

Family Remodel

Some Things A Son learns about God from his Dad

Genesis 22 Father's Day, June 18, 2017

Today is Father's Day, and unlike Mother's Day, it doesn't have all the hoopla surrounding it. There are a lot of reasons why, but as a way to get into this message today, I thought I'd just do a little bit of an experiment on how to celebrate Father's Day.

To celebrate Father's Day, would you (choose one, at least).

- Prefer to take me out for lunch?
- Prefer to buy me flowers, preferably the kind that don't need planted right away or ever need watering.
- Prefer to buy me a new tool, and cost is no object?
- Prefer to buy me a can of beans?
- Prefer to let me sleep this afternoon and snore without waking me up to tell me I'm snoring?
- Prefer to let me watch American Pickers, Hogan's Heroes, The A-Team and the movie, "Naked Prey" this afternoon without asking me if there was anything else on?



You can see, that as for me, I'm not at all that hard to please.

But seriously, because today is Father's Day, I want to make the most of this day and extend what I am saying also to you who often function as both mother and father in your families. I know you would prefer to not to have to function in both capacities, but because of life situations, this is where you are. I want to encourage you, to bless you, and to help you do some things that will help you to develop the faith in your kids, grandkids, neighborhood kids, etc., because it is up to us to do this. **To begin this morning, I have chosen to look at one of the great fathers of the Old Testament, Abraham.**

Bible Study notes: To better help ourselves understand what Isaac learned this day, let's begin with some Bible study.

- ***A PLACE TO BEGIN:*** First, preliminary to anything I might say, I want to bring to your attention what God has originally said to Abraham about his son. These two texts will help set the entire context, and help us have a greater appreciation for what all that

takes place. **Genesis 17:1-21** *When Abram was ninety-nine years old, the LORD appeared to him and said, "I am God Almighty; walk before me and be blameless. 2 I will confirm my covenant between me and you and will greatly increase your numbers." 3 Abram fell facedown, and God said to him, 4 "As for me, this is my covenant with you: You will be the father of many nations. 5 No longer will you be called Abram; your name will be Abraham, for I have made you a father of many nations. 6 I will make you very fruitful; I will make nations of you, and kings will come from you.*

15 God also said to Abraham, "As for Sarai your wife, you are no longer to call her Sarai; her name will be Sarah. 16 I will bless her and will surely give you a son by her. I will bless her so that she will be the mother of nations; kings of peoples will come from her." 17 Abraham fell facedown; he laughed and said to himself, "Will a son be born to a man a hundred years old? Will Sarah bear a child at the age of ninety?" 18 And Abraham said to God, "If only Ishmael might live under your blessing!" 19 Then God said, "Yes, but your wife Sarah will bear you a son, and you will call him Isaac. I will establish my covenant with him as an everlasting covenant for his descendants after him. ... 21 But my covenant I will establish with Isaac, whom Sarah will bear to you by this time next year."

- Ishmael was the son born earlier, though not from Abraham's wife Sarah. Ishmael's mother was the servant of Abraham's wife Sarah. Sarah makes a huge blunder, and Abraham also is a part to all this when she suggests he go sleep with her servant girl and maybe she will get pregnant and have a son. **BAD IDEA!!** But how bad this turns out is obvious!
- Some other things that will help understand the intensity of this situation:
 - Isaac is the ONLY son of Abraham and Sarah, Genesis 17:19
 - So important was the son that a feast was held when he was weaned. Genesis 21:8
 - God will call him, on the occasion of the sacrifice being studied today, "the son whom you love." Genesis 22:2.
 - Later will make an effort to get Isaac a godly wife Genesis 24:1-4.
 - Isaac will be the one to receive all his dad's inheritance. Genesis 25:5
- The idea I want to convey is that there is a unique bond between Abraham and Isaac, and that's what makes all this such an event.

Isaac is a SPECIAL GUY.

