

LifeGroup Study
THERE WILL BE TESTS
The Re-Test
2022-04-03
Leader Notes

OVERVIEW:

Welcome back to our series, There Will Be Tests. Tests can reveal what's inside us, whether good or bad. We see this in the life of Abraham. Abraham failed many tests, particularly in the conception of Ishmael. God gave him a "re-test" by asking him to offer up Isaac. This test Abraham passed. If you have failed a test in the past, be encouraged. God's not done with you! You can ask for the Spirit's help to pass the next test. With Jesus as our guide and power source, we can face the re-test and be victorious!

ICEBREAKER: If At First You Don't Succeed, Try, Try Again

You're probably familiar with this statement, "If at first you don't succeed, try, try again." What story from your life comes to mind when you think of this statement? Maybe you tackled a home repair that was a challenge but you got it done. Or, maybe your story is from your school days, or something that happened in your work. What challenges did you experience? What did you learn from it? Share your story with the group!

STUDY:

When God tests His children, He does a valuable thing. His purpose in the test is to show our faith is real and that we are truly His children. But what happens when we fail a test? Does God give up on us? Far from it! Today, let's look at the life of Abraham to learn about the "re-test". Our God is a God of second chances ... and more. With His Spirit empowering us, we can face the re-test and be victorious!

Search me, O God, and know my heart;
test me and know my anxious thoughts.
Point out anything in me that offends you,
and lead me along the path of everlasting life.
Psalm 139:23-24

1. This week Pete focused on Abraham and the many tests he underwent. How were you encouraged by this look at Abraham's tests?

Let's read about some tests Abraham faced. As you read each one, think about Abraham's response. Did he pass the test? Think about how God might use a similar test in our lives today.

2. READ: Genesis 12:1-7 The "Future" Test

What do you notice about this test God gave Abram? Did Abram pass the test?

LEADER NOTE: The test God gives Abram here in Genesis 12 is the invitation to leave the familiar and go with Him into the unknown. We could think of this as the "future" test, a time when God invites Abram to trust Him with his future. Abram passes this test as he packs up his family and belongings and heads out into the unknown, trusting God with his future.

Think about your life experience. Do you think God has given you the "future" test? What did you learn from it?

LEADER NOTE: The "future" test can be anytime we sense God prompting us to move ahead into the future when we don't yet know the details. For your group members, this could be a time they felt God prompting them to move to a new location, take on a new job or sign on for new challenge. A key question we can ask with this test is, "Am I willing to trust God with my future?"

3. READ: Genesis 12:10-20 The Truth Test

What do you notice about this truth test God gave Abram? Did he pass the test?

LEADER NOTE: In this test, Abram lies to Pharaoh about Sarai, his wife, by telling Pharaoh she is his sister. Although this is technically true (they had the same father but different mothers according to Gen. 20:12) Abram used this as an opportunity to deceive Pharaoh. Abram did this out of fear of what the Egyptians might do to him. Abram failed this test and sadly this set a precedent for future deceptions both by Abraham and some of his descendants.

Think about your life experience. Do you think God has given you the truth test? What did you learn from it?

LEADER NOTE: The reality is all of us have faced the truth test. How we respond to the test earlier on can set a precedent for the future. God wants to use this test to trust Him to be people who tell the truth even when it's not convenient, even when we're scared about the outcome. The lessons your group members have learned about the truth test can be a valuable encouragement to the rest of the group.

4. READ: Genesis 13:8-13 The Conflict Test

In this test, Abram negotiates through a potential conflict with his nephew, Lot, over the land they would occupy. **What do you notice about this test God gave Abram? Did Abram pass the test?**

LEADER NOTE: One of the tests God allowed in Abram's life was the conflict test. Abram and his nephew, Lot, faced conflict over the resources and land available for their livestock. Abram passes this test as he brings the matter to Lot and suggests a path forward to overcome the conflict. A key lesson to learn from the conflict test Abram faced is, can I trust God, even when I seem to be receiving an unfair settlement?

Think about your life experience. **Do you think God has given you the conflict test? What did you learn from it?**

LEADER NOTE: Relational conflict can be a touchy subject to talk about. Your group members may have unresolved conflicts that are causing emotional pain or anger. Conflicts most often arise from a sense I am not getting what I want. A key lesson from this test is I can trust God, even when I don't seem to be getting my way.

5. READ: Genesis 22:1-12 The Sacrifice Test

In this ultimate test in Abraham's life, God asks him to sacrifice his son, Isaac. **What do you notice about this test God gave Abraham? Did Abraham pass this test?**

LEADER NOTE: The call for Abraham to "go" (vs. 2) echoes the "future" test God had given Abraham in Genesis 12, a test he had passed. Perhaps this was an encouragement to Abraham as he set out to do the unimaginable. Along the way, Abraham demonstrates incredible faith. In verse 8, in response to his son's question about the sacrifice, Abraham answers, "God will provide ..." In the midst of this test, Abraham demonstrates incredible trust in God's provision. This trust is credited to him as righteousness and used an example by the Apostle Paul of how our relationship with God is by faith alone (see Romans 4).

What does the sacrifice test teach you about faith? In what ways has your life demonstrated you won't allow anything to come before God?

EXPERIENCE GOD

THE LORD'S PRAYER

In the Lord's prayer the last line is, "And lead us not into the test". We usually interpret this as "not into temptation", but a better translation is "not into the test". It's a direct connection to the theme of testing in the Bible.

Here's one interpretation on why Jesus teaches us to pray this. The way God answers the prayer to be spared testing is that he keeps us from those tests that will destroy us. Listen to the promise in 1 Corinthians 10:13 (NRSV): "God is faithful, and he will not let you be tested beyond your strength, but with the testing he will also provide the way out so that you may be able to endure it." So perhaps what "lead us not into temptation" should mean to us is "do not give us a test that we are bound to fail." Do test us. Do make us strong. Teach us through life experiences to depend on you. But you know our limits, Lord. You know when we will abandon you. Do not let us to be pushed beyond what we can bear with your help, and always provide us a way out.

As a group, pray The LORD'S Prayer out loud together, asking God to keep you strong in the test.

This, then, is how you should pray:

"Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name,
¹⁰ your kingdom come,
your will be done,
 on earth as it is in heaven.
¹¹ Give us today our daily bread.
¹² And forgive us our debts,
 as we also have forgiven our debtors.
¹³ And lead us not into [the test],^[a]
 but deliver us from the evil one.^[b]"

Addendum –

For yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever and ever.

AMEN

PRAYER

This week let's pray for our Global Missions partner in Uganda.

- Pray for our Global Partner in Uganda, Kitigoma Community Church and the ministries and outreaches they do into their community.
- Pray for the congregation of the church to experience the presence and power of the Holy Spirit in and among them. Pray for the students at the school to be influenced for Christ.

- Pray for the leadership of the church and the school, for Pastor Robert, Baby Justine and Shadrach Wanjala, and for their families. Pray for unity among the Teachers and Staff at God's Gift School