

ABRAHAM'S TESTS

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1. LEAVE UR: Am I willing to leave home to follow God?
2. LEAVE HARAN: Will I move when God want me to move?
3. STAY IN CANAAN: Will I stay put & trust God until He moves me?
4. ATTITUDE TO WEALTH: Am I content with what God provides?
5. SEPARATE FROM LOT: Do I trust God with my future?
6. RESCUE LOT: Am I willing to take a risk to help others?
7. MEET MELCHIZEDEK Do I treat my things as belonging to God?
8. AGING BUT NO SON: Can I trust God with my fears?
9. SON BY HAGAR: Am I willing to be patient and wait on God?
10. SEND HAGAR AWAY: Do I give in to pressure?
11. PROMISE OF SON: Can faith persevere when seems God not answer?
12. VISITORS ARRIVE: Am I willing to be a servant?
13. SON NEXT YEAR: Do I believe and act on God's promises?
14. PRAY FOR LOT: Am I faithful in praying for others?
15. SODOM DESTROYED: Trust God when don't understand happen?
16. SARAH'S MY SISTER #2: Have I learned from past mistakes?
17. ISAAC BORN, CIRCUMCISED: Do my actions show my faith?
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19. SACRIFICE ISAAC: Have I given my children back to God?
20. ABIMELECH COVENANT: Is my daily life faithful witness God?
21. SARAH DIES: Do I find peace in God when a loved one dies?
22. SARAH'S GRAVE: Have I committed to God's plan for my life?
23. A WIFE FOR ISAAC: Do I trust God to do what is best for my children?
24. ABRAHAM DIES: Am I trusting God concerning my own death?
25. WHOLE LIFE: Is my life lived in faith and obedience to God?

- God stretches our faith (won't break us)
 - trials, difficulties, tests, etc.
 - opportunities, decisions, choices
- faith gets stronger (**muscle**, not rubber band)

My life consisted of one test after another - about **25** major
many minor ones each day
tell you about a few
maybe you can see some of the tests in your life

1. LEAVE UR

Am I willing to leave home to follow God?

SCRIPTURE: Genesis 11:24-12:9

Gen 12:1 The LORD had said to Abram, "Leave your country, your people and your father's household and go to the land I will show you.

BACKGROUND: one chosen nation

TEST: leave top city of its day (Ur, moon worship)

RESPONSE: had to step out in FAITH, give up all

RESULT: In Haran 15 years until Terah, father, died

2. LEAVE HARAN

Will I move when God wants me to move?

2 "I will make you into a great nation and I will bless you; I will make your name great, and you will be a blessing. 3 I will bless those who bless you, and whoever curses you I will curse; and all peoples on earth will be blessed through you."

Then 300 miles further into Canaan (Palestine) - 75 yrs old - remembered God's word 15 yrs ago

Ur to Haran easy, Haran to Canaan - more difficult – 400 dry mi lived in Tents

PASSED Went

Built an altar – to worship, praise God

Test 2: leave haran

3. STAY IN CANAAN

Will I stay put & trust God until He moves me?

TEST FOLLOWS TRIUMPH! Famine!

A FAITH THAT CAN'T BE TESTED CAN'T BE TRUSTED

TEMPTATION:

God TESTING man – develop strength

Satan TEMPTING man – bring destruction

RESPONSE: I decided to help God out – FEAR!!!

MAPS TO EGYPT

RESULT: Sarah to Pharaoh, Rich, found out, Sarah no longer trust Abraham

BACK to Canaan

PRINCIPLES

1. God will allow His people to be tested with adversity.
2. Even those who have proven faithful in the past will be tested.
3. it is far better to walk by faith in God's promises than it is to walk by human sight
4. Build an altar wherever you go
5. If you can't build an altar its not by faith
6. TRUST & TRUTH

TRANSITION

Test 3: don't leave Canaan – did get wealthy (next test)

4. ATTITUDE TO WEALTH

Am I content with what God provides?

