

# Week 17: God Is Most Important

## Genesis 22–25

### Objectives

Students will . . .

- Define idolatry.
- Explain how Abraham shows his faith.
- Describe how Rebekah shows her faith.

### Week at a Glance

*To the Teacher:* Pray for your students daily and prayerfully study the verses given above.

	<b>Monday</b>	<b>Tuesday</b>	<b>Wednesday</b>	<b>Thursday</b>	<b>Friday</b>
<b>Lesson</b>	Idolatry	Abraham Puts God First	A Bride for Isaac	Isaac and Rebekah Walk by Faith	Show What You Know
<b>Big Idea</b>	What happens if you love something too much?	Abraham sacrifices Isaac.	Finding a wife for Isaac.	Isaac and Rebekah wait to have children.	Review for and administer this week's quiz.
<b>Videos</b>					
<b>Materials</b>			Bracelets and ring	Name cut-outs	
<b>Copies</b>	Daily Bible Connection			Abraham's Family Tree page	Show What You Know Quiz

# MONDAY: Idolatry

James 1

## Hook

Have students work with partners to make a list of good and/or important things in life. It might help to have them make categories.

What things in life are important to . . .

- a young child?
- a young adult?
- someone in elementary school?
- an older adult?
- someone in high school?

After students have time to write ideas with their partners, have each pair share their ideas with the class. Discuss the ideas together. As a class, brainstorm about things people want to be known for, such as their favorite ball team, band, or brand or their boyfriend or girlfriend. We make a big deal about certain things because they are important to us.

## Discussion

Life is full of important things. Every good thing in our lives is a gift from God (James 1:17). However, we are in danger if we ever get too connected to those important things and make them *most* important. As Timothy Keller states, “[Idolatry] means turning a good thing into an ultimate thing.”<sup>1</sup>

Abraham and Sarah wanted a son. Certainly, children are good and important. Isaac was the son God had promised. His birth was a miracle. Isaac’s children would become Israel, the nation that Jesus would come through. Yet as important as Isaac was, he was not the most important thing. God is more important than anyone or anything.

If a parent gives a child a bike, that child may like his or her bike but it’s silly for the child to think the bike is more important than his or her parent.

It’s hard to know what really has the top spot in our life. We might say we love our family but also say we love pizza. Our lives are like a good story. In a good story there is one main plot, or line of action. There may be many sub-plots, but they are not the main point of the story.

In the story of our lives, our connection with God is the plot line of the story. Family, friends, school—all other things are sub-plots. Only when we love God most can we grow to love others in a way that is best for them and for us.

God, in His mercy, sometimes takes away what we are trusting in. He is not being unkind. He knows that if we look to anything for satisfaction and joy besides Him, we will be disappointed. No person or experience or accomplishment is going to save us or satisfy us—only God can.

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1. Keller, Timothy. *Every Good Endeavor*. New York: Penguin Books, 2016

Think of a time when you were excited about something you thought was going to be amazing. Did you ever feel deeply disappointed about the way that thing actually turned out?

*Answer:* Answers will vary. Take time for various students to share stories. Perhaps share one of your own.

After Abraham had been promised a son and had waited for a son, he could have easily made Isaac the top priority for Abraham. Isaac was a good gift from God. God loved Abraham too much to let him put his faith in Isaac. We will learn tomorrow how God arranged a special opportunity for Abraham to show that God was top priority in his life.

## Discovery Words

1. Abraham showed that God was top **priority** in his life.  
*priority*—something that is more important than other things and that needs to be done or dealt with first
2. On Calvary's cross God **sacrificed** his most important treasure.  
*sacrifice*—the act of giving up something that you want to keep
3. The cookie was a **temptation** for the puppy.  
*temptation*—something that causes someone to desire to have or do something [God never tempts us to do evil. James 1:13]
4. God gave Abraham a **test** to show his faith was real.  
*test*—In the Bible, a test is a way to show if something is genuine. Like a jeweler tests to see if a rock is real gold or fool's gold [pyrite].
5. Abraham saw a **ram** with its horns caught in a bush.  
*ram*—a male sheep

## Memory Verse

In Isaiah 55:8-9 we learn that God doesn't think like we do. He can see the whole story. We can only see our little part of the story. This week find ways to show how God is doing things that are far above what Abraham or Isaac would have been able to imagine.

