God will provide! Lit = (God will see to it)*
- There comes a time for every one of us in the Test of The Heart when we have to trust God for the impossible!

Heb 11:1-2 *"Now faith is being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see. This is what the ancients were commended for."*

Sure: *Confident assurance*

Certain: *Proof and settled conviction*

Faith is what you stand on when you can't SEE any possible way for God to do what He says!

The test of the Heart takes you to the place where ALL you have is God and His word...and every circumstance says no Yet STILL you choose to trust in what God has said!

### 4. Will You Walk With Me In Faith Far Enough To See My Provision? Gen 22:12-14

Many people never get to the place where they see the provision of God in miraculous ways...because they STOP on the way Here is what I want you to see about God's provision when He Tests Your Heart

You will NOT see His provision until you are at the moment of needing it...and never before hand!

- Moses didn't see it until the Egyptian Army was bearing down on them
- Shadrack, Meshack and Abednego didn't see it until they were IN the fiery furnace
- Paul didn't see it until he was in prison
- Elijah didn't see it until the brook dried up

And the same is true for Abraham...

- Provision of God was NOT in the prayer closet
- Provision of God NOT in the work of preparation, cutting the fire wood,
- Provision of God was NOT in the discussion of faith matters with Isaac: (Where is the Lamb)
- Provision of God was NOT anywhere on the three day journey
- Provision of God was NOT anywhere to be found...but on ONE place...the Place of the Test of the Heart  
"It is on the mountain of God that you see the provision of God!" (Became a proverb for people of faith!)

Vs 14: Abraham called that place "The Lord Will Provide!"

The Place you SEE His Provision...Is the Place you NEED His provision  
Abraham would never have SEEN...Unless he went there!

### CONCL:

What about you...Have you ever faced a Test of the Heart? Where God intentionally put you in the Fire...to show your heart?

#### You will know it when you experience it: Always 4 Questions

*Will You Surrender To Me The Thing That You Love MOST In This Life? Gen 22:1-2*

*Will You Trust Me When You Don't Understand What I Am Doing? Gen 22:3-6*

*Will You Continue To Believe My Promises To You Even When They Seem Impossible? Gen 22:5, 7-11*

*Will You Walk With Me In Faith Far Enough To See My Provision? Gen 22:12-14*

De 8:2-3 *Remember how the LORD your God led you all the way in the desert these forty years, to humble you and to test you in order to know what was in your heart, whether or not you would keep his commands. He humbled you, causing you to hunger and then feeding you with manna, which neither you nor your fathers had known, to teach you that man does not live on bread alone but on every word that comes from the mouth of the LORD.*