TEST: \$, things always a temptation - faith in them instead of God

On a scale of 1 to 10, **HOW CONTENT ARE YOU?** de, self-centeredness

CONTENTMENT = attitude of satisfaction

RESPONSE: knew they came from God - trusted him, not things first

RESULT: God continues to prosper me - Before: stepped out in faith, trusting God

I have learned to be content whatever the circumstances. I know what it is to be in need and I know what it is to have plenty. I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation, whether well fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want. I can do all things through Christ who gives me strength. Phil 4:11-13

TRANS: Abraham content, Lot NOT - Lot: problem with greed!)

5. SEPARATE FROM LOT

Do I trust God with my future?

SCRIPTURE: Genesis 13:5-18 *Now Lot, who was moving about with Abram, also had flocks and herds and tents. But the land could not support them while they stayed together, for their possessions were so great that they were not able to stay together. And quarreling arose between Abram's herdsmen and the herdsmen of Lot. The Canaanites and Perizzites were also living in the land at that time.*

TEST: Wealth both a blessing & a curse! Who gets the best land? (God gave it to ME!)

RESPONSE: Let Lot choose favorite (best!) Humbly give up own rights

RESULT: God prospered me even more

PARADE – our viewpoint only see part that is in front of us at the moment

If up in sky could see whole thing, start to end, better perspective (how GOD sees things)

TRANSITION

Lot's greed, worldliness, got him into trouble -happens when follow world, not God

heard @ X-rated Sodom ("God gae up" Rom 1)

6. RESCUE LOT Am I willing to take a risk to help others?

TEST: Invaders take LOT - What am I to do?

RISK in trusting God

RESPONSE: Gathered own servants, neighbors, friends, trusted God, overcame fear

RESULT: Attacked at night, God gave us victory, Lot, people of Sodom/Gomorrah freed

TRANS: Tried to give me credit & riches, tempt my ego – next test....

7. MEET MELCHIZEDEK

Do I treat my things as belonging to God?

TEST: Take credit myself for the victory, Take \$ not mine (Ki Sodom say he made me rich

RESPONSE: God helped me out, sent Melchizedek help me remember who really did it

After Abram returned from defeating Kedorlaomer and the kings allied with him, the King of Sodom came out to meet him in the Valley of Shaveh. Then Melchizedek, king of Salem.. Gen 14:17-24

PICTURE OF JESUS

Priest of God & King

King of Salem (peace) - Melchizedek = 'righteousness;

NEED OR GREED God first or self first

RESULT: Turned it all down - God provided all I ever needed or wanted

TRANSITION Except a son . . .

8. AGING BUT NO SON Can I trust God with my fears?

WONDER where God is, why promises not being fulfilled, if prayers heard – 10 YEARS!

Abraham's solution: Eliezar, his steward (as was done in that culture)

SCRIPTURE: Genesis 15:1-21

After this, the word of the LORD came to Abram in a vision: "Do not be afraid, Abram. I am your shield, your very great reward."

RESPONSE: believed, but harder again as time went on

TRANS: When God not answer right away, faith fails...

9. SON BY HAGAR

Am I willing to be patient & wait on God?

PATIENCE a big problem today – impatience, stress, hurry, rush today

THE PROBLEM; Abraham 85, Sarah 75, past menopause

TEST: son by HAGAR

STUPID THINGS BELIEVERS DO WHEN IMPATIENT

1. Take things into own hands – Sarah impatient with God
2. Blame others for results – Sarah blames Abraham
3. Avoid consequences – Ab impatient with Sarah, Sarah impatient with Ab

RESPONSE: I caved in “Yes dear, anything you say, dear”

RESULT: Ishmael born - Arab-Israel problem today!

TRANS: bickering women in home (Sarah & Hagar) - 13 yrs pass - home a turmoil

10. SEND HAGAR AWAY

Do I give in to pressure?

TEST: HAGAR pregnancy, nasty to Sarah,

RESPONSE: I caved in “Yes dear, anything you say, dear”

RESULT: delivered by Jesus, birth of Isaac put off

TRANS: retested on obedience - thought I was in God’s will these 13 years

11. PROMISE OF SON

Can my faith persevere when it seems God doesn’t answer?

