

Adult Group Study Guide for January 3, 2021
A Hope Full New Year
Genesis 22:1-14, Luke 24:27

Goal: To grow in confidence that God loves you and that God reigns over the future.

Key Verse: *So Abraham called that place The LORD Will Provide. And to this day it is said, "On the mountain of the LORD it will be provided."* – Genesis 22:14 (NIV)

1. We say "Happy New Year" to each other as we greet the new year. We are hope-full that the new year will bring a fresh start. What are some other ways that you could share best wishes for the new year? For example: "I wish that you and your family will find health and happiness in the new year!" or "May God grant you his peace and joy this year!" Who needs to receive your hopeful greeting in this new year?

2. Review the story of Abraham's testing in Genesis 22:1-14. How does the first verse provide some help in understanding what is going on? Although it sounds incredible to our ears, the people of Canaan were used to thinking that the gods may demand child sacrifice. Abraham might have wondered if his God was like the pagan gods the Canaanites worshipped. How did God use this experience to demonstrate that he was a very different kind of god and that he would never demand such a sacrifice?

3. God had promised in Genesis 21:12 that it was through Isaac God would fulfill his covenant promises to Abraham. It seems as if God commanded Abraham to kill any hope of fulfilling the promise God made to him. What does Abraham's comment to his servants in Genesis 22:5 and his reply to Isaac in Genesis 22:8 say about his faith in God? Read Hebrews 11:17-19. What do these verses suggest about what Abraham thought God was able to do?

4. One phrase is repeated in Genesis 22:6 and 8 – "the two of them went together." This means that Isaac willingly went along with Abraham. How does this change your perception of this event? Read Luke 24:47. After his resurrection Jesus explained to his disciples what was said in the Scriptures concerning himself. How is this story in Genesis 22 a prophesy of what Jesus Christ would do for us on the cross? (John 1:29)

5. Abraham's obedience showed that he trusted God, even when he did not fully understand what was going on. Abraham knew anything was possible, but it was impossible that God would break his covenant promises. What would help you grow in confidence that God loves you and will provide for you in the future? (Hebrews 10:35-36)