

**The Tree of Life is a weekly teaching summary.  
The Tree of Life for week ending 11/25/01.**

**Gen 16:1 Abram listens to the voice of Sarai**

We have been noting Sarai's recommendation to Abram and her human solution to life's problems in Gen 16:1-2, *"Now Sarai, Abram's 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 have sex with my female slave; perhaps I shall obtain children through her. And Abram listened to the voice of Sarai."*

*Verse 3 "And 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."*

In verse 4 after Abram has had sex with Hagar and remember the Hebrew, as we have seen, says that they had sex not once but over and over again, she conceived. Verse 4 goes on to say that Hagar now despises Sarai. Once Hagar becomes aware of her pregnancy, she becomes arrogant. She was the first woman to become pregnant from Abram and in her own estimation, Hagar thinks that she is a greater woman than Sarai and promotes herself to the mistress of the household.

Abram has forfeited his manhood by saying "yes" to his wife and now he becomes a boy caught between an arrogant woman and a jealous woman, all under the same roof. No man can play the field and fornicate without losing his manhood and this is about to happen to Abram. The interesting thing is that Abram was about one year away from having Isaac, his heir, all he had to do was to wait upon the Lord.

The lesson to all of us in this is not to try to solve the problems of life by using human solutions but instead to wait for the divine solutions. Satan, as the god of this world, is a liar and a deceiver and he promotes human viewpoint as the solutions to our problems in life, Joh 8:44. This is why the Lord told Isaiah to warn the people in Isa 55:6-11 *"to Seek the Lord while He may be found; Call upon Him while He is near. Let the wicked forsake his way, And the unrighteous man his thoughts; And let him return to the Lord, And He will have compassion on him; And to our God, For He will abundantly pardon. For My thoughts are not your thoughts, Neither are your ways My ways, declares the Lord. For {as} the heavens are higher than the earth, So are My ways higher than your ways, And My thoughts than your thoughts. For as the rain and the snow come down from heaven, And do not return there without watering the earth, And making it bear and sprout, And furnishing seed to the sower and bread to the eater; So shall My word be which goes forth from My mouth; It shall not return to Me empty, Without accomplishing what I desire, And without succeeding {in the matter} for which I sent it."*

Unfortunately many believers compromise any character and integrity they have, to try to solve their problems with human viewpoint and therefore human solutions.

Therefore, let's note some principles:

1. Sinful solutions only intensify the problem rather than solving the problem.

2. This fornication is going to complicate Abram's life for many years and is going to cause a great deal of suffering to Sarah, Hagar, Abram and the children involved, Isaac and Ishmael.
3. Even though Sarah approved and sponsored the fornication, it didn't make it right. It made it easy for Abram but it didn't make it right. Abram should have stayed with doctrine and rejected his wife's so called "solution to their marital problems" thereby protecting their love and their future happiness.
4. The greatest protection a man can offer a woman is a commitment and faithfulness to that woman. And Abram was being unfaithful even though Sarah was the sponsor.
5. Just because a woman has an occasional lapse into imbecility, that does not excuse the man from protecting his loving imbecilic spouse.
6. Sex was not designed for problem solving, it was designed for right man and right woman to enjoy recreation. Sex is a blessing from God and blessings from God are not problem solvers. Problems are solved with doctrine.

So, back in Gen 16, the problem here is two-fold.

Sarai was emotional about the problem, but her emotional solution is related to ignorance. Here's where an intelligent woman becomes stupid.

This is why she said in GEN 16:2 ***“Please go have sex with my slave girl; perhaps I shall obtain children through her.”***

The second problem is that Abram listened to the voice of Sarai, in Gen 16:2.

Now, I want to note a few principles of introduction to the rest of this chapter.

Human solutions are no solutions. Divine solutions are the only solutions.

Good sincere motives do not justify wrong actions.

She is doing something that she knows is wrong but she's doing it anyway because she loves her man. Now this is the other side of the coin. She did love Abram.

She is never criticized for lack of love. She is only criticized for her stupidity and her dumb suggestions and her senseless actions, trying to rush the timing of God.

A woman should never feel that she has to compromise her godly convictions to please the man she loves. Furthermore, if the man she loves truly loves her, he wouldn't want her to. He wouldn't want her to compromise her relationship with God for the sake of pleasing him.