## TUESDAY: Abraham Puts God First

### Genesis 22

#### Discussion

##### Connect to Prior Learning:

- What was the name of Abraham and Sarah's son?  
*Answer:* Isaac
- What does the name *Isaac* mean?  
*Answer:* Laughter

Abraham had been obeying God's Words to him ever since God told him to leave his home when he was 75. For 25 years he followed God and waited for Isaac, who was born when Abraham was 100. Now God is going to ask Abraham to do something—the hardest thing he has ever had to do. (And he has done some extremely hard things).

**Reading Focus:** What did God ask Abraham to do?

**Read Aloud:** Genesis 22:1–2

##### Question for Comprehension:

- What was Abraham supposed to do with Isaac?  
*Answer:* Abraham was supposed to sacrifice Isaac as a burnt offering.
- Does this task given to Abraham sound reasonable to you? Why?  
*Answer:* No, it seems crazy because God promised to make Abraham's son into a great nation.

Doesn't this command sound crazy? Wicked people sacrificed their children to false gods. Why would the true God want Abraham to sacrifice his son? What good is it to kill the child who all the promises have to come through? This seems wrong—but don't rush to judgment.

- Do you believe God knew what He was doing when He asked Abraham to do this?  
*Answer:* Yes, God has a plan and always acts with perfect understanding. He always has our good in mind, even if we can't always see it.

Abraham *loves* Isaac. At this point Isaac could have been a child, a teen, or a young adult. (He had to be old enough to keep up with his father on a three-day hike and carry the wood up the mountain.)

**Reading Focus:** What did Abraham do?

**Read Aloud:** Genesis 22:3–5

##### Question for Comprehension:

- Did you notice the last sentence in these verses? What did Abraham say to his servants?  
*Answer:* "We will come back to you."

Notice Abraham said "We will come back to you"—not *I*, but *we*.

- How would they, both father and son, come back if Abraham is supposed to sacrifice Isaac?  
*Answer:* Answers will vary.
- What might this “we” statement suggest about Abraham?  
*Answer:* The statement suggest that Abraham trusted God to provide a way, even though he didn’t fully understand how.

**Reading Focus:** What might Isaac have been thinking while the situation unfolded?

**Read Aloud:** Genesis 22:6–8

**Question for Comprehension:**

- Who was supposed to be the sacrifice?  
*Answer:* Isaac

God had given Abraham a son and now that son was to play the part of the lamb that would be killed.

- Do you think Isaac might have been getting the idea that he was to be the sacrifice?  
*Answer:* Answers may vary. We don’t know. We can only speculate. Isaac at least wondered where the sacrificial lamb would come from.

**Reading Focus:** What happened when they reached the place God chose?

**Read Aloud:** Genesis 22:9–12

**Question for Comprehension:**

- Who was most important to Abraham—God or Isaac?  
*Answer:* God
- How do you know God was Abraham’s top priority?  
*Answer:* Abraham was willing to obey God even if it meant taking the life of his own son.

But the story isn’t complete. Isaac is still tied up on the altar.

**Reading Focus:** Did Abraham have to sacrifice his own son?

**Read Aloud:** Genesis 22:13–14

**Question for Comprehension:** What did God provide as the animal for Abraham to sacrifice?  
*Answer:* A ram (a male sheep)

**Reading Focus:** What did God think about Abraham’s willingness to obey?

**Read Aloud:** Genesis 22:15–19

**Question for Comprehension:** What did God promise Abraham because of his obedience?  
*Answer:* God promised to give Abraham many descendants, as many as the stars or grains of sand, and to make them victorious over all of their enemies.

God was not tempting Abraham to sin. God never tempts anyone (cf. James 1:13). But God was testing Abraham’s faith to find out whether Abraham was trusting in his own son or in God. This test of obedience was for Isaac as well. Both decided to obey God even though His instructions made no sense to them.

While it seems extreme for God to ask Abraham to give up his son, God knew He would provide the ram as a substitute. God also knew that Jesus, His Son, would one day be our substitute. Christ would be the perfect sacrifice to take our place because all of us are on the death-path away from God.

