



+ **YOU**

Winter 2022-23
How to Discern the Voice of God

Sermon Title: Our Response to God's Character

To be used with Session 4: Does It Aling with God's Character?

Scripture: Genesis 22:1-8

Connection with the Study: To complement the Bible study "Does It Aling with God's Character?" this sermon will expound upon what was taught in the study by providing biblical examples of how we are to respond to the faithful character of God as outlined in Exodus 34:1-9. This morning's Bible study discussed how God's character is holy, perfect, and unchanging. Today's sermon will provide specific responses that we can embrace in our walk with God based on His unchanging nature and character.

Introduction: To understand someone's character is to better understand that person and how to interact with that person. If we know that someone is an extrovert, we understand that they are willing to talk in front of others and we can ask them to pray before a meal or in a Bible study group. If we know that someone is a thinker, we will be more apt to ask their opinion on a complex problem and look forward to receiving their insights in a few days.

Our Bible study focused on the character and nature of God. We learned that He is holy, perfect, and unchanging. The goal of this sermon will be to build upon what we learned in Bible study and show how we can respond to the character of God. He does not want us to merely know these things about Him. He wants us to take the knowledge He is sharing with us about Himself and respond by following, worshiping, and trusting Him to provide. We see this lived out in the story of Abraham's obedience to God's calling.

1. Based on God's character, we can follow Him (v. 3).

Abraham was called by God to go into a distant land. God did not provide Abraham with a host of details and yet Abraham was still faithful (Gen. 12:1-4). In Genesis 22, Abraham's faith was being tested again in that God was calling him to offer up his only son as a sacrifice. How did Abraham respond? "So Abraham got up early in the morning, saddled his donkey, and took with him two of his young men and his son Isaac" (v. 3).

This had to be difficult for Abraham as Isaac was his only son and Isaac was a fulfilled promise from God. While God would not call us to offer up our child, He would call us to lay down things that we consider to be precious. Would we be willing to lay down a six-figure salary and engage in mission work? Would we be willing to lay down our Sunday morning sports to teach a Bible study group? Would we be willing to lay down that extra

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vacation and give to the church budget? Abraham said yes to God and followed His leading without knowing all the answers. He did this because he knew God's character and was willing to follow. Would we do the same today?

2. Based on God's character, we can worship Him (v. 5).

As Abraham approached the mount he was called to ascend, we see his purpose. He told his son Isaac and the two men with them that he and Isaac were going to go and worship God. The word worship means to bow low. When someone bows low to another, that person acknowledges that they are not in charge. Rather the one who is receiving the worship is the one in charge. Abraham knew that God was worthy of worship and was even leading his own son to see that God was worthy of worship.

When we come to better understand God's character, we cannot help but bow in worship. Everything that God calls us to may not make sense to a world that does not acknowledge God. But, as we have learned in this study, we know that we can discern His voice through His Word, His character, and His convicting work through the Holy Spirit. When we know that He is calling us, our response is to follow and worship Him because He is worthy. God is still in the business of calling people to follow Him and for us to respond in worship.

3. Based on God's character, we can trust Him (v. 5).

To be trustworthy means to be true to one's word and character. God is trustworthy and Abraham knew this to be the case. God had not failed him when He called Abraham to journey to a foreign land and He was not going to fail him now. We know this to be the case because Abraham told the two men that were with them that he and Isaac were going to worship and that they would return. Abraham was to offer Isaac as a sacrifice and yet he was planning on them returning together. The author of Hebrews said, "He considered God to be able even to raise someone from the dead" (Heb. 11:19).

The same God who was trustworthy to Abraham is trustworthy to us as well. As we offer our lives in surrender to Him, He will not forsake us. Instead, He will take our feeble offering and use it for His glory. Paul told the church at Rome "to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God; this is your true worship" (Rom. 12:1). His character was trustworthy to Abraham, the church at Rome, and to us as well.

4. Based on God's character, we can trust Him to provide (v. 8).

A study of the original language of this passage indicates that Isaac was most likely an adolescent. Like any adolescent, he had a question. He observed the fact that wood was gathered, and he heard his father say something about worship. Isaac then asked about the sacrifice. Abraham simply said, "God Himself will provide." We do not have any indication of a hesitation between the question and Abraham answer. Isaac asked a legitimate question, and Abraham provides an accurate answer.

The amazing thing about God's character related to this specific point is that we know that God did provide for Abraham and Isaac. Shortly before Abraham was to sacrifice his son, he

“looked up and saw a ram caught in the thicket by its horns. So, Abraham went and took the ram and offered it as a burnt offering in place of his son” (v. 13).

Conclusion: We can better discern one’s true character if we see the same actions embodied for an extended period. We find this to be true of God. His character is one that can be trusted, worshiped, and followed. We would be amiss if we did not further acknowledge His continued nature of providing a sacrifice for us. Yes, He provided the ram for Abraham and Isaac. He also provided Jesus for us today. John 3:16 states, “For God loved the world in this way: He gave His one and only Son, so that everyone who believes in Him will not perish but have eternal life.” He is providing for us yet again today. Will we respond by following, trusting, and worshiping Him?

Author Bio

Tod Tanner has degrees from Texas A&M University, Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary and The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary. He has pastored churches in Texas and Tennessee. He and his family reside in Wartrace, TN and he is serving as the Vice President of the Tennessee Baptist Foundation.