Abram's affair with Hagar was certainly not going to make Sarai happy.

She is not happy about this at all, that becomes obvious later on in the passage.

At this time Sarai loved her man more than she loved the Lord and therefore, she ignored the promise of God, she rejected Bible doctrine, which brings us back to the principle; human viewpoint cannot solve the problems of life.

She suggested a sinful means to accomplish God's end. She's mixing human viewpoint with divine viewpoint. God's end is an heir. The means is going to be God opening up the womb of Sarai, not the womb of Hagar.

Sarai ignored the attributes and character of God, the omnipotence and the fact that He has the power to open her womb as well as to close her womb.

God is waiting for her as He waits for all His children to develop some capacity to go with the fantastic blessings He has promised, and obviously at this time she's not ready.

She has stated that God closed her womb in verse 2. She recognizes that God has the power to close her womb, but she doesn't recognize that He has the power to open it.

Just like God can do anything in our life, Anything, no matter what the problem is.

Sarah will learn the lesson of Gen 18:14 ***“Is anything too difficult for the Lord?”***

And Mat 19:26 ***“With men this is impossible, but with God all things are possible”***

And Mar 9:23 ***“Jesus said All things are possible to him who believes.”***

And Luk 1:37 ***“For nothing will be impossible with God.”***

And Luk 18:27 ***“The things impossible with men are possible with God.”***

How many of God's people really believe those verses? Omnipotence closed the womb and can also open the womb, but the opening of the womb must be compatible with the key to all blessing for the believer, the Justice of God.

The principle then, this act of omnipotence must be compatible with divine justice.

Neither Abram nor Sarai has yet adjusted to the justice of God regarding their heir.

The justice of God is the issue, omnipotence is not. God has the power to open her womb at any time but until the justice of God gives the green light the womb is going to be closed. God's timing is perfect. Sarai's timing is not only imperfect but sinful and blasphemous. However, the elapse of time has not destroyed the faithfulness of God in keeping His word. Ecc 3:11 ***“He has made everything appropriate in its time.”***

There is another very important principle to be noted: When problems are solved in the wrong way, much greater problems are created. Sarai is going to solve the problem by giving her husband another sex partner, a slave, and in so doing, she will, among other things, destroy her own libido. Sex will be the means of bringing the heir of the new race into the world, and Sarai's sex with Abram is going to be the means of the birth of Isaac. But for the next 13 years the sex rapport between herself and Abram will be destroyed. Bitterness and jealousy is going to set in and affect the most important sexual apparatus of the human body - the soul.

In trying to solve the problem, Sarai will destroy the true means of solving the problem, the sexual relationship between her and Abram.

In Gen 16:4-6 we see the principle of reaping what they sowed.

What happens between Hagar and Abram will certainly affect their marriage, in fact, that's why adultery is one of the basis of divorce in Mat 5:32, 19:9, Luk 16:18, Mar 10:11-12. Adultery does not mean that the marriage must breakup, however, in some cases the innocent spouse does not have the ability to forgive the guilty spouse, therefore, divorce is permitted.

This is one of the reasons why Sarah will no longer have sex with Abram until God does something about it. Even though it was all her idea for Abram to fornicate with Hagar, she has now become jealous and can no longer function sexually in the marriage bed.

Gen 16:5 ***“And Sarai said to Abram, May the wrong done me be upon you. I gave my maid into your arms; but when she saw that she had conceived, I was despised in her sight. May the Lord judge between you and me.”***

Once she enters into jealousy it wipes out all of her normal responses to Abram. They have had a great sex life for fifty years and now the sex life is gone, wiped out by fornication.

This fornication will bring in the principle of illegitimate sex, which is man's sinful and evil distortion of what God has so graciously provided. The sacredness of marriage has invisible walls that isolate husband and wife in marriage and cause their relationship to be unique, those invisible walls are the sexual relationship.

It doesn't matter how you try to justify it, sex outside of marriage is always classified as a sin in the Bible, Lev 18; 20:10-23; Num 5:12-13; Deu 5:22-23, Col 3:5.