**Reading Focus:** What was Abraham thinking when offering up his own son?

**Read Aloud:** Hebrews 11:17–19

**Question for Comprehension:** What did Abraham believe?

*Answer:* He believed that if he had to offer Isaac as a sacrifice, God could raise him back to life.

When Jesus was on the cross, he had no ram to take His place. No ram would have even made an adequate substitute. Only Christ, the perfect sacrifice, could pay for our sins. John 3:16 tells us that God loved the world so much He did what He asked Isaac to do. God gave His promised Son.

Death is devastating. Losing those we love is unbelievably painful. But death lost its sting when Jesus died. His death accomplished life forever for those who trust Him.

**Question for Comprehension:** How could death have produced life?

*Answer:* Answers will vary. Guide students to understand that Jesus, when came back to life, broke the power of death. Death is an ending for our life on earth, but one day death will die. Already death is defeated because Jesus won the victory. He beat death, so death does not have any long-term power over those who believe His death was for them.

We may die physically, but physical death is not the end. For those who believe Him, Jesus will raise them—body and soul—back to life.

## Memory Verse

Isaiah 55:8–9

# WEDNESDAY: A Bride for Isaac

## Genesis 24

### Hook

Bring in a diamond ring or bracelets to show and talk about. Discuss how a diamond ring in our culture is often given to a woman by a man who wants to marry her. In many cultures, jewelry is a sign of wealth. Encourage students to listen for jewelry when it is mentioned in today's story.

### Discussion

**Connect with Prior Learning:** Sarah lived to be 127 years old before she died. Abraham had probably known her since her birth. He wept over her and bought a field where she could be buried.

Isaac was close to forty years old. In Abraham's day and culture, marriages were usually arranged by a person's parents. Abraham was too old to go find a bride for Isaac himself, so he sent the best servant in his house to go get Isaac a wife from Abraham's own relatives, not from the people living around them in the land of Canaan.

**Reading Focus:** What was Abraham's servant concerned about?

**Read Aloud:** Genesis 24:5

#### Questions for Comprehension:

- What was the servant concerned about?  
*Answer:* He was concerned that the woman wouldn't want to come back to be a bride to someone she had never met.
- What was the servant's back-up plan if the woman wouldn't come back with him?  
*Answer:* The servant was going to take Isaac back to the land Abraham came from.

**Reading Focus:** What did Abraham think of the back-up plan?

**Read Aloud:** Genesis 24:6–8

#### Question for Comprehension:

- What did Abraham say about his servant's back-up plan?  
*Answer:* He told the servant that Isaac was not to be taken back to Abraham's homeland.
- What would happen to the servant's promise if the woman refused to come with him?  
*Answer:* The servant would no longer be bound by the promise.

The servant made the promise to Abraham and left with ten of Abraham's camels. He didn't exactly pack light. The camels were loaded with all kinds of good things as a gift for the potential bride and her family.

The servant arrived at the town where Abraham's relatives lived near evening—the time when the women would come out to fill their water pitchers.

**Reading Focus:** What prayer did the servant pray?

**Read Aloud:** Genesis 24:12–14

**Question for Comprehension:** What did the servant ask God for?

*Answer:* He asked God to have the potential bride for Isaac offer to give water to him and to all ten of his camels.

Carrying water for all of those camels would have been a lot of work for the potential bride.

**Reading Focus:** How did God answer the servant's prayer?

**Read Aloud:** Genesis 24:15–21

**Question for Comprehension:** What makes you think Rebekah was the answer to the servant's prayer?

*Answer:* She did everything the servant prayed for—gave him a drink, watered the camels, and was from the right family (a cousin to Isaac).

The servant gave Rebecca a nose ring and gold bracelets. He found out that she was from the right family. Rebekah offered him a place to stay, as was custom in their day of no hotels.

**Reading Focus:** How did the servant respond?

**Read Aloud:** Genesis 24:26–27

**Questions for Comprehension:**

- What did the servant do?

*Answer:* He worshiped the Lord and praised God for the way God had lead him on his journey to just the right place.

