

The Cost of Indiscretion

Genesis 16:1-16

"We would reasonably think that the two-preceding faith-events in Abram's life, through which he was promised both a land and a people, would have steeled him against the slightest distrust in God. Remember that Abram's experience had been crowned by God's unliteral, unconditional ratification of his promise when he appeared to Abram in a flaming theophany and passed between the sundered pieces of animals—indicting that if he did not keep his word, he would become as those animals. Imagine the elevation that then coursed Abram's soul. His faith naturally soared off the charts. Surely this would render him impervious to distrust—we think. Now he would never fail to trust God—we think. Perpetual obedience would characterize Abram—we think.

How wrong we are! Genesis 16's story of Abram and two women, Sarai and Hagar, showcases falling faith and distrust and shocking expediencies. The result was the first marital triangle in biblical history. Here we have the multiplication of rejection, anger, hurt, jealousy, and vicious cruelty. Life complicated itself exponentially, and there was no resolution. The following is a warning to all children of faith. "No perfect feet walk the path of faith" (Barnhouse). As Paul would warn, "Let anyone who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall" (1 Cor. 10:12). Are you a person of faith? Then pay attention." Kent Hughes

- I. After reading Genesis 16, you kind of want to go up to Abram, hit him on the forehead and say, "*What were you thinking?*" The way the Lord had been working in Abram's life in such specific and powerful ways seems to have been totally ignored. Was this another test of his faith? Was it Satan's attempt to thwart the bloodline of Christ? Perhaps both! What causes someone to do stupid and mindless things that make no sense at all, especially when they should know better? Abram wasn't operating from the realm of ignorance. He wasn't acting out of a lack of knowledge, or from an infidel's perspective. He had been in the schoolhouse of faith for ten years or more. God had drawn him, established a relationship with him, and promised him an incredible life. He told him that he would birth a great nation. He also told him that from his seed, would come the Messiah through whom all nations would be blessed. God had proven himself faithful. Why wasn't that good enough? Abram and Sarai's disregard of God's promise speaks powerfully of the battle that wages against the flesh and the Spirit. It is a winnable battle, but only with a constant awareness of our need to submit to God's way every day. It's a lesson we must learn and take to heart.

Gen. 16:1-4

Gal. 5:17

Rom. 8:5-9

Rom. 8:12-15

II. There are many reasons why we don't submit to God's will as we should, either it's a lack of trust, or it could be that we simply don't want to. Usually there's a root cause, a root sin that we pander to, thinking we know best. It could be pride, or fear, or it could be an idol surreptitiously disguised as something good. Whatever the reason, the outcome or consequence of submitting to the desires of the heart over God's will never turn out well. We see this in how Abram and Sarai handled being childless. Abram in many ways is to blame. Like with Adam, he knew better, especially in what God did to show him His seriousness in following through with His promises to him. The result was devastating, and the sad part is that it could have all been avoided by simply resting on His Word. For our own spiritual wellbeing, we must take to heart Solomon's wise words when he wrote, *Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways submit to him, and he will make your paths straight* (Prov. 3:5-6)

Gen. 16:1-6
1 Cor. 10:12

III. What happened to Hagar was life changing in many ways. She had no rights as a slave, she had to submit to Sarai's commands, she didn't choose to sleep with Abram but was told to, and she had no control over getting pregnant. How she was treated was sinful and demeaning, so she ran to escape a hopeless situation unsure of what the future would mean for her. In her despair, God personally revealed himself to her to show her that Abram and Sarai's God, is a God who was not indifferent to her plight but was well aware of her need for grace and mercy. He drew her, revealed himself to her, and gave her promises and hope. Her response was not only one of joy and gratitude, but also one of obedience and trust. When you think about it, if it wasn't for God, where would we be? We owe everything to His faithfulness to us.

Gen. 16:7-16
Prov. 2:1-5

לֹא אֵל יֹאֵךְ רֹאִי, ro-ee', el roy, A God of seeing

be-ār' lakh·ah'ē rō·ē -- Beer-lahai-roi = "well of the Living One seeing me" (repeated twice in the Hebrew for emphasis)

Psalm 34:18 *The Lord is close to the brokenhearted and saves those who are crushed in spirit.*

2 Cor. 1:3-5 *Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort, 4 who comforts us in all our affliction, so that we may be able to comfort those who are in any affliction, with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God. 5 For as we share abundantly in Christ's sufferings, so through Christ we share abundantly in comfort too.*