

# Life Group Discussion Questions

Week 16: January 3-10

## Genesis 16

When we try to take a shortcut in life, it often causes more problems than it solves. This is especially true when we apply shortcuts to the plan God has for our lives. Abram and Sarai found this out the hard way in Genesis chapter 16. Since she was 75 years old and barren, Sarai assumed that God's promise must mean that Abram needed to have a child through another woman. She convinced Abram to take her maidservant, Hagar.

Derek Kidner writes,

It is ironical that after the heights attained in the last two chapters, Abram should capitulate to domestic pressure, pliant under his wife's planning and scolding, and quick to wash his hands of the outcome. Meanwhile the Lord, "with whom is no variableness," watches over the disregarded person and pattern, and "works His sovereign will."<sup>1</sup>

### Read Genesis 16:1-6

1. What does verse 1 tell us about Sarai and Hagar?

Hagar was probably one of the maidservants that Pharaoh gave to Abram in Genesis 12:16.

2. What plan did Sarai propose to Abram in verse 2?

Slavery, polygamy, and divorce were not a part of God's plan. However, these problems had become entrenched in the culture. For example, it was acceptable for a husband to divorce his wife if she was barren. Sarai's plan was another example of how people often tried to fix the problem of infertility. John Walton cites two marriage contracts from the Ancient Near East which required a barren wife to "provide the husband with a surrogate child-bearer."<sup>2</sup> As Christians living in an ungodly world, we should remember that just because something is legal or socially acceptable that doesn't mean that it is pleasing to God.

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<sup>1</sup> Derek Kidner, *Genesis* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2008), 137.

<sup>2</sup> John H. Walton, *The NIV Application Commentary Genesis* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Academic, 2001), 446.

3. How did Abram respond to Sarai's plan? (16:2)

4. How long had Abram been living in Canaan at this point? (16:3)

5. What did Sarai do with her maidservant, Hagar in verse 3?

6. What happened after Hagar conceived in verse 4?

Hagar was an Egyptian servant owned by the Pharaoh. She was given to Sarai and taken into a strange land. Then she was given to Abram and told that it was now her duty to produce a child for Abram and Sarai. She had been treated like an object with no rights or freedoms of her own. But the plan worked. She became pregnant, and suddenly Hagar was the woman blessed by God while Sarai was still barren. Proverbs 30:23 says that one of the things under which the earth trembles is "a maidservant who displaces her mistress." Hagar rubbed Sarai's nose in her new exalted position. "Hurt people, hurt people."

7. Why did Sarai blame Abram for the problems in verse 5?

8. What actions did Abram take to solve the problems in verse 6?

Kent Hughes observes,

Logically Sarai was wrong to place all the blame on Abram. After all, it was her idea. But actually, she was right. He was the patriarch. He was the head of the house. God had spoken to him, not to her. He should never have allowed the situation. Abram was truly responsible for the "wrong" she was suffering... Abram should have sought God's wisdom in repentant prayer. Instead, he capitulated again to Mesopotamian social convention. "Behold, your servant is in your power," Abram said. "Do to her as you please" (v. 6a). He hid behind the conventions of the Code of Hammurabi (Law 146), which stipulates that if a concubine claims equality with her mistress because she bore children, her mistress may demote her to her former status.<sup>3</sup>

9. How did Sarai treat Hagar in verse 6?

<sup>3</sup> R. Kent Hughes, *Genesis* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2012), 240.

10. What did Hagar do in verse 6?

**Read Genesis 16:7-16**

11. Where did the Angel of the LORD find Hagar? (16:7)

12. What did the Angel of the LORD ask Hagar in verse 8?

13. What did Hagar say that she was doing? (16:8)

14. What did the Angel of the LORD tell Hagar to do in verse 9?

15. What promise did the Angel of the LORD give Hagar in verse 10?

16. What prophecy did the Angel of the LORD make about Hagar's child? (16:11-12)

17. What name did Hagar give to the LORD in verse 13?

18. What is the name of the well where this took place? (16:14)

Tremper Longman comments,

Hagar now reveals that she believes that the angel is none other than God himself when she names God the God who sees her, and then notes that she has seen God (“the One who sees me,” v. 13). This event gives name to the place since Beer Lahai Roi means “the well of the Living One who sees me.” God’s seeing implies his care here. He is not simply observing her from afar but taking action in order to save her.<sup>4</sup>

19. What did Abram name his first son? (16:15)

20. How old was Abram when Ishmael was born? (16:16)

21. What makes it difficult to trust God’s plan for our lives?

22. What responsibilities has God entrusted to you?

23. How has God reminded you of His love and care for you?

<sup>4</sup> Tremper Longman, *The Story of God Bible Commentary: Genesis* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Academic, 2016), 212.

**Sermon Notes 1/3/21**

**Sarai and Hagar**

**How should we respond to Genesis chapter 16?**

1. \_\_\_\_\_ in God’s plan.  
Genesis 16:3  
Proverbs 3:5-6
2. \_\_\_\_\_ our responsibility.  
Genesis 16:5  
1 Corinthians 15:58
3. \_\_\_\_\_ the Lord’s direction.  
Genesis 16:9  
Luke 9:23-24
4. \_\_\_\_\_ that God is with us.  
Genesis 16:13  
Hebrews 13:5-6