SCRIPTURE: Genesis 17:1-27 *When Abram was ninety-nine years old, the LORD appeared to him and said, "I am God Almighty; walk before me and be blameless. I will confirm my covenant between you and me and will greatly increase your numbers."*

TEST: Keep faith in God’s promise of a son & descendants

New names: Ab/Sar = remember promise of son whenever name said!

RESPONSE: obeyed, believed & did it

RESULT: peace, confidence in God

Faith doesn’t grow without struggle

TRANS: patiently awaiting His timing in this

12. VISITORS ARRIVE

Am I willing to be a servant?

SERVANTHOOD – not popular today

Luke 22:26-27 But you are not to be like that. Instead, the greatest among you should be like the youngest, and the one who rules like the one who serves. 27 For who is greater, the one who is at the table or the one who serves? Is it not the one who is at the table? But I am among you as one who serves.

3 men to Abraham, got up in hottest part of day served them

TEST 12: Serve God by Serving Others

TRANSITION Came to give an important message to Abraham

13. SON NEXT YEAR

Do I believe and act on God's promises?

SCRIPTURE: Genesis 18:1-15 *Then the LORD said, "I will surely return to you about this time next year, and Sarah your wife will have a son."*

TEST: Believe God's word of a son within next year - Ab 99, Sarah 89

RESPONSE: Put obedience to God before Sarah - not let her manipulate me, but take a stand

sometimes harder to trust God with our CHILDREN than anything else!

RESULT: Good, being man God wanted me to be - example to Sarah, believed, too (Heb 11:11)

TRANS: God, at same time, revealed something else:

14. PRAY FOR LOT

Am I faithful in praying for others?

TEST: Lot and family there, will die, too - Do I care enough to intercede for him?

RESPONSE: Interceded for Lot & family - God not destroy Sod/Gom if 10 bel there

Abraham responded in intercession – prayer for them, 45, 40, 30, 20, 10 – God said yes

Lot, wife, 2 unmar dau, 3 mar dau & husb)

RESULT: Not 10 believers there!

Sod & Gom destroyed, Lot saved, wife salt (Incest with daughters!)

TRANS: God had RETEST for me!

15. SODOM DESTROYED

Do I trust God when things I don't understand happen?

Sodom & Gomorrah by Dead Sea

VERY prosperous, great cities

LOT WARNED by angels because a believer, Abraham prayed

COMPROMISE with sin that there in the first place!

Result: FIRE & BRIMSTONE on whole area, Lot wife & 2 dau alone escaped – God couldn't judge with them there – no judgment on believers

TRANS: learning to trust God – retested!!!

16. SARAH'S MY SISTER #2

Have I learned from past mistakes?

TEST: Same as test 2 – NEGEV, Abimelech, she's my sister

RESPONSE: compromised, lied @ Sarah ('sister')

RESULT: Embarrassed by Abimelech - God bailed out again

TRANS: sure enough, Isaac born soon after
Another RETEST, too

17. ISAAC BORN, CIRCUMCISED

Do my actions show my faith?

SCRIPTURE: Genesis 21:1-21

Now the LORD was gracious to Sarah as he had said, and the LORD did for Sarah what he had promised. Sarah became pregnant and bore a son to Abraham in his old age, at the very time God had promised him.

WHY DID GOD MAKE THEM WAIT?

1. Learn patience
2. Faith grow
3. Trust increase
4. Closer to God
5. See God's power

God's promises always come true!

Miraculous birth – similarity/type Jesus and Isaac

TEST: circumcises, dedicate to God, recognize he is God's gift

RESULT: God took care of them, blessed them - "Isaac" = "laughter"
much in family now!

TRANS: One final retest necessary - using people as security blanket
(not give up to God)

18. ISHMAEL SENT AWAY

Am I willing to face the consequences of my sins?

Face sin's consequences

ISAAC weaned (3 to 5 years old), great celebration

ISHMAEL (17) replaced, jealous teenager, mocked Isaac, picked on him

Consequences of Abraham's sin in having ISHMAEL in first place

TEST: Ishmael mocking, Sarah said get rid of him

RESPONSE: Went to God with it -not what to do, but peace – trusted God

TRANS another faith test coming – hardest yet!

