

Student ministry workers in Sweden developed a series of questions to ask when reading a Bible passage. Called the “Swedish Method” because of its origins, these questions can be used when reading the Bible by yourself or with others

The daily readings in this family worship guide have a few questions. However, you are encouraged, as appropriate for your family, to ask the following general questions of the text each day.



Is there something that ‘shines’ from the passage—whatever impacts most, or draws attention?



Is there something you don’t understand, or a question the passage raises in your mind?



Is there a personal application to your life?



Is there something you plan to share with someone else – and who will you share it with?



How do ideas in the passage interrelate? Or with other passages in this book – or in the whole Bible?

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*Worshipping Together* is part of the vision and is a ministry of the Reformed Presbyterian Church of Frankston, Victoria, Australia. [frankston.rpca.org.au](http://frankston.rpca.org.au)

The concept and layout draws heavily from *Let’s Worship God*, a ministry of the Reformed Presbyterian Church in Airdrie, Scotland. [airdrierpcs.org](http://airdrierpcs.org)

The readings are from Tim Chester’s 3-year weekly reading plan. [tiny.cc/WkBb1](http://tiny.cc/WkBb1) or [tiny.cc/3yrBb1](http://tiny.cc/3yrBb1)

The quote on the cover is from the article *What Shampoo and Family Worship Have in Common*, Written by Randy Greenwald, (Quoted from *Tabletalk* magazine, Nov 1997.)

Notes this week drawn in part from commentaries on Genesis by John Calvin and R. Kent Hughes

## Worshipping Together

15-21 Jan  
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We love God because He first loved us.

And we love to tell God that we love Him.

Joyful and faithful worship together twice each Lord’s Day is the highlight of our week. We are glad that they said, “Let us go to the House of the Lord.” Corporate worship prepares us for the week and prepares us for Heaven.

In addition, we regularly worship God as families and as individuals.

One father put it this way:

*The back of my shampoo bottle says, “Lather, rinse, repeat.” Simple enough that even I can do it. Though family worship may be a bit more complicated than shampooing hair, it ought not be rated with “home dentistry” in the scale of difficulty.*



*If you could buy family worship in the store, it would come in the form of a Bible, and the directions would simply say, “Read, pray, repeat.” Men\* should gather their families at least once daily. They should read a portion of the Scriptures to them. And they should pray with them. There need be no fireworks or pizzazz to keep the kids interested. There needs to be only a father\* with a heart-love for God – who desires to see that love appropriated by his children.*

*Read, pray, repeat.*

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\* Fathers leading their family in worship is always the goal. When, in the Lord’s providence, the father is absent or uninterested a godly mother will lead her children

**Reading** Genesis 22:1-2 A Shocking Test

**Notes** Once again, God, through the human author of Genesis, lets us know something before Abraham knows it. How shocked we would be as we read this story for the first time if we didn't know God was testing Abraham.

But, remember, Abraham didn't know. How painful for him to hear God tell him his son must die. Yet, even worse, Abraham was commanded to offer Isaac – *Laughter* – as a burnt offering!

What!?! Kill Isaac? Take his long promised and long awaited son, maybe in his mid-teens, tie him up, place him on an altar, drive a knife into his body, then light the alter wood on fire? We recoil in horror – even though we know this is God's test.

How could God ask a father to sacrifice his son? It's likely that human sacrifice was part of the culture of Canaan. But would God really ask such a thing? And, if Isaac is dead, what of God's promises? Children too many to count. Princes. How would they be born in Abraham's line?

Not all the questions are answered now. And not all of them are answered even later. But we know this is God's test. And, like Abraham, we must be convinced God is faithful.

- Questions**
1. What does God tell Abraham to do?
  2. What do we know God is doing with Abraham?
  3. Does God ever test us? Does God ever tempt us?



- Praise Pray** Psalm 3a<sup>1</sup>
1. Commit yourself and your family in prayer to trusting God, even when it's hard, by God's help.
  2. Pray for a member of your church
  3. Pray for your family
  4. Pray for a non-Christian friend/family member

<sup>1</sup> Psalm selections are taken from the *Book of Psalms for Worship*. The same selection is sung each day for a week to gain familiarity with the selection

**Reading** Genesis 22:15-19 A great promise

**Notes** Sometimes when we make a promise we remind ourselves and the ones who we're promising how serious we are by referring to someone greater than us. In a court of law, a witness will sometimes "promise to tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, so help me, God."

In response to Abraham's obedience, God reaffirms to him His great promise. God wants Abraham to know how serious He is about this promise. But God cannot refer to someone greater than Himself because there is no one greater than Himself. So God swears by Himself.

First, God swears by Himself, "I will certainly bless you." Literally, God said, "blessing I will bless you." It is sure. The repetition was not for God's sake, but for Abraham's.

Second, "I will certainly multiply you." Again, literally, "multiplying I will multiply you."

Third, "your descendants will defeat their enemies." Later, Jesus will tell Abraham's descendants that His church will defeat the gates of Hell.

Finally, "all the nations will be blessed in your offspring." Jesus is that promised offspring. And, in Him, all who trust God's promises in Jesus will be blessed. Are you?

- Questions**
1. Why does God swear by Himself in His promise to Abraham
  2. What are the 4 parts of God's promise?
  3. Who is the promised offspring who will bless all the nations



- Praise Pray** Psalm 3a
1. Rejoice with your family in prayer for God's sure promises
  2. Pray for a member of your church
  3. Pray for your family
  4. Pray for a non-Christian friend/family member
  5. Pray for the reading and preaching of God's word tomorrow

**Reading** Genesis 22:9-14 The Sacrifice Offered

**Notes** Immediately after God stops Abraham from killing his son as the burnt offering, God provides a substitute. A sacrifice was needed to worship God but Isaac, as the lamb, has been spared. God always provides the means by which we are enabled to worship Him.