- **A second Scripture** that will help us get a grasp on this is from **Hebrews 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, 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.
 - These two sets of Scripture are the basis for understanding who Abraham was a man of faith. God had made a promise to him, and he will then go forward believing that promise and then following in faith.
- **THE EVENTFUL DAY BEGINS.** A closer look at the text of **Genesis 22:1-5** *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."*
 - First, when God comes to Abraham, his response is, **"Here I am...** Abraham is available to serve God. **I wonder how much we could say about that, but just keep this idea in the back of your mind.** Abraham is available to serve God, and his response easily indicates that. **(That's something Isaac got to learn, so just keep that on the side notes. His dad is available for God. That's kind of unique for any of us here as we understand schedules and such. For Abraham, everything else too a lower priority than the call of God to go and sacrifice).** Now there's a lesson Isaac learned, **God is so important that you can change your schedule to obey Him.**
 - Second, note that God comes to Abraham with the command to sacrifice his son, and **there is no promise attached, but neither has God rescinded anything that He had previously said.** God's promise that through his son the entire world would be blessed remains unchanged.
 - **A note here also that God is not demanding a child sacrifice, but rather we are clearly told that it was a test.** Did Abraham know it was a test? Don't know for sure, but what we see is no hesitation regardless of how he considered it.
 - Child sacrifice did occur in this time of Abraham's life, but the age **(which we will look at in a moment)** would indicate that probably Isaac is too old to be

considered for a child sacrifice. From my study, usually child sacrifice was of infants and younger children still in the adolescent stages.

- The **WHY** of all this probably needs to be repeated. The why of God asking Abraham to do this is explained for us in **James 2:21-23** *Was not our ancestor Abraham considered righteous for what he did when he offered his son Isaac on the altar? 22 You see that his faith and his actions were working together, and his faith was made complete by what he did. 23 And the scripture was fulfilled that says, "Abraham believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness," and he was called God's friend.*

THIS IS WHY.

- The why of all this is answered. This is a look at the faith he has in God! **The simple application is this: It's one thing to say that you believe in God, but another then to act upon what one believes. Again the emphasis here for Isaac is he sees that belief and action are pretty much the same thing. His father believes in God, and so acts as he believes. Isaac got to see that!**

- Note also that it was early the next morning, after God had come to Abraham with the words that he is to sacrifice his son, his only son. **Abraham didn't waste any time**, didn't stand around and try and rationalize why he couldn't do this, get upset that God asked him to do it.



**FAITH
IN ACTION**

- **ON THE THIRD DAY** Genesis 22:4-6 *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." 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,*

- The entire journey will take 3 days, until they reach a point where Abraham will dismiss the servants and then move on with just Isaac.
- The question here arises as to **how old was Isaac?** There is a lot of speculation, some suggest that he was a boy, some that he was older. Let me give you some information to help formulate probably how old he was.
- Sarah was 90 when he was born, and she died at the age of **127 (Genesis 23:1)**.
- The **term used to describe Isaac as a boy can mean a very wide range of age**, all the way from being the age of 17 to someone in the early 30's. (We know that, for example, Joseph who will appear later in Genesis, is called a young man, a boy in

some translations at the age of 17 and then again at the age of about 30 (*Genesis 41:12,46.*)

Just a question:

- How old was Isaac?
- Best answer: old enough to carry the wood, vs 6.

- A Jewish historian by the names of Josephus, who lived a little bit after Jesus, was commissioned to write the history of the Jewish people for the Roman government. *Josephus will call Isaac 25*, for whatever that's worth).
- But, there is *one other thing* that helps us to peg the idea that Isaac was an older person, older than a kid and that is in *Genesis 22:6, 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,*
 - Isaac carries the large load of wood, which would be required for the sacrifice while Abraham carries only the knife.
 - Isaac is strong enough to carry the wood, and that's why one would tend to think that he is actually a young adult (by our standards.)
- **SOMETHING'S MISSING.** *Genesis 22:7-8 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.*
 - A bit more insight into the faith of Isaac and some of the things he had learned from his father about God, and one of those things is about sacrifice and what it meant.
 - Isaac learned about worship, how to worship, how to honor God through sacrifice (that you don't just offer anything to God), he also knew enough about God to know that a blood sacrifice was needed, but at this moment as they approach the place where it's all to happen, the sacrifice is missing.
 - *Isaac got to learn a lot about God and what worship is about, and how to worship God.*
 - Isaac knew that sacrifice was part of his and his dad's relationship of faith. Without going into a lot of deeper discussions about sacrifice, we are left with the idea that *sacrifice was normal for Abraham's family.*
- **THE MOMENT OF CLARITY** *Genesis 22:9-13 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.

