

“Sarai and Hagar”

Genesis 16:1-16

For the week of January 31, 2021

Abram Listens to Sarai

Read Genesis 16:1-2. Knowing what we know about God's promises to Abram, what is wrong with Sarai's assertion about bearing children? What do you think caused Abram to go along?

Was Abram wrong in listening to his wife? Why or why not? If not, what should have been his response?

What can we learn from our human efforts to modify God's plans? Or to displace God and make our own plans?

A Dysfunctional Family

Read Genesis 16:3-6. From this passage, describe the actions of our three main characters in the story.

Abram –

Sarai –

Hagar -

Now how would you describe their “family”? What were the family dynamics between Abram and Sarai? Sarai and Hagar? Abram and Hagar? Family life can be difficult, and it can especially be a difficult area in which to be godly. Why is that and how can you combat it?

Faith Revealed

This story already reveals two important aspects about faith which was not a part of our story. They are:

- Faith never tries to force God to act and is never manipulative.
- Faith learns to rest in the sovereignty of God.

Discuss these two truths in your community group. How can we realistically have a faith that is fully dependent and trusting of God and His will and His timing?

What is the difference between faith and trust (read Hebrews 11:1)? Why is faith critical to God (read Hebrews 11:6)? Why is faith essential to Christianity (read James 1:2-4)?

What Makes a Godly Husband and Leader?

Was Abram an exemplary husband? Why or why not? Read Philippians 2:3-4 and 1 Peter 3:7 for insight.

Was Abram an exemplary leader? Why or why not? What does each passage say about being a godly leader?

- Matthew 23:1
- Proverbs 19:20
- Acts 6:3
- Ephesians 6:7
- 1 Peter 5:6; Ephesians 4:32
- Philippians 3:12

Husbands: A Few Questions to Ponder

- Does your schedule indicate that your family is a top priority in time, energy, and focus?
- Are you heeding the counsel of 1 Peter 3:7 and really studying your wife?
- Are you taking the initiative to lead your wife spiritually by sharing the things God is teaching you?
- Examine your tone of voice. Have you fallen into a habit of harshness, blame, or subtle disapproval?
- Are you a good listener? Wives need to share their hearts, and you must be the safest place for her to do that.

What's Going on So Far

Abram is avoiding confrontation with Hagar—one of the worst mistakes a leader can make. Abram is passive and not intentional. He follows the lead of his wife (as Adam before him had followed the suggestion of Eve), and he stumbles badly. Instead of patiently waiting for God to fulfill the promise in His own way and in His own time, they took matters into their own hands—a faith failure. While Sarai was angry with Abram, she must have known that it was she who had made Hagar's bed. She wanted an heir. She planned the honeymoon. No confession or repentance of sin is found yet on Sarai's lips—only bitter remorse. Abram did not change his course. He should have learned that his passivity was not piety. He was the accomplice to sin by refusing to resist it or to rebuke Sarai. Sarai's stinging rebuke served only to cause Abram to retreat further. He did not acknowledge his sin, nor did he confront Sarai with hers. Instead he persisted in allowing Sarai to have her own way, relinquishing his leadership.

Hagar's Wilderness Experience

Read Genesis 16:7-14. Where was Hagar most likely fleeing to? What is revealing about Hagar's answer as to why she is fleeing?

How does the angel of the Lord promise to remedy the problem with Sarai? Why wouldn't the angel of the Lord make Sarai treat Hagar better?

"*Ishmael*", named by God, means "God hears". It's an indication that Hagar has learned that regardless of the circumstances, God sees and hears and is in control.

Consider if you have ever thought that because of the difficulty of a circumstance or a relationship, that God does not "see" or "hear" and does not respond as you'd like. What is the viewpoint we need to arrive at in terms of God's working when circumstances are hard or far from ideal?

Read Genesis 16:15-16. Do we know if Sarai treated Hagar any better upon her return? What will eventually happen to Hagar (see Genesis 21:10)?

What Did Hagar Learn about God?

Hagar's wilderness experience brought her face-to-face with God and taught her some important truths about him. Identify and discuss some of those truths. Below are some questions that you can turn into one of God's truths.

- Does God hear us? Listen to us? Respond to us?
- Is God a personal God?
- Does God know the future?
- Is God's grace evident even among sinful actions?