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OPENING THOUGHT

Even though we would expect Abram's faith to be at an all time high after God's covenant with him, we instead find another episode of faithlessness. Because they are still without an offspring, Sarai decides to take matters into her own hands by having Abram impregnate her servant Hagar. The plan works, and an expected number of problems arise because of it. Hagar is snobby because she's pregnant and Sarai is not. Sarai abuses Hagar because she's covetous of her fertility. And Abram is sinfully passive throughout. Each person acts sinfully in this chapter.

We can easily divide the chapter into two parts. The first part (verses 1-6) focuses solely upon Abram, Sarai, and Hagar as they try to fix a problem that they believe God created. This, of course, results in them creating far more problems for themselves. The second part (verses 7-16) shows God's intervention. The best of human plans resulted in Hagar's suicidal and pregnant journey through the desert. God, however, appears to Hagar with grace and mercy, promising blessings to her and her offspring. May our study of God's love for an unwanted servant girl remind us of God's great love for us!

SUGGESTED VERSES FOR MEMORIZATION & MEDITATION

- So she called the name of the LORD who spoke to her, "You are God of seeing," for she said, "Truly here I have seen him who looks after me." (Genesis 16:13)
- But God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. (Romans 5:8)

READ VERSES 1-3 AND DISCUSS THE FOLLOWING

1. Hagar's Egyptian heritage likely means that she was a part of Pharaoh's gift to Abram in exchange for Sarai in chapter 12. Even though Abram was forgiven for his sin in Egypt, the earthly consequences still remain. Can you recall a time when your sin had far-reaching consequences? How has the LORD still shown you forgiveness even when the consequences do not seem to go away?
2. Sarai blamed God for her infertility and then formed her own culturally acceptable solution to problem. Have you ever done the same? Does cultural acceptance of an action determine whether it is sinful or not?

READ VERSE 4 AND DISCUSS THE FOLLOWING

3. God allows Sarai's plan to succeed, but Hagar then begins to belittle Sarai. Is it always best for God to give us what we want?

READ VERSES 5-6 AND DISCUSS THE FOLLOWING

4. Sarai and Hagar treated one another wrongly, but Abram simply did nothing. Is it possible to sin by not doing anything?

READ VERSES 7-12 AND DISCUSS THE FOLLOWING

5. God graciously appears to Hagar and promises her blessings, even though she was unwanted, hopeless, and alone. How is this a picture of our relationship with Christ?

6. God commands Hagar to return to Sarai and submit to her. How does this resemble repentance?

READ VERSES 13-16 AND DISCUSS THE FOLLOWING

7. The LORD reveals Himself to Hagar as a God who sees and hears. Why is important to know that our God hears and sees us?

ACTIONS TO CONSIDER

- Consider any sin in your life (even sin of omission) and repent of it in prayer to God.
- Prayerfully thank God for how He has rescued you from sin.