

**BE RICH**  
**WEEK 3 DISCUSSION GUIDE**  
**“SERVE”**

**READ**

This week we concluded our “Be Rich” series, which is built around three ideas: give, serve and love. We focused on love, which is the motive behind why we give and serve. Be Rich is not just a once a year thing, it is a call to action, to live the way that Jesus lived. To love the way Jesus loves. To help us understand this motive of love, we took a look at the story of Abraham and his wife Sarai.

Abraham and his wife desperately wanted to have children, to have a family. Long after that seemed possible, God promised them one. Sarai finally became pregnant at 90, Abraham was 100 years old. This may seem less than ideal, but for them it was a dream come true. They had a boy named Isaac whom they cherished, who was growing up to be a fine young man, then out of nowhere God said to them...

**Genesis 22:3**

*... “Take your son, your only son, whom you love—Isaac—and go to the region of Moriah. Sacrifice him there as a burnt offering on a mountain I will show you. Early the next morning Abraham got up and loaded his donkey. He took with him two of his servants and his son Isaac. When he had cut enough wood for the burnt offering, he set out for the place God had told him about.”*

Now when we read this passage we would likely react with shock and horror. Why would God ask this, and why would Abraham comply? Abraham does not end up sacrificing Isaac, as God stops him at the last minute. Both Christian and Jewish scholars have struggled to explain this passage. It is argued that God is testing Abraham and Abraham is testing God. But let us look at a revolutionary idea that God is showing Abraham. One that would change our understanding of God forever.

The world was very different about 4000 years ago during the time this took place, human sacrifice was fairly common. There is evidence of it happening around the world. It was done to honor or appease a powerful person or deity. Ancient people did not understand science and nature the way we do, to them everything had a divine explanation. When everything is perceived to have a divine causation, people live at the mercy of appeasing the gods. People would go so far as to sacrifice other people, even their own children to appease gods.

Abraham does not object to God’s request, it is not out of the ordinary for that time. Abraham started following God later in life, and his parents did not follow this God so they do not have a long history. Abraham is still learning what it looks like to follow God.

Abraham set off to sacrifice Isaac. As they got closer to the mountain, Isaac asked Abraham where the lamb was for the burnt offering. Abraham told Isaac that God would provide the

lamb. When they arrived at the mountain, they built the altar. Abraham bound his son and laid him on the altar. He raised the knife and just then...

### **Genesis 22:11-12**

*...the angel of the Lord called out to him from heaven, "Abraham! Abraham!" "Here I am," he replied. "Do not lay a hand on the boy," he said. "Do not do anything to him. Now I know that you fear God, because you have not withheld from me your son, your only son."*

Here God intervenes and says don't do this. I know this is how it is with other people when they worship their gods, but this is not how it will be for us. He showed Abraham how it would be different.

### **Genesis 22:13-14**

*Abraham looked up and there in a thicket he saw a ram caught by its horns. He went over and took the ram and sacrificed it as a burnt offering instead of his son. So Abraham called that place The Lord Will Provide. And to this day it is said, "On the mountain of the Lord it will be provided."*

I am not a God who demands, I am a God who provides and freely gives. All throughout the Old Testament God is teaching Israel about himself. This story is one of the first major revelations that God is different. He is not a God who takes but a God who gives. He provides. He loves. He loves us so much that he did for us what he did for Abraham, provided a sacrifice. Not to appease himself but to make right what had gone wrong. To make a way back to himself, to life, to eternity. "...God is love" (1 John 4:8).

### **1 John 4:19**

*We love because he first loved us.*

Because we have been loved we can love others. When we experience God's love it transforms us. Let us live 52 weeks of the year from a place of knowing that God loves us. This doesn't happen in an instant, it is a journey. Be Rich can be the start of that journey.

### **DISCUSS**

Reflect on a time someone showed you the love of God through an act of kindness. What did that look like?

How does knowing the fullness of God's love for you impact the way you love others?

Share with your group one way that you served during this series.

What has been most impactful for you throughout this series?

Brainstorm with your group ways you can continue to leverage yourselves and your resources for the benefit of others.

**PRAY FOR YOUR GROUP**

Pray that we would decide in advance to be generous with our time, talent and resources.

**PRAY FOR FCC**

Pray that we would live the way that Jesus lived, that we would leverage our lives and resources for the benefit of others.

**PRAY FOR OUR GLOBAL PARTNERS**

Pray for FCC global partners in the Middle East working with refugees. Pray for their new church plant to continue to grow and bring light and hope to their community.