



S E R M O N G U I D E

No Limits with Pastor Delman

Don't Swing At A Bad Pitch

Genesis 16:1-16

NOTES INTRODUCTION As Abram and Sarai wait for the Lord to answer their prayers for a child, they instead decide to come up with their own plan. Sarai suggests that Abram sleep with her slave, Hagar. Sarai and Abram are not patient in waiting for the right pitch (God's pitch). Instead, they swing at a bad pitch (their own idea) in hopes of getting the same result. Have you ever found yourself swinging at a bad pitch? Have you ever prayed and asked God to give you something. Maybe you felt like He did not answer it, so you came up with your own plan. No matter what the situation, let me encourage you to never get ahead of God. The right pitch will come, but you must be patient and wait. So let's look at a few things we should consider if we want to avoid swinging at a bad pitch. **KEY POINTS** 1. Don't Let Desperation Drive Your Decisions When it comes to following God, you must be sure to not let desperation drive your decisions. In Genesis 16, Abram makes a decision in large by part by the frustration he felt in the chapter before. God was not moving when Abram thought He should move, and God was not working how Abram thought He should work. Abram and Sarai believed God's revelation upon their lives, but they were struggling with the manifestation of it all. From their perspective, they and God were on the clock. Abram is now 85, and this is before the blue pill. Sarai is 75, and this was before the development of in vitro fertilization. So in their minds, the issue wasn't whether they heard God's voice; they just thought that perhaps they misunderstood His method. All that considered, Sarai's suggestion for Abram to sleep with Hagar, and Abram's willingness to go along with the plan, are a result of the fact that in their minds, there is not a lot of time left for God to do what He said He would. If the promise is going to happen, it is going to happen now, and if it hasn't happened, then God must have meant for it to happen another way.

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NOTES 2. Realize That Everyone Who Loves You Doesn't **Necessarily Know What's Best For You** As we continue talking about waiting on God to work and not getting ahead of Him, we must learn another valuable lesson as it relates to letting God take the lead. That is, you must realize that everyone who loves you doesn't necessarily know what is best for you. It was Abram's wife of many years who recommended that he sleep with her handmaiden. Sarai's pitch led Abram to suspend his faith and to follow his flesh. I mean, Abram does not hesitate when Sarai proposes spicing things up by bringing in another woman. But the fatal flaw Abram makes is assuming that his wife's love for him means that she knows what is best for him, and consequently he fails to assess this proposal in light of God's will for his life. We are all guilty of listening to those around us and trusting their opinions at some point or another. The problem is not their intent. It is when what they advise you to go in a direction God has not instructed you to go. No matter how much those around you love you and want what's best for you, it does not mean they know best. Make sure when you seek advice from others, you make sure to take it to God first. Remember, only God knows what is best for you. 3. Don't Assume Every Good Idea Is A God Idea As you continue to pursue the path God has set before you, one thing you must do is decipher between a good idea and a "God idea." That is what Craig Groeschel talks about in his book, "IT: How Churches and Leaders Can Get It and Keep It." He writes that we must learn to tell the difference between a good idea and a God idea. In Genesis 16, Sarai's proposal was actually a good idea according to the traditions and ethos of the time. If a man wanted to have an heir and it was thought that his wife was unable to have a child, it was very common for that man to try and have an heir with a servant girl. The problem was that using a surrogate was not God's idea for their lives. Every good idea is not a God idea. Buying a house may be a good idea, but it may not be a God idea for you at this particular time. Getting married, leaving your job to start your own business...all of those may be good ideas, but may not be God's idea for you at

this time.

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QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

- 1. When was a time you allowed desperation to drive your decision making? What did you learn from that experience?
- 2. Have you ever had someone who loves you give you advice that contradicted what God was telling you to do? How did you handle that situation? Is there anything you would do differently if you could go back and do it again?

	3. When was a time you had a good idea but knew it wasn't a God idea? Which idea did you choose to pursue? What did you learn from that situation?
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