

me no children; so a servant in my household will be my heir."<sup>4</sup> Then the word of the Lord came to him: "This man will not be your heir, but a son coming from your own body will be your heir."<sup>5</sup> He took him outside and said, "Look up at the heavens and count the stars—if indeed you can count them." Then he said to him, "So shall your offspring be."<sup>6</sup> Abram believed the Lord, and he credited it to him as righteousness."

#### 4. I've Been \_\_\_\_\_, but the wait seems so long.

**GENESIS 12:7:** "So Abram left, as the Lord had told him; and Lot went with him. Abram was seventy-five years old when he set out from Haran."

**GENESIS 16:3:** "So after Abram had been living in Canaan ten years."

#### 5. I'm \_\_\_\_\_ A New Plan.

**GENESIS 16:1-4:** "Now Sarai, Abram's wife, had borne him no children. But she had an Egyptian maidservant named Hagar;<sup>2</sup> so she said to Abram, "The Lord has kept me from having children. Go, sleep with my maidservant; perhaps I can build a family through her." Abram agreed to what Sarai said.<sup>3</sup> So after Abram had been living in Canaan ten years, Sarai his wife took her Egyptian maidservant Hagar and gave her to her husband to be his wife.<sup>4</sup> He slept with Hagar, and she conceived."

#### FOLLOW THE LOGIC: *What Would You Do?*

- ❖ The Promise of a child is given to Abram (12:2-3, 7,13:15-16; 15:1-6).
- ❖ Abram's wife Sarai is barren and unable to fulfill the promise (11:30; 16:1).
- ❖ Abram is told '*a son coming from your own body will be your heir*' (15:4), but no mention is made of Sarai being the mother.
- ❖ Sarai states that '*the Lord has kept me from having children*' (16:2).
- ❖ The culture/custom of the day permitted a barren woman to have a child through her maidservant.
- ❖ The logic led Sarai to say '*perhaps I can build a family through her*' (16:2).

"In the legal custom of that day a barren woman could give her maid to **her husband** as a **wife**, and the child born of that union was regarded as the first wife's child. If the husband said to the slave-wife's son, "You are my son," then he was the adopted son and heir. So Sarai's suggestion was unobjectionable according to the customs of that time. But God often repudiates social customs." (Underline & italics mine)

John F. Walvoord, Roy B. Zuck and Dallas Theological Seminary., *The Bible Knowledge Commentary : An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1983-c1985), 1:56.

### THE RESULT OF TAKING MATTERS INTO OUR OWN HANDS

RESULT #1 \_\_\_\_\_ (Genesis 16:4-6).

RESULT #2 \_\_\_\_\_ (Genesis 16:7-16).

**GENESIS 16:11-12:** "The angel of the Lord also said to her: "You are now with child and you will have a son. You shall name him Ishmael, for the Lord has heard of your misery.<sup>12</sup> He 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."

"Ishmael would be a "wild donkey of a man" (16:12, NIV), which is not a very flattering description. It identified him with the wilderness where he lived by his skill as an archer (Gen. 21:20–21; Job 24:5). It also revealed his independent and pugnacious nature. He would be a hated man, living "in hostility toward all his brothers" (Gen. 16:12, NIV). While we must not apply these traits to every descendant of Ishmael, the centuries-long hostility between the Jews and the Arabs is too well known to be ignored. The Arab nations are independent peoples, dwelling in the desert lands and resisting the encroachments of other nations, especially Israel and her allies." Warren W. Wiersbe, *Be Obedient* (Wheaton, Ill.: Victor Books, 1996, c1991), Genesis 16:7.

### OUR APPLICATION

The next time you're tempted to take matters into your own hands remember...

- ❖ Don't \_\_\_\_\_ of God.
- ❖ \_\_\_\_\_ for His plan to unfold.
- ❖ Trust His \_\_\_\_\_.

## SMALL GROUP STUDY QUESTIONS

### PRAYER

- 1). What does Genesis 16:1-16 teach us about God?
- 2). Genesis 16:3 tells us that 10 years had passed from the time that God gave the promise of a child to Abram and left Haran (See Genesis 12:4), until the incident with Hagar. 10 years is a long time to wait (*the reality is that they actually waited 25 years until the child of promise was born*). No wonder Abram & Sarai became 'impatient' and took matters into their own hands. How do you handle 'waiting' for God's plan to unfold? What would you do if God did not answer you right away? Why are we so 'impatient' and expect God to act now?
- 3). In Genesis 12:10-20 Abram traveled to Egypt when he should have stayed in the land of promise (12:4-9). His trip to Egypt was because of the famine in the land and his failure to trust God to provide for him. While in Egypt he acquired many possessions (12:16), including 'maidservants.' How does Genesis 16:1 connect with Genesis 12:16? Talk about the failure to trust God and how this can have an *ongoing* impact in our lives.
- 4). Take time to talk about the results of our failure to trust God and take matters into our own hands. What were the results of Abram and Sarai taking matters into their own hands (See Genesis 16:4-16)?
- 5). Abram & Sarai allowed the customs of their day to influence them into using Hagar to bring forth a child for Sarai. What should Abram and Sarai have done? What is God's plan for marriage (Genesis 2:18-25)?
- 6). When people point to the Patriarchs (men like Abram) in support of Polygamy (the practice of taking many wives), what important details are they missing from the story that might change the way they think about the subject?
- 7). Genesis 16:11-12 introduces Ishmael, the father of the Arab nations (See also Genesis 25:12-18). In light of Genesis 16:11-12, will there ever be peace in the Middle East? If so, how will that peace come about?

### PRAYER

**HEROES OF THE FAITH: Lessons From the Lives of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob & Joseph**  
**Today's Message:** "Taking Matters Into Your Own Hands" Genesis 15-16  
01.18.09 / SMC / Pastor Cory Anderson

## INTRODUCTION:

### 1. I've Got A \_\_\_\_\_ I Can't Fix.

**GENESIS 11:30:** "Now Sarai was barren; she had no children."

**GENESIS 16:1:** "Now Sarai, Abram's wife, had borne him no children."

### 2. I've Been Given A \_\_\_\_\_ Only God Can Fulfill.

**GENESIS 12:2:** "I will make you into a great nation and I will bless you."

**GENESIS 12:7:** "The Lord appeared to Abram and said, 'To your offspring I will give this land.'"

**GENESIS 13:15-16:** "All the land that you see I will give to you and your offspring forever.<sup>16</sup> I will make your offspring like the dust of the earth, so that if anyone could count the dust, then your offspring could be counted."

**KEY QUESTION:** *What do you do when your problems collide with God's promise?*

## Do you have FAITH or DOUBT?

**HEBREWS 11:1:** "Now faith is being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see."

### 3. I'm \_\_\_\_\_ and Looking for Assurance.

**GENESIS 15:2-6:** "But Abram said, "O Sovereign Lord, what can you give me since I remain childless and the one who will inherit my estate is Eliezer of Damascus?"<sup>3</sup> And Abram said, "You have given