

ADULTS

BIBLE STUDIES FOR LIFE®

SPRING 2018 | **PERSONAL STUDY GUIDE**



A Psalm of Da'vid.

1 The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want. Isa. 40:11; Ezek. 34:11

2 He maketh me to lie down in green pastures: he leadeth me beside the still waters. Ezek. 34:14

3 He restoreth my soul: he leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake. Ps. 5:8

4 Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me.

5 Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies: thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over. Ps. 92:10

6 Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: and I will dwell in the house of the LORD for ever.

GOD IS ...

STAND UP: HOW TO FIGHT INJUSTICE



A PROMISE THAT WILL NEVER BE BROKEN

It hurts when people break a promise. Some people make promises they have no intention of honoring. Others sincerely mean well, but circumstances interfere and they're unable to do what they promised they'd do.

God is not like us. When He makes a promise, He keeps it. Period. He is always faithful to His Word. For example, He promises an abundant and eternal life to those who trust in His Son, Jesus Christ.

“if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.... For ‘everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved’” (Rom. 10:9,13).

But we don't automatically enjoy the benefits of this wonderful promise. We must understand and believe Jesus died on the cross, taking our sin upon Himself, and then rose from the dead, making a new, eternal life possible for us. As we believe, we also acknowledge His lordship, turning from sin and surrendering our lives to Him.

God's promise is for you. If you would like a new life in Christ, repent of your sins and put your faith in Him. Admit to God you are a sinner and ask Him to forgive you. Turn from the sin that has kept you from God and accept Jesus' gift of forgiveness. Confess your faith in Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord. Express your repentance and faith by praying something like this:

“Dear God, I know I am a sinner. I believe Jesus died on the cross to forgive me of my sins. I'm sorry for all the wrong I've done and ask You to forgive me. I now accept Your gift of eternal life. Thank You for Your love, forgiveness, and a new life in Jesus Christ. From this day forward, I choose to follow You. In Jesus' name, Amen.”

Share your decision to follow Jesus with a pastor or those in your Bible study group. Get involved in a church that will help you grow in your faith. Be baptized as an expression of your faith.

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Coming in Summer

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Commentary

Dig deeper into Scripture with the *Bible Studies for Life: Advanced Bible Study*. This resource features in-depth Bible exposition on the passages studied in this book.



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Bible Studies for Life: Adults often lists websites that may be helpful to our readers. Our staff verifies each site's usefulness and appropriateness prior to publication. However, website content changes quickly so we encourage you to approach all websites with caution. Make sure sites are still appropriate before sharing them with students, friends, and family.

A Word from Our Team

The Bible Studies for Life Team



A high point of my week is the time I spend with my Bible study group. I am both challenged and encouraged as we discuss together the studies in Bible Studies for Life. I pray that you are equally challenged and encouraged as you meet with your group to study together.

The *Bible Studies for Life* team has put a lot of love, work, and prayer into the book you are holding! Now it's your turn. You can get a lot of benefit from this book in either of two ways:

- 1. Read the session before the group meets.** By reading beforehand, you will have thought through the discussion questions, become familiar with the passage, and be better prepared for an engaging discussion.
- 2. Read the session after the group meets.** By reading afterwards, you can dig deeper into the truths, principles, and applications your group discussed. This approach underscores the point from the session, and helps you to live it out during the week.

Choose the approach that works best for you. But either way, read! Let this Personal Study Guide help you with your discipleship and growth in Christ.

Enjoy!

Lynn Pryor—Team Leader |  @lynnpryor | lynnhpryor.com



My group's prayer requests

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My group's prayer requests

A series of horizontal dotted lines for writing.

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GOD IS ...



"God" is not His only name.

You are probably known by different names. Those names reflect both your character and your relationships with those around you. For example, people who know me professionally call me Dr. Hemphill, yet others who know me personally call me Ken. My children call me Daddy and my grandkids call me Papa.

Not surprisingly, God has also been known by many names throughout the centuries.

The many names of God revealed in Scripture tell us much about His character. Those names invite us to know Him in a growing, intimate relationship. Knowing these names is important for three reasons:

- ▶ **God's name is inherently great.** "O LORD, our Lord, how majestic is your name in all the earth!" (Ps. 8:1). Understanding the names of God will enable us to praise and worship Him more effectively.
- ▶ **God's name protects and benefits us.** "The name of the LORD is a strong tower" (Prov. 18:10). God's various names can be a tremendous aid to effective and specific prayer.
- ▶ **We represent God's name and must bring honor to it.** God gave Ten Commandments, and one of those Commandments has to do with His name: "You shall not take the name of the LORD your God in vain" (Ex. 20: 7). This command means far more than avoiding its use in vulgar or slang expressions. It means the people of God must reflect His name or character in their lives.

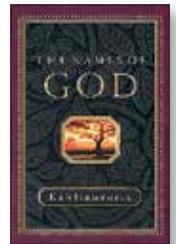
The names of God are a love gift to us. God reveals Himself *fully* so that we might experience His *fullness*. As we look at six of those names, we'll discover truths about the lovely character of our God.



