

ChristChurch London Life Group Discussion Outline –05/08/07
Rhys Scott

Genesis 16 & 21

Life is sometimes complicated and painful. One person's bad decisions can have massive impact in others lives. The idea that we live in an island, and that our actions only have consequence for ourselves is a nonsense.

The story of Abram, Sarai, Hagar, Ishmael & Isaac is a family tragedy. Sarai and Abram's decision to have a child through Hagar brings years of pain to all involved.

We can learn some very important life lessons from what happens in this story:

1. Sarai, her faith at a low ebb, is frustrated and bitter that the promised son has not appeared. Ten years of waiting has taken its toll, and so she decides to take matters into her own hands and find a human solution for what was ultimately God's responsibility. Discuss the ramifications of her suggestion for Hagar, and for her marriage/family relationships.
2. Abram, instead of empathising with Sarai and then reminding her that God must act to fulfil God's promise, goes along with her suggestion. He doesn't take leadership in the situation, and so ends up being responsible for the destruction that results in his family. If we want to be Godly we will have to take responsibility for making Godly choices, rather than taking the easy option of going along with what people may sometimes suggest. In what ways can we grow in taking leadership and responsibility in the life situations we face from day to day?
3. Hagar was subjected to horrible injustice at the hands of Sarai and Abram. Yet, when she ran away, God still faced her with her responsibility to be Godly in the face of mistreatment. Are there situations that you face where it feels like you have been mistreated? How do you guard your heart and keep pure in these times?
4. Ishmael was rejected by his father, and the scars of that rejection would have been with him all the days of his life. Family breakdown can be the most bitter of pains. But God makes it clear in the passage that He remains with Ishmael. There may be people in the group who identify with this sense of rejection, and have experienced their family coming apart. God makes specific reference to Himself as the Father to the Fatherless. He is a God who desires to bless and heal those who have suffered human rejection. It may be appropriate to pray in small groups for people who identify with this, asking God to draw near to them, and praying that they would be able to open their hearts to him as their Father.