**Reading Focus:** How do you think Rebekah responded?

**Read Aloud:** Genesis 24:28

**Question for Comprehension:** How did Rebekah respond?

*Answer:* She ran home and told her family what had happened.

Rebekah's brother Laban saw the ring and gold bracelets and went out to meet the servant. He again offered their home as a place for him to stay.

At dinner that night, the servant wouldn't eat until he had explained his mission. He told Rebekah and Laban and their family all about Abraham and his wealth, about how Sarah and Abraham had Isaac when they were old, and about the promise to find a wife from Abraham's relatives. The servant explained his prayer and how Rebekah had done exactly what he had prayed for.

**Reading Focus:** What did the servant do next?

**Read Aloud:** Genesis 24:49

**Questions for Comprehension:** What did the servant ask the family?

*Answer:* He asked whether they would be faithful to Abraham.

**Reading Focus:** How do you think her family responded?

**Read Aloud:** Genesis 24:50

**Question for Comprehension:** How did Rebekah's family respond?



*Answer:* They were unable to say anything because it was clear the Lord was working in this situation. They agreed to let Rebekah become Isaac's wife.

**Reading Focus:** How do you think Rebekah responded?

**Read Aloud:** Genesis 24:57–58

**Question for Comprehension:** How did Rebekah respond?

*Answer:* She agreed to go with the servant.

Rebekah was willing, like Abraham had been, to leave her home and all that was familiar to her. She took one servant with her and road back on the camels to meet Isaac.

Marriage is designed by God, in part, to give us an understanding of choosing *one*. When a man proposes to a woman he loves, he forsakes all other women to love only her. If she says yes and marries him, she forsakes all other men to love only him. God is giving us a picture of how our love for *Him* is supposed to be. We are not to love God along with a lineup of false gods (like our pleasure or possessions). We are to love Him and Him alone.

**Questions for Comprehension:**

- Why did Abraham's servant travel back to Abraham's home country?

*Answer:* to find a wife for Isaac from Abraham's relatives

Abraham's servant prayed very specifically about finding the right wife for Isaac.

- How long did he have to wait for God's answer to his prayer?

*Answer:* Rebekah came out before he had even finished praying.

## Discussion

[Ask students the following questions and discuss their answers together as a class.]

Does the idea of an arranged marriage seem strange to you?

Did it seem odd that Isaac didn't go find his own wife?

Does the idea of finding a bride from "the right family" fit with how you think about choosing who you will marry?

This story doesn't seem to fit the way most western cultures in our day think about marriage. However, it was perfectly normal for the people who were living it. This Bible account comes to us from a time in history and a place in the world when this was the culture. Cultures change. God works His will no matter what the context or culture.

## Memory Verse

Isaiah 55:8–9

## **THURSDAY: Isaac and Rebekah Walk by Faith**

Genesis 25

### **Discussion**

**Connect to Prior Learning:** What was Abraham's servant doing right before he met Rebekah for the first time?

*Answer:* He was praying.

**Reading Focus:** When were Isaac and Rebekah married?

**Read Aloud:** Genesis 25:20

**Question for Comprehension:** How old was Isaac when he married Rebekah?

*Answer:* He was forty years old.

While God had led the servant right to Rebekah in answer to his prayer, we find out in Genesis 25 that Isaac and Rebekah had a big problem.

**Reading Focus:** What problem did Isaac and Rebekah face?

**Read Aloud:** Genesis 25:21–22

**Question for Comprehension:**

- What problem did Isaac and Rebekah face?  
*Answer:* They were unable to have any children.
- How did Isaac respond when faced with this difficulty?  
*Answer:* He turned to God in prayer, asking him for a child.

Just like Abraham and Sarah had to look to God for a child, Isaac and Rebekah had to as well.

There were no ultrasounds in that day. Rebekah couldn't call her mother or her mother-in-law for advice. She couldn't google what to do when a pregnancy is rough. She wisely went to God who controls all things.

**Reading Focus:** What did God say to her about her rough pregnancy?

**Read Aloud:** Genesis 25:23–26

Isaac was forty when he married, but now twenty more years have gone by with no children. Now Isaac and Rebekah are going to have two sons.

