CHAPTER 2

ABSOLUTE COMMITMENT
Read Genesis 22:1-19

What is the purpose of this story?

The climax of the story, commanding Abraham not to sacrifice Isaac, is to put an end to the ritual of child sacrifice, in a time when the firstborn belonged to God and human sacrifices was the norm worldwide.

What is odd about verse 2?
Then, when the son reached the age of serious work with him, he said: "O my son! I have seen in a vision that I offer thee in sacrifice: now see what is thy view!"

The son said: "O my father! Do as thou art commanded: thou will find me, if Allah so wills, one of the steadfast!"

So when they had both submitted to Allah, and he had laid him prostrate on his forehead for sacrifice,

We called out to him "O Abraham! ..."

"Thou hast already fulfilled the vision!" - thus indeed do We reward those who do right.
In this story from the Koran, no name is mentioned, but Muslims believe that it was Ishmael, the first born son, instead of Isaac.

No alternative animal sacrifice is mentioned either.

The rock in this story becomes important.
This rock is also considered to be the place where Muhammad ascended into heaven.

Where is this sacrificial rock?
What common thread do you see in the Isaac/Ishmael story and Jacob/Esau story and the parable of the prodigal son?

How does this relate to Judaism / Christianity today?
Compare this story of sacrifice in Genesis to the death of Jesus on the cross.

In this story, we see human sacrifice is replaced by animal sacrifice. In the death of Jesus, we see human sacrifice takes the place of animal sacrifice.

Read Hebrews 7:27
What type of sacrifice is called for today in terms of Christianity and why do we make these sacrifices?

Read Mark 8:34

Christian sacrifice is self motivated and self giving for the well being of others and for the glory of God.
Abraham was put to the test as he faced tension between loyalty to family and obedience to God.

Sometimes we may feel what seems best for our families may be different from what God wants us to do.

When does this type of conflict come into play in today’s families?
Abraham was following what he thought was God’s will, but God was showing him a better way.

Human sacrifice was outmoded, and God offered another way.

In what ways might we be thinking we are following God’s will today, which might be outmoded and God might be showing us a better way?