Ken Hemphill

Ken is husband to Paula, father to three daughters, and grandfather to ten grandchildren. He is a pastor who is passionate about the church and God's Word. He has served in many capacities in Southern Baptist life and is a prolific author. He is currently the

Director for Church Planting and Revitalization at North Greenville University. Ken has authored numerous books, including *The Names of God*.



God Is ...

Session 1 **Our Provider** *Genesis 22:1-14*

Session 2 **Our Healer** *Exodus 14:29-31; 15:22-27*

Session 3 **Our Banner** *Exodus 17:8-16*

Session 4 **Our Peace** *Judges 6:11-16,22-24*

Session 5 **Our Shepherd** *Psalms 23:1-6*

Session 6 **Our Righteousness** *Jeremiah 33:3-8,14-16*

1

OUR PROVIDER



What's one of the hardest things you've been asked to do?

QUESTION #1

THE POINT

Trust God to meet our needs.



THE BIBLE MEETS LIFE

We've all made decisions to take on a daunting task, but it can be especially difficult when someone else makes that decision for you. The soldier who is "volunteered" for an assignment. The employee who is transferred to a new task or city. The student who is called on by the instructor to show the rest of the class how to solve "x." In those moments, our minds can be dominated by a single thought: *How am I going to do this?*

A few years ago, my wife, Paula, and I chose to move closer to our extended families. That might not seem like a hard decision, but things didn't fall together the way we expected. To make it even more challenging, my wife was diagnosed with cancer in the midst of the transition. We moved ahead, though, choosing to trust God and not our circumstances. We trusted and God provided.

When we look back, we can see God's hand at work. Our home has given us a quiet retreat—a wonderful healing place for Paula. God provides what we need, when we need it. Abraham knew this too. God truly is our Provider, and Abraham saw God's provision as he trusted Him during a great test of his faith.

WHAT DOES THE BIBLE SAY?

Genesis 22:1-2

¹ **After these things God tested Abraham and said to him, “Abraham!” And he said, “Here I am.”**
² **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.”**

Abraham is commonly seen as a great example of someone who exercised strong faith. (See Heb. 11:8.) But Abraham’s journey wasn’t always easy. In fact, there were moments when he faltered:

- ▶ In his fear, Abraham claimed Sarah was not his wife—twice! (See Gen. 12:12-13; 20:1-3.)
- ▶ In his doubt, Abraham attempted to “help” fulfill God’s promise through having a son by Sarah’s slave Hagar. (See 18:1-3.)

In Genesis 22, Abraham faced his greatest test of faith. Verse 1 begins with an interesting phrase that is easy to overlook: “After these things.” Moses, the writer of Genesis, wanted us to think back over Abraham’s long journey that had led him from Ur of the Chaldeans to this very conversation with God.

God called to Abram when he was 75 years old (see Gen. 12:4), instructing him to leave his land, his relatives, and his father’s house—everything that was familiar and comfortable. In return, God promised to bless Abram by making him into a great nation that would bless all the nations of the earth. (See v. 2.) This was problematic because Abraham had no children and his wife, Sarah, was barren. Even so, “[Abram] believed the LORD, and he counted it to him as righteousness” (15:6).

Abraham eventually did have a son, Isaac, although it took 25 years for God’s promise to be fulfilled. (See 21:1-7.) Genesis 22 took place several years after Isaac’s birth.

What’s your initial reaction to these verses?

QUESTION #2

Given Abraham's story, God's command in verse 2 is difficult to understand: "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."

Notice God's detailed description of Isaac: "your son, your only son Isaac, whom you love." This wasn't simply "a son" God required of Abraham. It was *his only son*. It was Isaac, the son *whom you love*. This son was not only dear to Abraham, he was essential to God's promises concerning the blessing of the nations—yet he was about to be offered as a sacrifice.

How do Abraham's actions in these verses demonstrate faith?

