

GENESIS



DAYONE

1. This week we will look at the high cost of impatience. Read Genesis 16-17 at least twice before starting to answer the questions in the study guide. What is something you have been praying about for a long time? Are you growing impatient? Have you considered helping God remedy the situation?

2. Look at Genesis 16:1, what was the problem Abram and Sarai were experiencing?
Sarai was This is a sad situation; especially when you consider the promises of God. Read Genesis 12:2,7, and Genesis 15:3-5, what had God promised Abram?
3. When we allow our hearts to forget the character of our good God, we begin to entertain all sorts of foolish plans. What thoughts might Sarai have been thinking over the decade living in Canaan?
4. When you have a prayer that seems to be going unanswered, have you tried your own plan to change the outcome?
5. According to the first half of verse 2, what conclusion did Sarai come to about her barrenness?
Was this conclusion right or wrong?



6. Comment on the verses below.

Genesis 2:7 Then the Lord God formed man of dust from the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living being.	
Nehemiah 9:6 You alone are the LORD. You made the heavens, even the highest heavens, and all their starry host, the earth and all that is on it, the seas and all that is in them. You give life to everything, and the multitudes of heaven worship you.	
Job 33:4 The Spirit of God has made me; the breath of the Almighty gives me life.	

- **7.** We cannot say for sure but when do you think Sarai may have acquired her handmaid, Hagar?
- **8.** Sarai presents her idea to Abram. Do you think this was their first conversation about this subject?
- **9.** Look at Genesis 16:3, what are the steps of Sarai's actions that got her in this regrettable situation?

(You might underline the verbs in verse 3 so it is easier to see her actions.)

Does this process remind you of another woman we have read about in Genesis 3:6?

10. As a wife, how important is it that we remember Eve and Sarai's poor influence when presenting our ideas to our husbands?

Loving husbands listen to their wives. They really do want us to be happy and content. How important is it that our suggestions be ones that will lead our family toward righteousness?



11. Genesis 16:2 seems like a very strange idea by our standards today. If you do a bit of research, you will find this was a practice of ancient civilizations. But just because others are doing something, does that mean it is right for us?

How might we discern if an idea is good and if it will lead us in the direction we should go?

My mother used to say, "when in doubt, don't." Now that I am older and a bit more experienced, I tend to agree.

DAYTWO

12. Leading our family well is a huge responsibility. To which of them had God spoken his promises, Abram or Sarai?

13. Godly headship in the home reaps amazing blessings. Unfortunately, some misunderstand headship and think it is the same as dominance or dictator. The Bible teaches something very different. Ephesians 5:23, gives us the ultimate example of this type of leadership. "For the husband is the head of the wife even as Christ is the head of the church, his body, and is himself its Savior". The husband is to be head of his wife in the same way that Christ is head of his church. What kind of headship did Christ offer the church?

Was it harsh or loving?

Was it domineering or gentle?

Was it proud or humble?

Christ loved the church so much that he counted it as more precious than his own life. He gave up his own life so that she might live.

Don't you just love it when someone makes your job easier?

Read Ephesians 5:15,22; what could we do as wives to help our husbands be a successful leader of the family?



14. The sad truth is the seed of temptation had been planted by Sarai. Whether it was a conscious, selfish decision or simply a bad idea not taken to the LORD first, Abram was subtly being tempted to doubt God's ability to provide. Do you think this story might have ended differently if Abram and Sarai would have taken a few days to pray, talking to God about this idea?

This reminds me of the words of the old hymn "What a friend we have in Jesus." The first verse of this hymn says, "Oh, what peace we often forfeit, Oh, what needless pain we bear, all because we do not carry everything to God in prayer!"

15. Read Genesis 3:17 again, what did God point out as Adam's first step out of God's will?

There will always be voices attempting to distract us and take our attention off God's word. What are we to do?

Jesus painted a word picture for us in John 10:1-6. What is the key to successful living found in these verses?

- **16.** You are wise to be in God's word. God will not act contrary to his character. Read Hebrews 6:17-18; James 1:13, 17; Psalm 119:160 and underline the truths you see concerning the character of God.
- **17.** Genesis 16:4 says, "He (Abram) slept with Hagar, and she conceived." Sometimes people question why God allowed Hagar to become pregnant, as though it was God's fault this family is in such a disastrous situation. Pregnancy is the natural and expected result of this type of intimacy. There are consequences set in motion when we act on our poor choices. This is referred to as cause and effect. We have said it before, guardrails are something intentionally and strategically put in place to keep us from drifting into an unsafe space. What are some of the quardrails we can erect to keep us from the consequences of bad decisions?

