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PRAYER

LOVING AND SUSTAINING GOD

You call us to obedience, to follow you in all things, to give up the things we cling to, and to give ourselves wholeheartedly to your purposes.

We confess that we don't always find this easy to do. We confess that it is often very difficult to let go of the things we love. But we also know that you never ask more of us than what is possible, and that you stand ready at all times to sustain us, and to provide everything we need.

Give us courage to faithfully follow your leading, even when we cannot see the outcome, even when the path you call us to seems impossible to comprehend. Help us to trust you in all things, to let go of everything that would stand in the way of whole-hearted obedience to you.

In the name of Jesus Christ, we pray.
Amen.

(Prayer by Christine Longhurst based on [Genesis 22](#))

WARM UP (OPTIONAL)

Can you tell us about someone who inspires you because of their willingness to sacrifice? What did they sacrifice and how did it work out?

WORD

¹ After these things God tested Abraham and said to him, "Abraham!" And he said, "Here I am." ² He said, "Take your son, your only son Isaac, whom you love, and go to the land of Moriah, and offer him there as a burnt offering on one of the mountains of which I shall tell you." ³ So Abraham rose early in the morning, saddled his donkey, and took two of his young men with him, and his son Isaac. And he cut the wood for the burnt offering and arose and went to the place of which God had told him. ⁴ On the third day Abraham lifted up his eyes and saw the place from afar. ⁵ Then Abraham said to his young men, "Stay here with the donkey; I and the boy will go over there and worship and come again to you." ⁶ And Abraham took the wood of the burnt offering and laid it on Isaac his son. And he took in his hand the fire and the knife. So they went both of them together. ⁷ And Isaac said to his father Abraham, "My father!" And he said, "Here I am, my son." He said, "Behold, the fire and the wood, but where is the lamb for a burnt offering?" ⁸ Abraham said, "God will provide for himself the lamb for a burnt offering, my son." So they went both of them together. . . .

[GENESIS 22:1-14](#)

You probably have your own ways to address the issue without becoming "God's spin doctor." I'd probably try to tell a story explaining how deeply unaware humans are of their true nature. This is a natural condition of any human being. We're disconnected from ourselves. God leads his people on the path of revealing to us who we are, what our nature is, and what we really need. That might seem like a rather traumatic way for God to relate to a human being, unless we are fully sure of his nature and know that we can trust him through times of painful testing. When we trust him, we know these times might be painful, but we're safe and they will not last forever. For Christians, God proves his good, loving nature and good disposition toward us through the atoning death and resurrection of Jesus, which is presented in this story in Genesis in the type/shadow fashion.

Finally, the testing has a two-fold result:

- It revealed to Abraham something about himself.
- It revealed to Abraham something about God.

We need both to live fully. God leads us in order to provide both.

By Przemek Sielatycki (Every Nation Poland)

GUIDE QUESTIONS

(NUMBERED ACCORDING TO LEVEL OF DEPTH AND READINESS TO SHARE)

1. On a scale of 1-10, how would you rate your ability to sacrifice for others? Why have you rated yourself this way?
2. Why do you think verse 2 places importance upon Isaac being Abraham's ONLY son? Why is this important to Abraham? Why is this important to the whole story of the Bible?
3. Why would a good, loving God test people he claims he loves?
4. [Verse 5](#) presents the first mention of the word WORSHIP in Scripture. What is the meaning of worship in this context and how does it differ from how we might see worship in today's society, whether Christian or not?
5. According to this passage, what/who do you worship like Abraham and Isaac do, and how do you worship?

If you do not yet have a relationship of worship with God, would you like to have one? Ask your Life Group leader to lead you in prayer to receive Christ. You can pray this prayer with them:

Dear Lord Jesus, I know that I am a sinner, and I ask for your forgiveness. I believe you died for my sins and rose from the dead. I turn from my sins and invite you to come into my heart and life. I want to trust and follow you as my Lord and Saviour. In Jesus' name, Amen.

PRAYER LIST