QUESTION #3

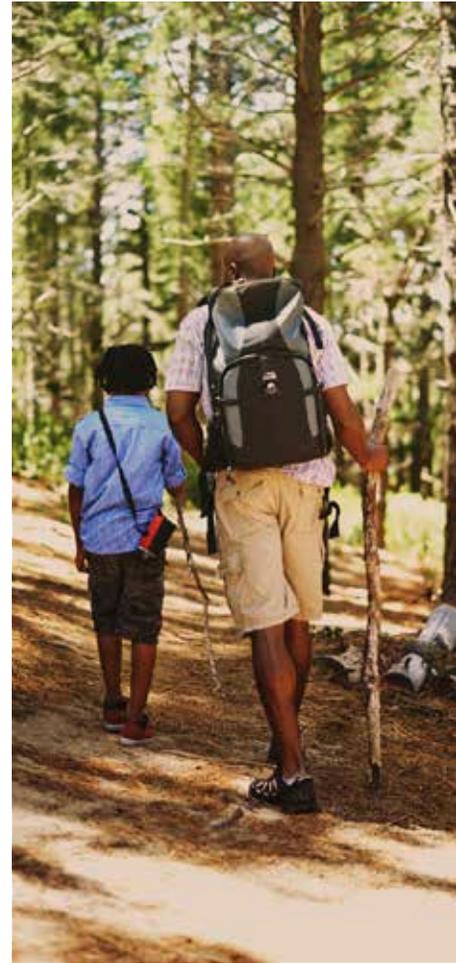
Genesis 22:3-10

³ 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. ⁴ On the third day Abraham lifted up his eyes and saw the place from afar. ⁵ Then Abraham said to his young men, "Stay here with the donkey; I and the boy will go over there and worship and come again to you." ⁶ And Abraham took the wood of the burnt offering and laid it on Isaac his son. And he took in his hand the fire and the knife. So they went both of them together. ⁷ And Isaac said to his father Abraham, "My father!" And he said, "Here I am, my son." He said, "Behold, the fire and the wood, but where is the lamb for a burnt offering?" ⁸ Abraham said, "God will provide for himself the lamb for a burnt offering, my son." So they went both of them together. ⁹ When they came to the place of which God had told him, Abraham built the altar there and laid the wood in order and bound Isaac his son and laid him on the altar, on top of the wood. ¹⁰ Then Abraham reached out his hand and took the knife to slaughter his son.

We can hear Abraham's faith in his instructions to the young men: "Stay here with the donkey; I and the boy will go over there and worship and come again to you." How could he be so confident? The writer of Hebrews gave us insight into Abraham's thoughts as he took his son to Mount Moriah: "He considered that God was able even to raise him from the dead, from which, figuratively speaking, he did receive him back" (Heb. 11:19). Abraham was convinced that God, who had already performed one miracle by putting life into a barren womb, could raise Isaac from the dead. In short, Abraham had arrived at a point in his faith journey where he was confident he could trust God with his most valued possession: his only son.

The text gives us no clue as to how much time passed between verses 8 and 9. Having arrived at the place God designated, Abraham built the altar and arranged the wood in preparation for the sacrifice. This work might have taken considerable time, and I've often wondered if any additional dialogue passed between Abraham and Isaac. The text is silent. We are only told with utter simplicity that Abraham "bound Isaac his son and laid him on the altar, on top of the wood," and then raised his knife to kill his beloved son.

Just reading the account leaves us nearly breathless. There's no doubt Abraham was committed to obey the command of God. Yet we should understand that Abraham's actions were based on his understanding of God's character. Our circumstances never test the faithfulness of God; they only test our understanding of His character and purpose.



When have you experienced a time of testing?

QUESTION #4

Genesis 22:11-14

¹¹ But the angel of the LORD called to him from heaven and said, “Abraham, Abraham!” And he said, “Here I am.” ¹² He said, “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.” ¹³ 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. ¹⁴ 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.”

This place of divine encounter became sacred for Abraham, and so he called it “The LORD will provide.” This is the literal translation of the name *Jehovah Jireh*. The Hebrew word *jireh* can be translated “to see.” We may wonder what the connection is between “seeing” and “providing.” We can make the connection with the English noun “provision,” a compound made up of two Latin words which when taken together mean “to see beforehand.” God’s pre-vision leads to His provision. God knew before Abraham ever reached Moriah that he would need a sacrifice; therefore, God personally provided the ram.

This is an amazing picture of salvation. Before the foundation of the world, God had prior vision of man’s sin and rebellion. Seeing our need, He made provision for our redemption by providing a lamb of sacrifice—Jesus, “his only Son” (John 3:16).

Notice that it was Abraham’s obedience that unleashed God’s blessings in his life. (See Gen. 22:16-18.) For us as well, obedience is the key to growing faith. James spoke to this issue with great clarity when he compared those who hear God’s Word and refuse to act with those who hear and do act. The latter will be blessed in what they do. (See Jas. 1:23-25.)

If you desire to unleash God’s blessing in your life—if you want to discover that God is your Provider—then obey His Word. Obey immediately and without reservation, and see all that God will provide.

How can our actions and attitudes demonstrate that we serve the God who provides?

QUESTION #5

LIVE IT OUT

God will use challenging circumstances to lead us to a deeper understanding of His ability to provide for our needs. How will you apply these truths this week? Consider these suggestions:

- ▶ **Identify your Isaac.** What circumstance, person, or thing are you having the most difficulty placing in God's care? Pray this week for the faith necessary to let go.
- ▶ **Place your Isaac on the altar.** Abraham had to first gather the resources necessary to make a sacrifice before he could find God's provision. Identify concrete steps you can take to place your "Isaac" in God's care.
- ▶ **Look for God's provision.** Write down the ways God provides for you this week. Make known to others the good things God is providing in your life.



You can experience a breakthrough in your faith walk when you are willing to trust God with those things you hold most precious. Make that decision today and trust *Jehovah Jireh*, the God Who Provides.

My thoughts