- We need to visualize in our minds this whole act of Abraham building the altar, aligning the wood for the burning, and getting all of that set. I wonder if Abraham took longer than usual in doing this, because he knew what came next, and that was binding his son, the way one would bind an animal to be sacrificed on the altar.
- I can only imagine the thoughts running through Abraham's mind as somehow he was able to bind his son with ropes, and even why the son allowed that to happen.
- From Isaac's perspective, being offered as a sacrifice by his father may have brought him to a point of panic, probably did, as he tried to make sense of all this, as he perhaps fought to get free from the ropes to escape. Were there thoughts running through his mind that perhaps his aged father was acting as an insane person? Was he thinking that this is all wrong... how can Isaac consider himself the son of promise *(which I'm sure he heard many times) if this was going to happen, him being killed and then offered as a burn sacrifice.
- I don't have all the answers, but I do have a reason why Isaac could be more submissive than we think, more cooperative than we'd be, more compliant than what we can even consider... and that is Isaac understood something about his dad's faith.
- I'm thinking that Abraham had told Isaac about how great God was, and that if this happened to him, being killed on an altar, God would raise him up. I'm speculating here, but I wish I could have been there to hear Abraham explain how great God is to Isaac.
 - What we see here at this scene is not a war between a dad, but obedience, compliance and trust.
 - Isaac got to see his dad involve him in faith at a deeper level than most of us would be comfortable with or even imagine.
- Perhaps Isaac faced this with the same confidence that Jesus faced the cross, knowing that God would raise him up on the third day.

Just imagine...

- *I think we must know that Isaac had learned some things from his dad's faith and trust in God to even consider this whole event and not run, which allowed him to be the sacrifice.*
- But there's one more thing we need to note about this event, and that is **10 Then he reached out his hand and took the knife to slay his son.**



- It is at this point that the sacrifice is really offered, the intention, purpose, sincerity, fullness of Abraham's heart and trust in God is complete. God takes all of this as an approval that Abraham was ready to do as asked.
- The New Testament (Hebrews 11:17-19, a text we looked at earlier) considers the sacrifice as completed, done. Because of Abraham's heart and trust, it's considered as done.

A lot of things happened that day, and in all reality, we could spend the rest of the day looking more in depth at the details and just be amazed. But, what I'd rather do is to now shift gears and talk about some of the specific things Isaac got to learn about God from his father. Abraham was able to influence his son to believe and trust in God.

Illustration: There is no end to the research on fatherhood that demonstrates the value of dad and how important he is. There are lists of the things dad can add to the family life. Here's a brief list, and by no means the end of the father's influence:

9 Important Ways Dads Impact The Lives Of Their Children Despite all of society's advances over the past century, men are still — too often — viewed by some as their own children's "babysitters"; when in actuality, research supports the irreplaceable role they play in their everyday lives. Chelsea Clinton recently helped unveil a first-of-its-kind report on fatherhood at the United Nations. The "State of the World's Fathers," produced by MenCare and its partners, analyzed hundreds of global studies on fatherhood that show why and how fathers matter. We partnered with Johnson & Johnson to share findings from the report on global fatherhood, as well as from several other studies that examine the powerful and enduring influence fathers can have on their children.

- 1. Their kids play well with others***
- 2. Their wives and babies are healthier***
- 3. Their children are more prepared for school.***

4. ...And go on to be more successful academically .
5. Their children start speaking earlier and are more verbally expressive.
6. Their children grow up less prone to depression..
7. Their sons are less likely to be in trouble
8. Their daughters are more ambitious in their careers...
9. ...And have a more positive self-image

So when it comes to teaching kids who God is, the opportunity is there. Dad, mom, don't let kids come to their own conclusions about who God is and what He's like, but take the lead... which is what Abraham did. Don't assume that a 30 minute lesson here and there will be enough... and worst of all, don't think that it's the right thing to do to wait till your kids are old enough to decide. That's never a good thing!