19. SACRIFICE ISAAC

Have I given my children back to God?

SCRIPTURE: Genesis 22:1-19 *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."*

FAITH – taking God at His word

TEST: Give Isaac back to God - kill him! – seems contradictory

Faith strong because **KEPT EYES ON GOD**, not on trial going through

Knew God **ABLE**, not know if He is **WILLING**

RESPONSE: Obeyed, did it (didn't tell Sarah, too much) - God would bring back to life (Heb 11:19)

ISAAC AGREED, submitted, obeyed, trusted as well

Abraham willing to give up the closest thing in life for God

"God will provide **HIMSELF** a lamb"- God's substitute

RAM in bushes provision as substitute

PICTURE OF JESUS – God not stop hand on Jesus, like did on Abraham

MORIAH place – where temple built, right by Calvary

TRANS: This important victory helped me 'turn the corner' and completely trust God

20. ABIMELECH COVENANT

Is my daily life a faithful witness for God?

Daily witness for God

TEST: living godly life for neighbors, see Jesus in me

Matthew 5:13: You are the SALT of the earth

Mathew 5:14-16 You are the LIGHT of the world

TRANSITION Then comes one of life's hardest tests

21. SARAH DIES Do I find peace in God when a loved one dies?

SCRIPTURE: Genesis 23:1-20

Sarah lived to be a hundred and twenty-seven years old. She died at Kiriath Arba (that is, Hebron) in the land of Canaan, and Abraham went to mourn for Sarah and to weep over her.

TEST: Sarah dies at 127 years - Without mate life empty

Ps 55:22 Cast your cares on the LORD and he will sustain you; he will never let the righteous fall.

Absent from the body = present with the Lord Phil 1:21-23

RESPONSE: Nice burial (buy land - all mine, but own none)

RESULT: First land ownership

"Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord ... that they may rest from their labors; and their works do follow them: Rev 14:13

"and Abraham went t mourn for Sarah and to weep over her."

Special closeness to God, meet needs Sarah met

When you know where something is you haven't lost it.

TRANS: Where to bury Sarah significant decision

22. SARAH'S GRAVE

Have I committed to God's plan for my life?

TEST: Hebron, buried in the land, not taken back to Ur or Hebron

RESULT: Committed to staying in Canaan, as God said

Trust God No Matter What

TRANS: I had to be father & mother to Isaac, help get wife

23. A WIFE FOR ISAAC

Do I trust God to do what is best for my children?

TEST: Importance of godly wife - bel or unbel? Trust God to pick right wife? His choice?

RESPONSE: Trusted God to provide believing wife
Sent servant Eleazar back to Ur area for wife

RESULT: God provided Rebekah for Isaac

TRANS: Isaac took over, own rel with God
New wife, Keturah, children = MIDIANITES
As my death near had to trust God with that, too

24. ABRAHAM DIES

Am I trusting God concerning my own death?

Abraham married Keturah 20 years after Sarah died, many children with her, then time to die

“Altogether, Abraham lived 175 years. Then Abraham breathed his last and died at a good old age, an old man and full of years; and he was gathered to his people.”

TEST: Trust God with Isaac, rest of family

Trust God with my soul through last enemy - death! 175 YEARS OLD

RESPONSE: Trusted God, lived last days in peace MUCH God taught me over the years . . .

Isa 26:4 Trust in the LORD forever, for the LORD, the LORD, is the Rock eternal.

Ps 9:9-10 The LORD is a refuge for the oppressed, a stronghold in times of trouble. Those who know your name will trust in you, for you, LORD, have never forsaken those who seek you.

RESULT: Died in peace

No fear of death for the Christian

“Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me.” Psalm 23:4

“Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints.” Psalm 116:15

TRANS: death last test – no more after that!

25. WHOLE LIFE

Is my life lived in faith & obedience to God?

RESPONSE: By end of my life learned to trust God

RESULT: Used by God as father of faithful since

LESSON: YOUR turn, YOUR tests, YOUR time to pass or fail