

## Genesis 21 - 22 Community Group Discussion Questions

**Opening Question:** What is your favorite donut?

**Tell them:** Pastor Michael summarized the birth of Isaac. (If you want to do more in-depth study on that topic, there is a study of it available on the church website.) Then he got into chapter 22, the Sacrifice of Isaac. He talked about how this scene is a foreshadowing of the crucifixion of Jesus.

(If anyone needs a review of the passage read verse 1 – 18)

**Ask them:** *How many of you have seen the mini-series The Bible, specifically this scene between Isaac and Abraham? How did this scene make you feel?*

**Tell them:** Without an eye on the Savior, without the thought of the gospel, this scene is too much to stomach. It can leave you feeling that the God of Abraham is a cruel God, but knowing that it represents only a sliver of what the Father had to endure in order to bring salvation to the world brings him from a cruel God to a merciful and providing God.

**Ask them:** *Do you remember what Pastor Michael said is required in order to approach God? (blood) How does this point to the gospel?*

**Ask them:** *How is the binding of Isaac a parallel to the Son of God? John 10:14-18. “This is why the Father loves me—because **I lay down my life, so that I may take it back again. No one takes it away from me, but I lay it down of my own free will. I have the authority to lay it down, and I have the authority to take it back again. This commandment I received from my Father.**” (John 10:17-18, NET)*

**Ask them:** *Why do you think that Abraham’s obedience would prompt God to affirm his covenant?*

*“Was not Abraham our father justified by works when he offered Isaac his son on the altar?” (James 2:21, NET)*

**Tell them:** Pastor Michael asked, “What do we encounter about God?” He told us 4 things:

1. **He hates sin:** Ask them: *What is sin?* (Sin is disagreeing with God and not doing what He commands.) Tell them: James 4:17 tell us simply, *“whoever knows what is good to do and does not do it is guilty of sin.”* (James 4:17, NET)  
Psalm 5:5 confirms God’s hatred of sin: *“Arrogant people cannot stand in your presence; you hate all who behave wickedly.”* (Psalm 5:5, NET)  
Because God cannot stand sin, there had to be way for the sinner to approach the throne of God. Hebrews 9:18-20 tells us, *“So even the first covenant was inaugurated with blood. For when Moses had spoken every command to all the people according to the law, he took the blood of calves and goats with water and scarlet wool and hyssop and sprinkled both the book itself and all the people, and said, “This is the blood of the*

*covenant that God has commanded you to keep.” (NET) Tell them: That means that every time we see blood in the Old Testament we can think about the gospel and the Jesus’ shed blood for us. **Ask them:** How does this help redeem the scene of Abraham and Isaac on Mount Moriah?*

2. **He disciplines His people: Ask them:** Do you remember how Pastor Michael told us that God disciplines His people? (through commands and tests) Psalm 39:11 says this about discipline: *“When you discipline a man with rebukes for sin, you consume like a moth what is dear to him; surely all mankind is a mere breath!”* **Ask them:** Why do you think it means that God consumes like a moth what is dear to the sinner?
3. **He loves sacrificially: Ask them:** In what ways would you say that God loves is sacrificial?
4. **He guarantees his promises: Ask them:** In what ways have we seen God guarantee his promises?

**Tell them:** Then Pastor Michael asked us, “What have we encountered about humanity (in the life of Abraham so far?)”

First, the good news:

1. **We can be faithful: Tell them:** Pastor Michael said the story of Abraham shows that humanity can be faithful. **Ask them:** In what ways was Abraham faithful? **Ask them:** In what ways have you experienced the faithfulness of others?

Second, the bad news:

2. **We love ourselves: Ask them:** What are problems that can arrive because we love ourselves too much? **Tell them:** Matthew 23:12 tells us what happens to that self-love: *“And whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and whoever humbles himself will be exalted.”*
3. **We love shortcuts: Ask them:** Do you recall all the shortcuts that Abraham and Sarah took or wanted to take?
4. **We love our idols: Tell them:** Pastor Michael said that “an idol is anything we worship that isn’t God.” It can be anything that we go to for the things that God promises us like provision, protection, hope, etc.

**Tell them:** Pastor Michael gave us a good way to identify idols in our lives. He said: “You and idols are quite the P.A.I.R.” You can look for your idols in these four places:

1. Possessions
2. Achievements
3. Identity
4. Relationships

**Ask them:** Thinking about these four things, can you think of idols that the American people tend to embrace? Why do you think that we are so prone to go after idols?

**Tell them:** Pastor Michael said that our idols are generated out of our fear and selfishness.

**Ask them:** Why do you think that would be true?

Do you remember what he said was the foundation of our fear and selfishness? (Pride) When you think about it, pride is the foundation of all of our sin. If you look at any sin you

struggle with, and you dig deep enough, you will find pride. This is good news because it means that the answer to your struggles with sin is surrendering your wants, dreams, hopes and plans to the Lord. Like Abraham, when we surrender what is most dear to us, God reveals His presence and provision.

**Tell them:** Pastor Michael reminds us that the gospel permeates all of the pages of scripture. This scene between Abraham, Isaac and the Father is a vivid example of the scene on Golgotha. This is an image of the Father, the Father who stops Abraham from having to suffer the pain that He will one day suffer, and Isaac from getting a taste of the suffering the Son will one day suffer. God had provided something better for us. He provided His own Son:

“Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us (because it is written, “Cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree”)in order that in Christ Jesus the blessing of Abraham would come to the Gentiles, so that we could receive the promise of the Spirit by faith.” (Galatians 3:13–14, NET)

**Remind them: Do you remember “Why a ram and not a lamb?”**

Pastor Michael said one possibility comes from the fact that young sheep are lambs. Adult female sheep are ewes. Castrated male sheep are wethers, and Intact (not castrated) adult male sheep are rams, the ram may be seen as a **temporary** sacrifice while God had a perfect lamb coming. Another possibility was that a ram (adult male) was a foreshadowing to the perfect, spotless man, Jesus.

**Ask them:** *Do you remember Pastor Michael’s reference to the maple bar? What is something that you can get here locally but is so much better somewhere else? That the local option is a temporary fix until you can get the real thing? **Remind them:** That’s the ram versus Jesus. That’s this world versus the next.*

**Ask them:** *What was your favorite takeaway from this week’s sermon?*