

# GOD<sup>OF</sup> THE GAPS

STUDY 4



**The GAP is the  
time between  
the promise  
declared by  
God and the  
promise  
fulfilled by  
God.**

## Study Four

# LAY IT DOWN

Our final study begins by reflecting back on the journey that Abraham had with God. He was absolutely a man who loved God, but his devotion fell short at times. His faith was also met with flaws.

At 75 he received an incredible promise of a son. A son that would be the pathway to the promise of a lineage that would spread throughout the earth. Abraham would be the father of a great multitude. In his efforts to obtain the promise, his faith wavered. He struggled with doubt and his fear of nothing coming to pass drove him headfirst into sin. Even though there were consequences, God was faithful to follow through on His promise to Abraham. At the age of 100, Isaac was born.

Genesis 22 picks up the story an estimated 25-37 years later. It's important to note that Isaac would have not been the naïve little boy that is often depicted. Even conservative estimations point to him being an older teenager. As we will read, this next step was no ordinary journey.

## Genesis 22:1-3

*After these things God tested Abraham and said to him, "Abraham!" And he said, "Here am I." He said, "Take your son, your only son Isaac, whom you love, and go to the land of Moriah, and offer him there as a burnt offering on one of the mountains of which I shall tell you." So Abraham rose early in the morning, saddled his donkey, and took two of his young men with him, and his son Isaac. And he cut the wood for the burnt offering and arose and went to the place of which God had told him.*

Has God ever asked you to give up something that you loved dearly?

The story continues with Abraham taking Isaac up the mountain, where he would prepare to offer his son as a sacrifice. He laid the wood on the altar, then placed Isaac on top and raised the knife to take his life before an angel stopped him in verse 12, saying...

*"Do not lay your hand on the boy or do anything to him, for now I know that you fear God, seeing you have not withheld your son, your only son, from me." And Abraham lifted up his eyes and looked, and behold, behind him was a ram, caught in a thicket by his horns. And Abraham went and took the ram and offered it up as a burnt offering instead of his son. So Abraham called the name of that place, "The LORD will provide"; as it is said to*

*this day, "On the mount of the LORD it shall be provided." And the angel of the LORD called to Abraham a second time from heaven and said, "By myself I have sworn, declares the LORD, because you have done this and have not withheld your son, your only son, I will surely bless you, and I will surely multiply your offspring as the stars of heaven and as the sand that is on the seashore. And your offspring shall possess the gate of his enemies, and in your offspring shall all the nations of the earth be blessed, because you have obeyed my voice."*

**What thoughts do you think were running through Abraham's mind as he climbed the mountain with Isaac?**

It's hard to fathom what it was like to be in Abraham's shoes. One of the most striking things about this account is not just what Abraham was asked, but his response.

**How do you think you would have responded had you been in Abraham's place?**

It's fair to say that most of us would not have responded with the same instant obedience that Abraham did. Abraham still had a choice to make, but as we pull back and look at the bigger picture, we begin to see that everything was setting up for this moment. Through all the fears, doubts and

worries regarding the birth of His promised son, Isaac, Abraham had learned to trust God.

With the initial promise of a son, Abraham filled the gap with doubt and fear. Now, not knowing the outcome as they reached the top of the mountain, he trusted that God's plan was sufficient, and more importantly, that God Himself was good.

We can draw encouragement from Abraham's story because we too can learn to trust God. Some people think either you believe or you don't, but our faith is not just a whimsical decision, it's rooted in an understanding of the goodness and greatness of our God. The more we know Him, the greater our level of trust in Him.

**What things do you often turn to before turning to God when you face trials in life?**

Left without all the details, left with a gap in the story, Abraham no longer doubted or responded with cynicism, he simply trusted God. So when God called, he prepared, got up early and started the journey. One step at a time, he climbed the mountain, for three days. He placed his son on the altar and drew the knife. The hand that once wavered was now sure, no longer in just the promise given, but in the One who made the promise to him.

**What significance can we find in the fact that Abraham had to climb a mountain before he was tested?**

**Do you think many people stop shy of God's best because the road seems too difficult or takes too long?**

Abraham spent those 25 years before the birth of Isaac consumed with trying to obtain the promise, while God was trying to teach him to be consumed with trusting Him.

It's important to understand why we trust. Trust may be born out of love, but it is evidenced in obedience. More precisely, instant obedience.

God wants the best for His children. His best for us is discovered by listening, trusting and responding to His voice. Don't delay and hope that you get a second chance. Trust and know that you are getting the best.

God is asking all of us if we trust Him. Saying we trust isn't the same as actually trusting. The proof is in our response. It may be a scary proposition, especially if life's circumstances have led to disappointment and pain. Do not to give up. Don't do what most do and shut down.

That is the normal response to being hurt. Shut down and shut out everything and everyone that could hurt you. The problem is that when we try to

put a shell of protection around us, we end up becoming a shell of ourselves. We stop living the abundant life that Christ died to give us. God gave too much for us to settle for less than His best.

**Is there an area of your life that you are settling for less than God's best?**

If God is asking you to lay something down, know that you can trust Him. Maybe He is asking you to truly give something up, or maybe it's just that you would be willing to if that's what it took. Either way, the future is bright because God is leading the way. The best is yet to come and no matter what the gap holds, God has you covered.