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## Sarah & Hagar

### Waiting for God to Act

**Genesis 16; 18:1-15**

Do you ever think God needs a little help in keeping his promises? When time passes without answers, the temptation is to take matters into our own hands. It's one thing to believe God answers our prayers and keeps his word; it's another thing to wait for him. Waiting is hard. Believing while waiting is harder still.

GROUP DISCUSSION. Proverbs 13:12 says, "Hope deferred makes the heart sick, but a longing fulfilled is a tree of life." Recall ways in which you have found this proverb to be true in your own life. When is waiting hard, and when is it easy? What does that tell about the human heart?

PERSONAL REFLECTION. How do you react when your prayers go unanswered?

God had made a promise to Abraham and Sarah. He said he would bless the whole world through the child he would give them. At first they waited eagerly. But after years of waiting their faith began to waver. Would God keep his promise? Should they take matters into their own hands? God's timetable is often very different from our own. *Read Genesis 16.*

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1. Over a period of two decades God repeated his promise to make a great nation out of Abram's offspring. As the years went by and no child was conceived, how do you think Sarai felt about herself?

2. When Sarai suggested Hagar as a substitute (surrogate) mother, she was following a custom acceptable in her culture. At what point does she regret this decision (16:4-5)?

3. Notice how Sarai blames Abram in verse 5. Why do we want to blame others for our bad decisions?

4. What does Hagar learn about God in her personal struggles over this pregnancy (16:7-14)?

5. Remembering Hagar's position in Abram's household, what would it cost her to obey the angel's instruction?

6. Thirteen years later God again appears to Abram, reminds him of his promise and changes his name to Abraham and Sarai's to Sarah (17:5, 15). *Read Genesis 18:1-15.* To what lengths does God go to demonstrate to Abraham and Sarah the certainty of his promise?

How do you think Abraham and Sarah felt about God after he took these actions?

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7. What does the Lord seem to know about Sarah (18:10-15)?

What did Sarah need to learn about the Lord?

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8. Is God's knowledge of your private thoughts and fears a comfort or a distress to you? Explain.

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9. What choices and possible outcomes face you in times of waiting for God to act on your behalf?

*Ask God to teach you what it means to have a truly believing heart that waits for him.*

**Now or Later**

Compare Jeremiah 32:27, Luke 1:37 and Luke 18:27 with Genesis 18:14. Is anything in your life too hard for God?