Dads and moms have influence, and their example can model for kids how to live. Thus, a few of the things Isaac learned about God from his dad, and things we, as parents (and dads) can be teaching to our children.

1. What obedience to God looks like when it tugs at a dad's heart.



- a. **Illustration:** the Perfect dad. Does this guy exist? I see a lot of things on Facebook about people reminiscing about their fathers, but no matter what they might say, none of those dads were perfect. What we see are people who understand that a perfect dad doesn't exist, but we'll take a great dad just as well.
- b. **Isaac learned that his dad wasn't perfect, but obeying God in difficult times was not an option.** Abraham was not the perfect dad. I think I need to share this, lest you think what I'm suggesting is not attainable. Abraham wasn't the perfect dad. Let me make a reference to a situation that happened earlier in Abraham's life. Abraham wasn't perfect.
 - i. In **Genesis 12:10-20**, Abraham lies and tries to pass off his wife as his sister because he's worried about his own life. Rather than trust God and tell the truth, Abraham has a problem here. The lie becomes known and Abraham has to deal with that.
 - ii. Abraham does it again in **Genesis 20:1-18**, he again lies and tries to pass off his wife as his sister. And, once more he must deal with that.
- c. **But, this is one of the times that Abraham did it right! Abraham obeyed God.**

- d. So the reason I begin here is obedience to God is an important thing and dad's don't always get it right, especially when there are other things tugging at your heart.
 - i. For example, a dad gets pulled over for speeding, disobeying the law. **What's the reaction? Obedience or defiance?** The answer should be obedience, because obedience is right and it is needed.
 - ii. Or, let's take an example that has a spiritual side: Dad makes up an excuse that he's sick, and calls off work so that he can go play. Obedience calls for truthfulness, honesty, integrity, God honoring.
- e. The Kids need to know that obedience is always right, and in this case, **Isaac got to see his father obey the command of God, even though it was extremely difficult.**
 - i. This is the real issue here. Obeying God can be difficult because sometimes it's inconvenient, troublesome, awkward, and even not fun... but the need is there.
- f. **Isaac got to see his dad obey God, even when it was difficult. Every parent and especially dad here today needs to know that when you obey God, even in the difficult moments, you make it easier for your kids to obey God.**
 - i. That's how this works.

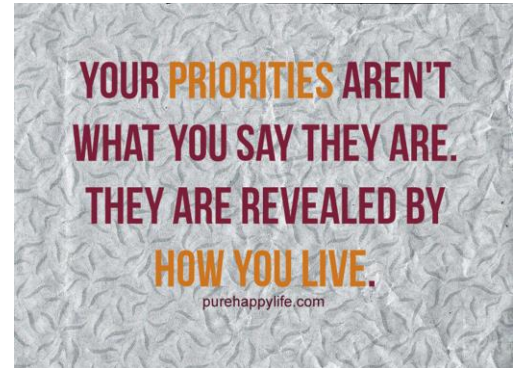
How This Works

2. How Important Faith Is



- a. **Illustration:** Dad's priorities. One of the most difficult things a dad could do would be to ask his wife and kids, **"What's the most important thing I do?"** We might be surprised, shocked, or even in denial to hear the answer. The answers might be that dad's priorities are things like watching ball games on TV, eating, cutting grass, etc. The shock comes because most dads would never list watching ball games as a priority. Yet the answers are real.
- b. On the day in which Isaac was to be sacrificed, **he got to see how important his dad's faith was to him, that it was a priority because he'd seen it consistently.** He'd seen his dad trust in God, he'd heard the stories about God telling him to move to a land that He would show him. None of how God was involved in Abraham's life was hidden from Isaac.
 - i. Isaac got to see and participate with his dad in his faith, and maybe that's what influenced Isaac so much that he was able to participate.