18. Hagar was Sarai's handmaid. By ancient standards she was simply property belonging to Sarai. The text tells us "When she knew she was pregnant, she began to despise her mistress." Try to put yourself in Hagar's sandals for a few moments, what might you be thinking?



19. As with most bad decisions, Sarai has regrets. What do her words indicate about her heart?

20. Sarai tries to describe her pain to Abram, "the wrong I am suffering" and "she despises me."

The Hebrew word translated "wrong" is Chamac which is defined as violence, wrong, cruelty, injustice.

The Hebrew word translated "despises" is Qalal which is defined as to be cursed, to make despicable.

What type of relationship do you think they may have had prior to this?

What is the relationship like now that Hagar is pregnant with Abram's baby?

DAY THREE

21. Why do you think Sarai was so upset with Abram?

Hadn't he simply done what she asked?

Read 1 Peter 3:5-6, how is her relationship with her husband described in the New Testament?

The word translated "obeyed" is the Hebrew word Hupakouo, which means to listen, to harken to a command, to submit.

What examples of Sarai's character have we seen so far?

Was she a woman who tried to rule the house, or a wife who quietly allowed God to protect her?

You might want to look back to Genesis 12:10-20.

22. Read Proverbs 14:1, what might be some ways we can be a wise woman and build our home?

What are some foolish things we should avoid so we don't destroy it?



- 23. When left to deal with her pain as she saw fit, how did Sarai handle it?
- **24.** What is the difference between responding and reacting to hurt and pain?
- **25.** This situation has deteriorated very quickly. How bad had things gotten in verse 6?

Read Ephesians 5:15,22; what could we do as wives to help our husbands be a successful leader of the family?

- **26.** Poor little Hagar. No, I did not say innocent little Hagar; she had played a part in this whole scenario. Where do we find her in verse 7?
- **27.** Have you ever been hurt and the thought of running away seemed like the best alternative? When you paused for a moment to reflect on where things went so terribly wrong, did you hear God's voice?

Does running from our problems ever solve them?

What is the best course of action?

- **28.** We are introduced to a person in verses 7-10 called "the angel of the LORD." His words are kind and full of concern as he speaks to her. What does he tell her to reassure her that she is seen and will be blessed?
- **29.** Angels are God's messengers, but here the one speaking uses the pronoun, I. "I will increase your descendants so much that they will be too numerous to count." Who is the only one who could fulfill a promise to increase her descendants? Who do you believe is speaking to Sarai? (Theologians have debated this for centuries. Don't get hung up here but do think about it.)

30. The name given to Hagar's son is Ishmael, which means "God hears." What had the LORD heard that brought about this name?

What would people be reminded of as they spoke this child's name?

DAY FOUR

31. Sarai was dearly loved by God. But her lack of faith, her poor choice to take matters into her own hands and harsh mistreatment of Hagar had not gone unnoticed by the LORD. All of these brought tremendous pain to their home. Proverbs 14:12 is a good reminder. What is the best thing for us to do with our plans and our pain?

32. When you read Genesis 16:12, does this sound familiar? Do we see this hostility between these two lines even today?

33. Hagar called the name of the LORD, El Roi. What is the meaning of this name given in verse 13?

34. This is such a beautiful and meaningful name for God. Do you feel this same way about God?

Do you believe he sees you?

35. When Abram came to Canaan, he was 75 years old. Many things have happened in that decade.

In Genesis 16:15-16 we see Hagar had a son; they named him Ishmael. How old was Abram at the time when Ishmael was born?



36. Genesis 17 is an interesting chapter. When the chapter opens, we see there have been several years between chapters 16-17. How old is Abram?

How old was Ishmael at that time?

37. Once again, we read that God appeared to Abram. It is hard to imagine how it felt to be a man who loved God so, and yet he went years without hearing from God. The LORD gives Abram a reminder, "I am;" This is the name El Shaddai which means: the All-Powerful, All Sufficient One, The God of the Mountains, God Almighty. That leaves little doubt regarding who is speaking to Abram.
38. Next, he commands Abram to " before me and be" The word translated blameless or perfect is the Hebrew word, Tamiym. It means complete, entire, sound, innocent, and having integrity. What is God calling him to do?
39. What does he remind Abram about in verse 2?
40. In verse 5 we see God gives Abram a very special blessing; he gives him a new name. God changes Abram's name. Abram means "exalted father," Abraham means "father of a multitude." Abram will now be known by what God says about him, "You are Abraham, the father of multitudes." The LORD informs Abraham that he has bestowed upon him the honor of being the father of many nations. This honor is still a long way from being a reality. Do you have a promise from God that you are waiting on?
Does it feel as though you may never see it happen?
What have you learned from this study that helps you in the waiting?