Abraham looks up from Isaac and sees a ram. And God had ordained that at this exact moment this exact ram would be caught in this exact thick growth of bushes. And, the ram wasn't caught by its body in the thicket, but by its horns. Later we will find that God requires an unblemished sacrifice just like He provides here for Abraham.

So Abraham, and certainly Isaac with him, takes this ram and offers it as the sacrifice to God. How they must have rejoiced in this substitute that God had provided. Abraham even renames the place where they are, "The-Lord-Will-Provide." Always they would remember where God had provided a substitute offering.

We need a substitute offering for us too. Later in the Bible we will see clearly that Jesus is the Substitute Sacrifice for all who believe in Him. On the Mount of the Lord, He has provided.

- Questions**
1. How does God provide a substitute sacrifice for Abraham to offer?
  2. What does Abraham rename that place?
  3. Who is our Substitute Sacrifice?



4.

**Praise** Psalm 3a

**Pray**

1. Rejoice in prayer that God has provided a Substitute Sacrifice for you and your family
2. Pray for a member of your church
3. Pray for your family
4. Pray for a non-Christian friend/family member

**Reading** Genesis 22:1-5 Quick Obedience, Again

**Notes** Abraham had lived a faith roller-coaster. His faith was sometimes high, sometimes low. At times he obeyed God fully, other times he tried his own way instead. But, by God's grace, in his greatest challenges, he obeys God – and right away.

So he gets up early the next morning, determined to obey God at an unbelievable cost. We're shocked at God's test of Abraham – and maybe just as surprised by Abraham's quick obedience. We often find many excuses to delay obeying God.

Not Abraham. Not this time. He takes all he needs. Isaac. A donkey carrying the wood. Two servants to help. And he sets off – heading for the place God told him to go.

Three days later, the place is in sight. Abraham tells his servants to stay with the donkey. "We'll go, the lad and I, and worship. Then, we'll come back." **We'll** come back? Wouldn't Isaac be reduced to ashes on the alter? Was Abraham hoping to trick God? If the servants couldn't see, maybe God couldn't see and he wouldn't really have to kill Isaac. No.

Later in the Bible (Hebrews 11:17-19) we find out what Abraham was thinking. He knew God was faithful, and so he reckoned God could raise Isaac from the dead. Quick obedience. Life and death trust.

- Questions**
1. How quickly should we obey God? How quickly should children obey their parents?
  2. What does Abraham take with him?
  3. How was Isaac going to come back with Abraham?



4.

**Praise** Psalm 3a

**Pray**

1. Commit yourself and your family in prayer to obeying God quickly, with His help
2. Pray for a member of your church
3. Pray for your family
4. Pray for a non-Christian friend/family member

**Reading** Genesis 22:3-8 Faith lived and taught

**Notes** Father and son time. But not like any time Abraham might have planned nor asked for with his beloved son. They head off to the place of sacrifice – together. Isaac carrying the wood on which he was to die. Abraham carrying the knife and the fire.

Obviously Isaac had been learning his whole life from his father how to worship God. How important that parents teach their children about God from infancy. And so they go together to worship.

Isaac appears to suspect nothing. Yet he notices a problem. In a normal father/son conversation he asks his dad, “Where is the lamb?” What could Abraham say? “Actually, son, I’m going to offer you instead of a lamb.” It seems the test deepens with this innocent question.

Yet, again by grace, Abraham answers in faith. And his answer of faith points to a greater test. “God,” he says, “will provide for Himself the lamb.” And so, we’ll read later in the Bible that Jesus comes as the Lamb of God (John 1:29); that Jesus carries the wood (John 19:17) on which He is to die

But we’ll have to keep reading to find out what happens to Isaac and we’ll have to keep reading to find out what happens to Jesus.

- Questions**
1. How should children learn to worship God? How young?
  2. What does Isaac notice is missing?
  3. How does Abraham answer Isaac’s question?



- Praise Pray**
- Psalm 3a
1. Commit yourself and your family in prayer to worshipping God together, with His help
  2. Pray for a member of your church
  3. Pray for your family
  4. Pray for a non-Christian friend/family member

**Reading** Genesis 22:9-12 The Sacrifice Prepared

**Notes** Abraham continues in obedience. He builds an altar and places the wood on the altar. Then he must have told Isaac, “you are the lamb.” Isaac, though younger, and certainly stronger and faster, appears to go quietly like a lamb to the slaughter, opening not his mouth.

His faith, it seems, matches the faith of his father. We might wonder how Abraham persuaded him, but we are not told.

We are told that, without any note of a struggle, Abraham ties up his son and places him on the altar. Although Isaac was willing, perhaps Abraham thought he might at the last minute flee in terror.

And Abraham then demonstrates his ultimate faith in God. James will later tell us that Abraham’s “faith was active along with his works, and faith was completed by his works” (James 2:22) His faith drives his works to drive his hands high so he can drive the knife into the body of his beloved son.

But God.

But, God says, “Stop! Don’t do anything to Isaac.” Abraham has passed the test. He now knows fully that he is God’s and he will give and do whatever God asks. Will you?

- Questions**
1. What does Isaac do as his father is putting him on the alter?
  2. Was it Abraham’s faith or his works that passed God’s test?
  3. How did God intervene?



- Praise Pray**
- Psalm 3a
1. Commit yourself and your family in prayer to demonstrate that your faith works, by God’s help.
  2. Pray for a member of your church
  3. Pray for your family
  4. Pray for a non-Christian friend/family member