

GENESIS 16 - DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

THE GOD WHO SEES AND HEARS - ([SERMON MP3](#))

Abram and Sarai felt pressure from their life stage and surrounding culture. Here Abram “The father of many” had no children. According to the worldly culture of Abram’s day, he was due to take a concubine and raise up a heritage through her.

- *What are some of the pressure our culture puts on our family that didn’t exist 100 years ago?*
- *What are some ungodly American values and customs we need to challenge? What adverse affects do they have on the family?*

Consider some of the themes found in this chapter of Genesis: Submission in circumstances of affliction, when to work and when to wait, the Angel of the Lord, marriage boundaries, what to do with the “Ishmael’s” of life (the consequences of sin and regretful choices), how to assess the question - “Where have you come from and where are you going” in life, etc. Do Abram’s and Sarai’s actions in (Genesis 16:1-6) pose a threat to God’s plan (Genesis 17:15-21)? Is the plan in serious danger? Why or why not? Why are these facts important for us to remember?

- *What character qualities did Abram display in (Genesis 16:1-6)?*
- *Abram and Sarai take things into their own hands. Have you ever tried to do God’s job for Him? Perhaps you can think of an example to share with the group.*

Just because it is an acceptable custom of the world doesn’t mean it should be embraced by believers. When it comes to using Hagar as an instrument to produce a male heir, Assyrian marriage contracts, Babylonian law codes and other extra-biblical sources confirm that this was a common practice. But should Abram have gone that route?

- *How can we know whether something is okay or not for a Christian? Should, “everyone else does it” be our standard of decision making? Why or why not?*
- *What are some common and acceptable practices of the world that should be avoided by believers?*

Abram doesn’t seem to be motivated by lust, but rather by a desire to see God’s purposes fulfilled. The promise had identified him as the father (Genesis 15:4), but as of yet, Sarai had not been explicitly designated as the mother of Abram’s descendants. So Abram took a short cut. Unfortunately shortcuts don’t always take us where we intend to go.

- *Can you recount a time when you tried to “shortcut” God’s plan and it turned out disastrous?*
- *Abram and Sarai had trouble waiting on God. After 10 years they had trouble with impatience and distrust. But such attitudes are dangerous. Sometimes we are eager to see events unfold and grow weary of waiting for God to act. Perhaps in your life, you long to be married, or to have a child, or to progress in your career, or finish school, or be healed from some physical problem, etc. What should you do when the promises of God seem slow in being fulfilled? What should you do when you seem to be stuck at a dead end in life with no apparent prospect of seeing your hopes and dreams realized?*

Consider (Genesis 16:7-13), and write down some things these verses show us about God. How does the Lord treat Hagar? What does He tell her to do? What does he promise?

- *Why was Hagar sent back to Abram and Sarai? Look up (Genesis 12:3) and see if it offers insight correlating Hagar’s submission in the house of Abram and her future blessing.*
- *Have you ever had to trust the Lord in moments of submission to authority? How did it turn out? Be prepared to share an example with the group.*

Why does God insist on (Genesis 16:9)? What does that tell you about God’s heart for the oppressed? What does that tell you about God’s thoughts on authority? What should we learn from the instruction in (v. 9)?

Sometimes temptation comes from a clearly evil source and they attack us like a roaring lion, or assault us like fiery darts. But at other times, the temptation comes from the people closest to us. The friend or family member who is supposed to be a blessing to us, is sometimes the instrument through whom we are led astray.