The older son was Esau; the younger, Jacob.

**Think About It:** God answered Abraham's servant's prayer in providing Rebekah. Now God had answered Isaac and Rebekah's prayer in giving them a son.

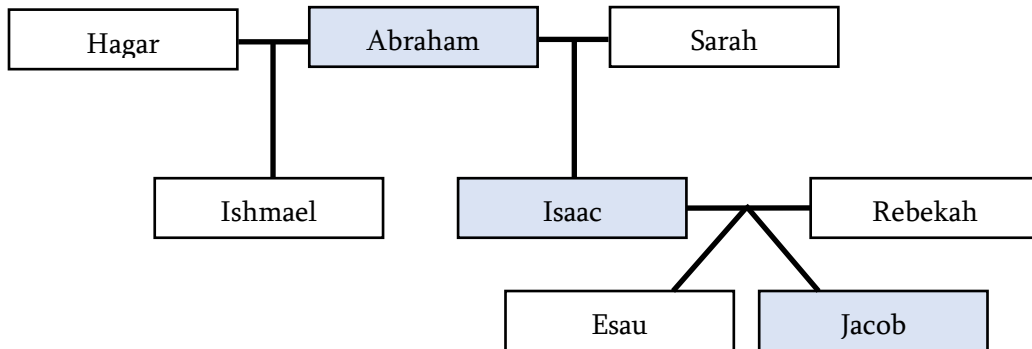
We know Abraham was a man of faith. How do you think these two experiences helped Isaac become or deepen as a man of faith?

If you never make your muscles bear a heavy load, you don't develop more muscles. Faith is like a muscle in that it grows when have to face problems that only God can solve.

## Hands-On Activity

Draw lines on a board or tape yarn to a wall according to the lines shown on the chart below. Cut apart the names in the table below and have students place the names where they belong on the chart. If students are not familiar with the concept of a family tree diagram, you may want to give them a modern-day example using your own family tree.

After doing this activity together, have students fill out the **Abraham's Family Worksheet**. Understanding who these people are and how they relate to each other is an important foundation. This is a significant part of this week's Show What You Know. Explain that horizontal lines show parents and vertical (or diagonal) lines show children.



Cut out the boxes below and have students put the names where they go on this family tree (or write them in). Color the boxes for Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob blue so students can see the line of promise that God would come through.

<b>Abraham</b>	<b>Sarah</b>
<b>Hagar</b>	<b>Ismael</b>
<b>Isaac</b>	<b>Rebekah</b>
<b>Jacob</b>	<b>Esau</b>

## Memory Verse

Practice the Isaiah 55:8-9 memory verse.

## FRIDAY: Show What You Know (Key)

**Multiple Choice:** Choose the letter that best answers the question and write it in the blank.

- B   1. We know \_\_\_\_\_ was the top priority in Abraham's life because he was willing to sacrifice his most prized treasure.  
A. money                      B. God                              C. Jacob
- A   2. When the angel stopped Abraham from hurting his son, Abraham looked up and saw a \_\_\_\_\_ caught in a bush.  
A. ram                              B. fish                              C. bull
- C   3-4. God promised Abraham that the number of his children would be as many as the \_\_\_\_\_ in the sky or the \_\_\_\_\_ on the seashore.  
A. birds/crabs              B. clouds/shells              C. stars/sand
- A   5. Abraham's servant traveled back to Abraham's relatives to get a \_\_\_\_\_ for Isaac.  
A. bride                              B. house                              C. chariot
- B   6. When Rebekah watered the \_\_\_\_\_, Abraham's servant praised God for answering his prayer.  
A. horses                              B. camels                              C. cats
- A   7. Twenty years after Rebekah and Isaac were married, Isaac \_\_\_\_\_ for Rebekah that she would be able to have a child.  
A. prayed                              B. sang                              C. shouted
- B   8. God's answer was to give Rebekah and Isaac \_\_\_\_\_ boys.  
A. seven                              B. twin                              C. many

**Short Answer:** Write your answer to the question on the lines provided.

- 9-10. According to Isaiah 55:8-9, God's ways are   higher   than our ways and his   thoughts   are higher than our thoughts.