Sex is the monopoly of marriage, designed by God for the expression of unity, virtue, privacy, intimacy, and personal care for the other spouse.

No one can have sex outside of marriage without adverse consequences related to the law of volitional responsibility, 1Co 6:15-19.

The four spiritual mechanics, Filling of the Spirit, Metabolized doctrine circulating in the soul, Ten Problem Solving Devices and the power to execute the Pre-Designed Plan of God are the only ways to achieve recovery from this kind of situation.

God will have to take sex away from both Sarai and Abram then perform a miracle of bringing back their sexual abilities. He has to perform two miracles, He's going to have to bring back their sexual ability and then open up her womb. He will do all the work and as Paul said in 1Co 1:29 ***“that no flesh should glory before God.”***

Something is going to complicate the life of both Sarai and Abram for quite a while because Sarai sets aside Abram's authority by her proposal. When Abram says yes to this proposal he is demoted and Sarai is now the ruler of the house and she will become a very frustrated ruler. Damaged authority can only be corrected by the reassertion of proper authority.

Abram should be listening to doctrine, but instead, he's listening to his wife. The advice of friends, family, relatives, husbands or wives is never to supersede the advice of doctrine. When we learn to live our life as unto the Lord through doctrine, then we will never get caught in this advice trap.

Abram was led when he should have been leading. Consequently the authority structure of the household is ruined and problems are never solved by destroying authority. Sarai destroyed Abram's authority and complicated their lives and did not solve the problem.

Abram is about to complicate the problem further with what the Hebrew calls in Gen 16:12 ***“a wild ass of a man.”***

Jesus Christ told Hagar he will be a wild ass of a man. When Abram took Hagar as his mistress, he not only committed the sin of adultery, but he demoted Sarai to a slave below the slave, and at the same time promoted Sarai as a dictator over himself. The whole structure is shot, and this effects everything.

Human solution to the problems of life always causes greater loss than gain.

Divine solutions eliminate the lost factor and problems are not solved by destroying authority.

Gen 16:4-6 ***“And he kept on having sex with Hagar, and Hagar became pregnant; and when Hagar saw that she had become pregnant, her mistress [Sarai] was despised in her sight. And Sarai said to Abram, May the wrong done me be upon you. I gave my maid into your arms; but when she saw 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's human solution plans now begin to backfire as human solutions always do. , she wears the crown, while Abram and Hagar are her slaves. Everything she tried to accomplish in the energy of the flesh came back to haunt her. Sarai is going to discover that human solutions merely complicate her life and cannot provide happiness but instead the intensification of a miserable life.

Operation boomerang was taught by our Lord when He said such things as Mat 7:1-2, ***“Do not judge lest you be judged. For in the way you judge, you will be judged; and by your standard of measure, it will be measured to you.”***

In Gen 16, Sarai has destroyed Abram's authority by assuming his position as ruler of the household.

Abram and Sarai had what many would give almost anything for, the ideal sex life, the right man-right woman blessing. They have had marvelous relationship as an expression of the soul in coalescence, and they've had it for over 50 years.

But when you reject or neglect Bible doctrine, even for a short period of time, you become bored and familiar with the best things in life.

Doctrine is the capacity for blessing, including the area of sex when you lose the capacity for the blessing, capacity for life in this case, a great sex life for over a half-century, it's because you lose track of the source. God never gives a blessing until we have the capacity for the source.

Having capacity for the source gives us maximum enjoyment of the blessing.

Abram and Sarai, at this point, have neglected doctrine. Abram was bored with the perfect sex partner because he was minus doctrine and a change of scenery, a change of diet looked pretty good to him, so he acquiesces, and not only did he not have the good relationship that he had with Sarai, but he lost Sarai in the process.

We can never neglect doctrine, because when we do we always lose something that was more important than we realize, unfortunately we realize it often only after it's gone and a good many people spend their life grieving because they lost something important. So the authority to straighten out this mess is destroyed when Abram obeys his wife.

Abram had everything and because he neglected doctrine for a short time, he failed to realize what he had. By neglecting doctrine he lost his capacity and entered into about 14 years of the most disastrous part of his life.

There may be some who think they know exactly what they really want in life, it may be sex, money, a promotion, however, there are no short cuts, and nothing in life is worth the neglect of doctrine.