- c. How important is faith in your life? Is your faith a priority? As a dad or as a parent, how important is it in your list of daily life?
- It may very well be that the best way to answer that question is to ask those who call you dad or mom. The answers might surprise you, because what you see as living in faith to God might just not be at all what others are seeing. Ask your kids, ask you family, **“How important is my faith in God to me, what do you see me doing? What do you see me saying? Am I living like it’s the most important thing in my life?”**



- What spoke most to Isaac about his dad’s faith in God was the demonstration of faith and his participation in that faith, not only here on this occasion, but as he got to see his dad live out his life. He got to see how important faith was to his dad, whether it was dealing with someone who was not easy to get along with, or honoring God.
- Isaac got to see how important faith was, that it was a priority in his dad’s life.** So too with us, as parents, how important is faith to us?
 - Do we prioritize worship so that our kids know worship is what we do as a family? Or is that only an option?
 - Do we prioritize the influence of our faith in how we spend our money? Do the members of our families understand that what we have we have as a gift from God? Do our kids understand that we honor God first? **Isaac got to see and learn that!**
 - I could go on, but I think you get the idea of what I’m talking about. Faith was important to Abraham, and Isaac knew it. Our goal is for our kids to know that too! Our faith is a priority, not an option.

3. **To make Decisions Based on Who God is and How God Keeps His Promises.**



- God had promised Abraham that it would be through his son that the world would be blessed. That’s a promise from God, and the passage from Hebrews 11 **Hebrews 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, 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.

- b. God made a promise and Abraham acted on that promise, and Isaac got to see his dad make the decision to offer him as a sacrifice, based on that.
 - i. **Abraham knew the promises of God, and that not even death was going to stop God's promises from being fulfilled... not even death!**
- c. The biggie for Isaac is seeing his dad, whom he loves deeply make a decision which involves him, based on how God keeps His promises.
 - i. We can talk theory all day long about what faith should and shouldn't do, about what God's promises are, and how wonderful they are.
 - ii. But the question of the hour is whether or not we are willing to make decisions, life decisions, based on how God keeps His promises.
 - iii. As I reflect upon Isaac and what appears to be him humbling himself without a struggle to be the sacrifice. The only explanation I can have for him being that way is a) he is knocked out and can't function at all, or b) he's seen his dad trust God and knows that even now in this critical moment, God won't fail either of them.
4. Let me share some examples of life decisions we, as God's dads and moms need to be making because we believe the promises of God.
 - a. The decision to worship God and the priority that will take over all other activities, that we will teach our children to be worshipers. A lot of life's pain will never happen if we can teach our children to respect and worship God first.
 - b. The decision to be generous with what God has given us. God's promises are to bless us, not necessarily back with money, but with peace, joy, kindness, and I say it again, peace. The other option is selfishness. Imagine the joy of making decisions about generosity, so that our children never have to experience the ugliness of selfishness.
 - c. The decision to live sacrificially. Our children need to understand that the call to follow Jesus is not made easily, but that sacrifice is essential, but the joy that emerges as real values surface... that's worth it all!
 - d. The decision to love people, even those who are not easy to love? This is a faith decision, whether we will admit it or not.
 - e. The decision to use appropriate language which honors God in times of stress.

- f. The decision about marriage and what marriage is all about. That's a decision we all will make based on the promises of God.
- g. Jesus as my Lord and Savior. This is a faith decision to make as we live out what it means to be a disciple, a follower of Jesus.
- h. These are just some of the things we can make a decision to do, based on who God is, and how He keeps His promises to our faithfulness.

Conclusion: A child came home from school after his first day in school. The dad saw him



in his room and asked him, “What did you learn at school today?” The child replied, “Not enough, I’ve got to go back tomorrow.” Perhaps we do need to see education and learning as endless things, but the point I want us to see is that Isaac learned a lot that day, a lot about his dad, his faith, his own faith. Let me review these things:

- i. **What obedience to God looks like when it tugs at a dad’s heart.**
- j. **How Important Faith Is**
- k. **How to make Decisions Based on How God Keeps His Promises.**

But what about us?



1. Are we teaching those around us what obedience to God looks like, especially when that obedience, doing the right thing, tugs at our hearts and is costly?
2. Are we demonstrating how important faith is to us as we live for God? Are we demonstrating that faith and action are tied together because of God?
3. Are we making decisions, life changing decisions, based on who God is and how God keeps His promises?
4. The last question I always want to ask is this: What do you need to do because Jesus is Lord? Is it time to make a life changing decision based on who Jesus Christ is as Lord and Savior? What do you need to do with all that has been said today?