DAYFIVE

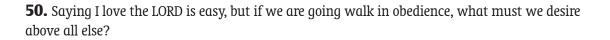
41. We do not want to miss the very important detail found in verses 7-9. What did you learn about this covenant?



42. The Lord describes an important sign for Abraham. Look at verses 10-14, what was this important sign of the covenant?

Who was required to participate in this part of God's covenant?

- **43.** The LORD also changed Sarai's name to Sarah. The name Sarai means princess or confining her honor to one family. Sarah is similar but has a greater meaning. Sarah means noble woman, a princess over nations. She too is being called to something very special. Just imagine how she must have felt to know God said these things about her. What are the promises given by the LORD in verse 16?
- **44.** It is very important to pay close attention to Abraham's response to this news in verse 16. God knows Abraham's heart. He does not reprimand him for any unbelief. If Abraham was not laughing in disbelief, then why was he laughing?
- **45.** What feelings does Abraham have toward Ishmael?
- **46.** That was not God's plan. What unusual event was about to take place that would change Abraham and Sarah's home forever?
- **47.** In obedience to God's command what do we see Abraham do? (verses 23-27)
- **48.** Do you think this might have been a difficult thing to do?
- **49.** There are times when the assignment God gives us is difficult, even painful. Others around us may not understand, but obedience must be our only response. Obedience has been defined as "compliance with an order, request, or law; it is submission to another's authority." Think of your last difficult divine assignment; did everyone understand and support you?



51. Take a few minutes and think about all we have read this week. What is your takeaway?

What part of these two chapters do you want to share with others?



DAYTWO

Question 13

Ephesians 5:15, 22 (NIV)

¹⁵Be very careful, then, how you live—not as unwise but as wise,

²² Wives, submit yourselves to your own husbands as you do to the Lord.

Question 15

John 10:1-6 (NIV)

¹⁰Very truly I tell you Pharisees, anyone who does not enter the sheep pen by the gate, but climbs in by some other way, is a thief and a robber. ² The one who enters by the gate is the shepherd of the sheep. ³ The gatekeeper opens the gate for him, and the sheep listen to his voice. He calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. 4 When he has brought out all his own, he goes on ahead of them, and his sheep follow him because they know his voice. ⁵ But they will never follow a stranger; in fact, they will run away from him because they do not recognize a stranger's voice." ⁶ Jesus used this figure of speech, but the Pharisees did not understand what he was telling them.

Question 16

Hebrews 6:17-18 (NIV)

¹⁷Because God wanted to make the unchanging nature of his purpose very clear to the heirs of what was promised, he confirmed it with an oath. ¹⁸ God did this so that, by two unchangeable things in which it is impossible for God to lie, we who have fled to take hold of the hope set before us may be greatly encouraged.

James 1:13, 17 (NIV)

¹³When tempted, no one should say, "God is tempting me." For God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does he tempt anyone;

¹⁷Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights, who does not change like shifting shadows.

Psalm 119:160 (NIV)

¹⁶⁰All your words are true; all your righteous laws are eternal.

DAYTHREE

Question 21

1 Peter 3:5-6 (NIV)

⁵For this is the way the holy women of the past who put their hope in God used to adorn themselves. They submitted themselves to their own husbands, 6 like Sarah, who obeyed Abraham and called him her lord. You are her daughters if you do what is right and do not give way to fear.

Question 22

Proverbs 14:1 (NIV)

¹The wise woman builds her house, but with her own hands the foolish one tears hers down.





DAYFOUR

Question 31

Proverbs 14:12 (NIV)¹²There is a way that appears to be right, but in the end it leads to death.