Many people spend their life grieving because they lost something important for "stuff" something they sold themselves out for.

One day Esau wanted some stuff, and so he sold his birthright, Gen 25:28-30 ***“Now Isaac loved Esau, because he had a taste for game; but Rebekah loved Jacob. And when Jacob had cooked stew, Esau came in from the field and he was famished; and Esau said to Jacob, Please let me have a swallow of that red stuff there, for I am famished. Therefore his name was called Edom.”***

Here is the kind of person Jacob was, it suddenly occurred to him that this would be a good opportunity of winning the right to be the spiritual leader of the family. So he figured that he would "take advantage" of his brother's weakness and rob the blessing from him.

Gen 25:31-32 ***“But Jacob said, First sell me your birthright. And Esau said, Behold, I am about to die; so of what use then is the birthright to me?”***

Esau was an unbeliever and yet hundreds and thousands of believer's today have this very same attitude. They allow their carnal and physical desires to drown out the conviction of the Holy Spirit and obscure the vision of divine blessings for the promise of temporal things.

They do not believe Mar 12:30 ***“and you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength.”***

Or Luk 10:27 ***“And he answered and said, You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your strength, and with all your mind; and your neighbor as yourself.”***

For the average believer, there is no thought of the duty he owes to God.....no sense of requirement because they do not love God with all of their strength!

This is evident even in the communion service.

There is disrespect toward that great event of the cross manifested in believers today who do not come and celebrate the Lord's supper when their local assembly gathers together for that purpose.

Many of God's people completely sell out and forget their requirements.

Like Esau they say "what use then is the birthright to me?"

Gen 25:32-33 ***“And Esau said, Behold, I am about to die; so of what use then is the birthright to me? And Jacob said, First swear to me; so he swore to him, and sold his birthright to Jacob.”***

We should not be too quick to blame Jacob, remember the warning that we are given in Heb 12:15-17 ***“See to it that no one comes short of the grace of God; that no root of bitterness springing up causes trouble, and by it many be defiled; that {there be} no immoral or godless person like Esau, who sold his own birthright for a {single} meal [a mess of pottage]. For you know that even afterwards, when he desired to inherit the blessing, he was rejected, for he found no place for repentance, though he sought for it with tears.”***

Before we think of condemning him for selling his birthright, we should look closer at home to ourselves. Think of how many believers, who although they can never lose their salvation have "sold out" and sold parts of their birthright away.

For at the moment of salvation, every believer is given fantastic blessings and assets and yet they are so involved in the devil's world they don't have time for their birthright with God.

They are given an eternal inheritance in Eph 1:14, and yet they ignore that inheritance. They have been given eternal life but through Negative Volition Toward Doctrine they have ignored the reality of living in that live in time. They have been reconciled to God but they ignore that relationship that comes from reconciliation.

They have been created a new spiritual species or a new creature but do not live in the new creation. They've been entered into the Royal family of God forever but refuse to gather together with the Royal family of God in time.

They've been given equal privilege and equal opportunity to glorify God but have ignored the divine opportunities and privileges. They've been given the universal priesthood of the believer but refuse to function as priests through their N.V.T.D.

They've been made a Royal ambassador for Christ at the moment of salvation but have sent a message to their king, TLJC, "I'm not interested in representing you in this foreign country called the world!"

They've been given the indwelling of God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit, and have ignored their presence.

They have been given the unique availability of divine power but insist on relying on their own disgusting, repulsive, sickening human power.

They've been given a portfolio of invisible assets but have sold out to the cosmic system.

They've been given the unique predesigned plan of God but insist on relying on their own plans.

They've been given a spiritual gift to build up and edify their local assembly but they are too busy in the devil's world to do so.

They have been given direct access to God but do not have time to approach Him.

They've been given problem solving devices but instead rely on human solutions.

The point is that before we think of condemning Esau for selling his birthright, we should look closer at ourselves to make sure that we have not been selling the privileges of our new birth to the cosmic system of Satan.

So many of God's people are so involved in the world system trying to become a success that they have entangled themselves with the affairs of this life.

As believers in The Lord Jesus Christ, we must never sell our wonderful heirship or birthright and our destiny for a mess of pottage.