

**Life Group Topic #24**  
**The Test of Faith**

Genesis 22 and Hebrews 11:17-19

**WELCOME:** (15 minutes)

What is one of the best memories you have of time spent with your father?

**WORSHIP:** (15 minutes)

Use whatever means possible to turn the group's attention to the wonder and majesty of our God- including music, prayer, meditation on the Psalms, and other art forms.

**WORD APPLICATION:** (45 minutes)

Briefly read or paraphrase the following sermon summary before moving to the heart of this section: the discussion around the application questions.

**SHAKE IT OFF AND STEP UP**

*The parable is told of an old dog that fell into a farmer's well. After assessing the situation, the farmer sympathized with the dog but decided that neither the dog nor the well were worth the trouble of saving. Instead he planned to bury the dog in the well and put him out of his misery.*

*When the farmer began shoveling, initially the dog was hysterical. But as the farmer continued shoveling and the dirt hit his back, a thought struck him. It dawned on him that every time a shovel load of dirt landed on his back he should shake it off and step up. This he did blow after blow. "Shake it off and step up, shake it off and step up, shake it off and step up!" he repeated to encourage himself.*

*No matter how painful the blows or how distressing the situation seemed, the old dog fought panic and just kept shaking it off and stepping up! It was not long before the dog battered and exhausted, stepped triumphantly over the wall of that well. What seemed as though it would bury him actually benefitted him—all because of the way he handled his adversity.*

*Bruce Shelley*

There are few among us that have enjoyed the concept of "testing" that has characterized our years in school so the idea of God using "testing" in our lives is seldom embraced with enthusiasm. Read these Scripture verses and comment on the testing and what was accomplished...

- Exodus 16:4, 19, 20
- Exodus 20:20...note the context of the chapter
- Deuteronomy 8:2-5
- I Corinthians 10:13 uses the word temptation for the concept of testing
- James 1:2-8 puts testing in a certain context

The word “test” means *to test or prove the quality of something through adversity or hardship*. God never tests you to prove the evil or the failure in you. He tests you to prove the good that He knows He has put in you. **What times of “testing” have happened in your life and what has been the result of that testing?**

When the testing is done in Genesis 22, God provides a ram for the sacrifice, in place of Isaac. Abraham gives a new name to Mount Moriah...he calls it Yahweh-Jireh, the Lord sees and provides...the Hebrew word *moriah* has the meaning of God is my teacher but *Yahweh Jireh* has the meaning of God is my provider. **What transition do you think happened in Abraham and his relationship with God?**

Comment on the meaning of Yahweh-Jireh for our lives...

- Yahweh...*the One who exists to meet the needs of His people*
- Jireh...*the One who anticipates what I will need and in His mind has already met it*

**Whatever test you face has at the end of it a revelation of God that will be mind numbing and life shaping.**

God demands that reason be taken captive under the rule of faith!

- God perpetually tests His children
- Reason is always brought into submission to faith
- What is he testing in you?

**Take the piece of paper and write down either the word that describes what God is testing in you. It is important that you name it. Will you allow reason to be brought into submission to faith?** Obedience always releases power and blessing...

- It propelled Abraham into belief in the power of resurrection
- It propelled Abraham into a Yahweh-Jireh understanding
- It propelled Abraham into the reward of an expanded covenant...God added the phrase...*conquer the cities of your enemies*

Take the paper with you...Isaac remained with Abraham for the rest of his life but he had passed the test.

**WITNESS:** (15 minutes)

**Consider:** How will our Life Group build on the relationship initiated at Love Abbotsford?