

AMITY BIBLE CHURCH

"To Know God and To Make Him Known"

SUNDAY BIBLE STUDY NOTES

— June 10, 2018 —

Pastor Leslie Smith

SERIES: Reaffirming the Biblical Foundation of the Family

SERMON: Co-Parenting with a Difficult Ex

TEXT: Genesis 16:1-10

Central Message:

Life is a series of choices. We choose what time we will get up, what we will eat, what clothes we will wear. We choose the programs we'll watch on television, the music we'll listen to, and the kind of car we'll drive. But for the most part, those decisions don't carry great consequences. However, there are other decisions... who we will marry, the job we will take, and the school we will attend that have more far-reaching consequences. We choose our friends. We choose what we will feed our mind. We choose how we will respond to difficult times. Each of these choices has far-reaching consequences.

In Genesis 16, we have the record of a decision that Abram and Sarai made that would have a great effect on their marriage and an even greater effect on the world in which we live. It was a bad decision, but if we had been in their shoes, it may have been the same decision we would have made.

We look at their situation and we do so in order to learn from their mistakes. We want to gain some positive principles so we can make better choices. Four principles emerge from the text that I would like to consider.

The Summary Statement for the Text

When we give in to our anxiety and assume that when God delays to meet our needs, it because He is unable to do so, we can be tempted to help God resolve the situation, but God does not need our help.

The Key Take-Away for the Lesson

Our choices have far-reaching consequences for ourselves and for others.

Principle #1: Don't underestimate the power or ability of God.

Genesis 16:1-2

"Now Sarai, Abrams wife, had borne him no children, and she had an Egyptian maid whose name was Hagar." "So Sarai said to Abram, 'Now behold, the Lord has prevented me from bearing children.'...Please go in to my maid; perhaps I will obtain a child through her.' And Abram listened to the voice of Sarai. "

God told Abram to leave his home and go to a strange place. If he obeyed, God promised that a great nation would come through him. They had been in the land for ten years and Sarai was barren...she had no children. Her anxiety was understandable but not acceptable.

God does not always move on a schedule that satisfies us. He may be telling us to wait. God tells singles to wait before they become sexually active. God tells couples in difficult marriages to wait...don't divorce just yet. God tells couples considering marriage to wait...wait until you are spiritually mature enough.

Sarai could not wait ...she saw God's delay as an indication that He was either unable or unwilling to give her a child.

When we judge God by our circumstances and we take matters into our own hands, that decision can have far-reaching consequences.

Principle #2: Trust God's timing. He has a purpose for every delay.

Gen. 16:2-3

"So Sarai said to Abram, 'Now behold, the Lord has prevented me from bearing children. ...Please go in to my maid; perhaps I will obtain a child through her.' And Abram listened to the voice of Sarai. " "After Abram had lived ten years in the land of Canaan, Abram's wife Sarai took Hagar the Egyptian, her maid, and gave her to her husband Abram as his wife."

Sarah and Abraham interpreted God's delay as inability. But God delays for many different reasons. Solomon wrote in Ecclesiastes, "there is a time for everything." And "he makes everything beautiful in its time."

- Sometimes God delays to make us holy
- Sometimes He delays to prepare us for a task
- Sometimes He delays to deal with some weakness
- Sometimes He delays to strengthen our faith
- Sometimes He delays for the benefit of those who are watching

God may be getting ready to do something incredible in your life...don't give in to your feelings...hold on to your faith. God's timing is perfect. Don't allow your pain or your impatience to cause you to make a decision that you will live to regret. God does not waste opportunities and He does not waste silence. When God is silent, that is not the time to panic.

Principle #3: Consider carefully the consequences of your choices.

Gen. 16:4-6

"He went in to Hagar, and she conceived; and when she saw that she had conceived, her mistress was despised in her sight" "And Sarai said to Abram, 'May the wrong done me be on you. I gave my maid into your arms, but when she saw

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that she had conceived, I was despised in her sight.’ May the Lord judge between you and me.” “But Abram said to Sarai, ‘Behold your maid is in your power; do to her what is good in your sight’. So Sarai treated her harshly, and she fled from her presence.”

Sarai suggested and Abram agreed that Hagar should become a “sister wife”. She never considered how she would feel watching her husband loving on another woman.... Choices!

When you choose to bring a blended family together, you will have to make some difficult decisions which could be made more difficult by a difficult ex. A married couple in a blended family must choose to make the marriage relationship the priority relationship...kids are second. Parents in a blended family must also accept that there are no step-parents and no step-children...there are just parents and children. “Blended Families” must avoid certain personal interactions between exes...the goal is to keep it professional!!! Adults in a “blended family” should avoid making deals with an ex that are not fully communicated and agreed to by all concerned.

The marriage of Abraham and Sarah was affected by Sarai’s choice. Every time Abraham was "with" Hagar, it wounded Sarah. It may have been her idea . . . but the thought of her husband being in the arms of another woman wounded her. And when Hagar became pregnant, Sarah felt she was overshadowed. The result is that Sarah gets mad at Abraham. She wants to know, "How could he do this to me?" Abraham of course is baffled. I'm sure things were very tense around the home of Abraham and Sarah. To ease the tension, Abraham abandons his responsibility and says, "Hey, do whatever you want. If you want to get rid of her, it’s fine."

Hagar feels she needs to leave. She can no longer stand the abuse that Sarah is heaping on her. Like most of us . . . when we aren't in a good mood . . .we take it out on others. Sarah was jealous and resentful towards Hagar and was making her

life miserable. The child they thought they had wanted was now heading to the wilderness. Can you imagine the turmoil Abraham was going through? Like it or not . . . the child Hagar carried was his.

There are worldwide consequences. Every day, we hear and read about consequences that resulted ultimately from this decision to "help God". Ishmael, the child born to Hagar and Abraham, became the father of the Arab peoples. The conflict which has existed between the Arabs and the Jews is a direct result of this foolish choice.

Principle #4: Remember that God gives comfort for every wounded heart.

Genesis 16:7-10

7 Now the angel of the Lord found her by a spring of water in the wilderness, by the spring on the way to Shur. 8 He said, "Hagar, Sarai's maid, where have you come from and where are you going?" And she said, "I am fleeing from the presence of my mistress Sarai." 9 Then the angel of the Lord said to her, "Return to your mistress, and submit yourself to her authority." 10 Moreover, the angel of the Lord said to her, "I will greatly multiply your descendants so that they will be too many to count."

Hagar had Abram's baby and ended up getting rolled under the bus. This is sounding way too familiar. One of the questions that I have never asked myself is why are difficult "exes" so difficult? Hagar did not ask to be brought to Canaan, and sleeping with Abram was not her idea. In many ways, she was the victim.

Some "exes" are disagreeable for the sake of being disagreeable. It is their disposition and temperament. But for others, the situation may be different. Maybe that difficult "ex" is simply a wounded heart that is lamenting the fact that the person they hoped would take them to the altar is taking someone else. Maybe the difficult "ex" is a lover that was scorned and is having a great deal of difficulty living with the knowledge that they were jilted.

There are several important lessons that we need to take away for this:

➤ **Lesson 1**

God's delay does not always mean denial and it never means disability.

➤ **Lesson 2**

God's timing is perfect, and He always keeps His promises.

➤ **Lesson 3**

God's allows you to make choices, but He expects you to accept the consequences.

➤ **Lesson 4**

God does not shield us from every hurt, but He comforts every wounded heart.