BIBLE CHAPTERS

Genesis 16 (NIV)

- ¹Now Sarai, Abram's wife, had borne him no children. But she had an Egyptian slave named Hagar;
- ² so she said to Abram, "The LORD has kept me from having children. Go, sleep with my slave; perhaps I can build a family through her." Abram agreed to what Sarai said.
- ³ So after Abram had been living in Canaan ten years, Sarai his wife took her Egyptian slave Hagar and gave her to her husband to be his wife.
- ⁴ He slept with Hagar, and she conceived. When she knew she was pregnant, she began to despise her mistress.
- ⁵Then Sarai said to Abram, "You are responsible for the wrong I am suffering. I put my slave in your arms, and now that she knows she is pregnant, she despises me. May the LORD judge between you and me."
- ⁶ "Your slave is in your hands," Abram said. "Do with her whatever you think best." Then Sarai mistreated Hagar; so she fled from her.
- ⁷The angel of the LORD found Hagar near a spring in the desert; it was the spring that is beside the road to Shur.
- ⁸ And he said, "Hagar, slave of Sarai, where have you come from, and where are you going?" "I'm running away from my mistress Sarai," she answered.
- ⁹Then the angel of the LORD told her, "Go back to your mistress and submit to her."
- ¹⁰ The angel added, "I will increase your descendants so much that they will be too numerous to count."
- ¹¹ The angel of the LORD also said to her: "You are now pregnant and you will give birth to a son.

You shall name him Ishmael, for the LORD has heard of your misery.

- ¹²He will be a wild donkey of a man; his hand will be against everyone and everyone's hand against him, and he will live in hostility toward all his brothers."
- ¹³ She gave this name to the LORD who spoke to her: "You are the God who sees me," for she said, "I have now seen the One who sees me."
- ¹⁴That is why the well was called Beer Lahai Roi; it is still there, between Kadesh and Bered.
- ¹⁵ So Hagar bore Abram a son, and Abram gave the name Ishmael to the son she had borne.
- ¹⁶ Abram was eighty-six years old when Hagar bore him Ishmael.

Genesis 17 (NIV)

- ¹When Abram was ninety-nine years old, the LORD appeared to him and said, "I am God Almighty; walk before me faithfully and be blameless.
- ²Then I will make my covenant between me and you and will greatly increase your numbers."
- ³ Abram fell facedown, and God said to him,
- ⁴ "As for me, this is my covenant with you: You will be the father of many nations.
- ⁵No longer will you be called Abram; your name will be Abraham, for I have made you a father of many nations.
- ⁶I will make you very fruitful; I will make nations of you, and kings will come from you.
- ⁷I will establish my covenant as an everlasting covenant between me and you and your descendants after you for the generations to come, to be your God and the God of your descendants after you.
- ⁸The whole land of Canaan, where you now reside as a foreigner, I will give as an everlasting possession to you and your descendants after you; and I will be their God."
- ⁹Then God said to Abraham, "As for you, you must keep my covenant, you and your descendants after you for the generations to come.
- ¹⁰This is my covenant with you and your descendants after you, the covenant you are to keep: Every male among you shall be circumcised.
- ¹¹ You are to undergo circumcision, and it will be the sign of the covenant between me and you.
- ¹² For the generations to come every male among you who is eight days old must be circumcised, including those born in your household or bought with money from a foreigner—those who are not your offspring.

- ¹³ Whether born in your household or bought with your money, they must be circumcised. My covenant in your flesh is to be an everlasting covenant.
- ¹⁴Any uncircumcised male, who has not been circumcised in the flesh, will be cut off from his people; he has broken my covenant."
- ¹⁵ God also said to Abraham, "As for Sarai your wife, you are no longer to call her Sarai; her name will be Sarah.
- ¹⁶I will bless her and will surely give you a son by her. I will bless her so that she will be the mother of nations; kings of peoples will come from her."
- ¹⁷ Abraham fell facedown; he laughed and said to himself, "Will a son be born to a man a hundred years old? Will Sarah bear a child at the age of ninety?"
- ¹⁸ And Abraham said to God, "If only Ishmael might live under your blessing!"
- ¹⁹Then God said, "Yes, but your wife Sarah will bear you a son, and you will call him Isaac. I will establish my covenant with him as an everlasting covenant for his descendants after him.
- ²⁰ And as for Ishmael, I have heard you: I will surely bless him; I will make him fruitful and will greatly increase his numbers. He will be the father of twelve rulers, and I will make him into a great nation.
- ²¹ But my covenant I will establish with Isaac, whom Sarah will bear to you by this time next year."
- ²²When he had finished speaking with Abraham, God went up from him.
- ²³On that very day Abraham took his son Ishmael and all those born in his household or bought with his money, every male in his household, and circumcised them, as God told him.
- ²⁴ Abraham was ninety-nine years old when he was circumcised,
- ²⁵ and his son Ishmael was thirteen;
- ²⁶ Abraham and his son Ishmael were both circumcised on that very day.
- ²⁷ And every male in Abraham's household, including those born in his household or bought from a foreigner, was circumcised with him.