



When we become **IMPATIENT** with God's promises, we go **OUTSIDE** of the will of God to help God. This is exactly what Sarah and Abraham did in **Genesis 16:1-4**.

How will you know if you're not operating in faith? You're using **HUMAN REASON** to manipulate the **SITUATION**. It may not make sense to us now, but more often than not, we go **OUTSIDE** of God's will to **ACCOMPLISH** God's will. God said to Sarah, "You'll have a child." But Sarah said to Abraham, "Let us get practical, I'm old. Just use Hagar, our slave. Maybe, that is how God wants us to have a child." Sometimes, when **LOGIC** operates, **FAITH** depreciates.

When you operate in faith, sometimes God allows you to wait for a long time. So, we say, "God is moving too slow. So, I think God needs my help to fulfill His promises." There is truth in the expression, "Do your **BEST** and God will do the **REST**." However, God will not go against His word, His will, and His law. God intended for each man to have one wife and each wife to have one husband. But Sarah pushed Abraham to use Hagar to have their children. It's just like we're thinking, "I'm ok to **SIN** so I can fulfill God's promises to me."

What happened to Sarah's compromise? Hagar despised Sarah when she got pregnant. Ishmael was born. **Galatians 4** lays down important principles if you desire to operate by faith. (**Galatians 4:21-23 ESV**)." What does that mean? Hagar is a slave woman. She bore the illegitimate child, the illegitimate approach. It is of the flesh. It's just like one of the guys wanted to have a male child but his wife can't give him one anymore so he went to another woman. When God makes a **PROMISE**, He doesn't want you to go to the **FLESH** to make it happen.

When you go to the flesh to help God out, you **DELAY** the promise. Did that happen to you? In your quiet time with God, as you read the Bible and pray, God gave you certain promises. But it's not happening. So, you step on other people's toes to make it happen. When you go to the flesh, **TROUBLE** often follows you.

By faith, Sarah received the ability to conceive. What happened between Sarah using a slave woman and Sarah having faith? Sarah said, "the Lord has prevented me from bearing children (**Genesis 17:15-18**)."

Hebrews 11:11 says, "By faith Sarah herself received power to conceive, even when she was past the age, since she considered him faithful who had promised (**ESV**)."

But you can't see faith in Sarah in **Genesis 18:9-15**. At the age of 90 years old, she has not yet conceived Isaac because Sarah has not yet exercised her faith. Our **ABILITY TO RECEIVE** God's promise is tied up to our **EXERCISING OF FAITH**. The reason Sarah laughed is because she thought that what God said is a joke.

There was another story that happened between Genesis 18 and 21. Abraham went to Abimelech and told Abimelech that Sarah was her sister. Since Abraham told Abimelech that Sarah was his sister, Abimelech decided to take Sarah and make her his wife or concubine. Then, Abimelech had a dream. God said to him, "Don't you dare touch Sarah for she is Abraham's wife.



If you do, you're a dead man." Abimelech said to God in the dream, "Wait a minute, Abraham told me that Sarah is his sister. In the integrity of my heart and the innocence of my hands I have done this."

Then something happened. **Genesis 20:17-18** - "17 Then Abraham prayed to God, and God healed Abimelech, and also healed his wife and female slaves so that they bore children. 18 For the Lord had closed all the wombs of the house of Abimelech because of Sarah, Abraham's wife (**ESV**)." When Abimelech took Sarah, God closed the wombs of all the women in Abimelech's kingdom and wouldn't let anybody get pregnant until Sarah was released. Abraham and Sarah saw the power of God destroying Sodom and Gomorrah. Abraham and Sarah saw the power of God to close wombs and open wombs. So, God was saying to Abraham and Sarah, "Why are you laughing? What's so funny? Is anything too hard for the Lord?"

If God can close all the wombs of women and open them when Sarah was released, the Lord can also open one womb, the womb of Sarah. In other words, God revealed His power to Abraham and Sarah. However, the **REVELATION** of God's **POWER** will not become our **BLESSING** until we decided to **MOVE IN FAITH**. Sarah did not receive Isaac if she did not decide to move in faith. When we decide to operate in **FAITH**, our circumstances will **CHANGE**. God allows us to enter into **PROBLEMS**, to enter into **HOPELESS** situations, without changing the scenario, so that we get to see Him as God.

When we're out of alignment with God, we're blocking our miracle from God. Faith is what you do and not how you feel or what you think. What is your **ACT OF FAITH**? **ACT** on your faith and see the **POWER** of faith come in action.

GROW:
Application Questions:

1. What lesson do you hope to remember from this message about Sarah? (the waiting on God part versus doing it my way)? What do you hope to develop in your character right now?
2. Which of God's promises do you regularly remember? How do God's promises impact your daily life?
3. Many times, we try to solve our problems without seeking God in our lives. Can you describe a time in your life, or in the life of someone you, know when not seeking the counsel of the Lord back fired on you or others?

PRAY FOR EACH OTHER IN YOUR GROUP

WARM-UP

"God seems cruel." For someone who had waited for many years to have a child, the waiting part must have been one of the most difficult things to bear. Why did God make Sarah wait too long? What did God want from Abraham and Sarah? They packed all of their things, left their country to go to a place God said, "I will show you." And this "wait-decades-for-a-child" test was simply too much for Sarah. If you were Sarah, would you wait for God's promise or give up and abandon it?

ONE BIG IDEA

Our **ABILITY TO RECEIVE** God's promise is tied up to our **EXERCISING OF FAITH**.

STUDY (Hebrews 11:11-12 ESV)

"11 By faith Sarah herself received power to conceive, even when she was past the age, since she considered him faithful who had promised. 12 Therefore from one man, and him as good as dead, were born descendants as many as the stars of heaven and as many as the innumerable grains of sand by the seashore."

LEARN

God had made a promise 5 times to Abraham and Sarah that they would have a child and that they would be fathers and mothers of many nations (**Genesis 15:5-6**). There was doubt in the heart of Sarah when she heard these words from God. She didn't have the ability to have children because of old age. Time was not on her side.

Learn from this: don't let the **FACTS** get into your **FAITH**. If you're living on **FACTS**, you're living on **SIGHT**. And if you're living by **SIGHT**, you're not living by **FAITH**. And if you're not living by **FAITH**, you're not pleasing God. When it seems that God is not working things for us based on His word and promises, our tendency is to **MANIPULATE** the situation. We force it to happen.