

SERIES TITLE: OBSTACLES TO GOD'S PROMISES

PART 2: EASY SOLUTIONS

TEXT: GENESIS 16

INTRODUCTION.

As we continue studying through Genesis, we follow the life of Abraham, the great Patriarch. After receiving astounding promises from God, Abraham is faced with one obstacle after another. There is much we can learn from the man, because all of us deal with similar obstacles in our own lives.

DISCUSSION.

Share about a time you took a shortcut that didn't end well.

EXAMINATION.

- Vv.1-6 What negative behaviors or attitudes do you notice in Sarai, Abram, Hagar?
- What motivated Sarai to suggest this course of action?
- Vv.7-16 Is there any difference between the "angel of the LORD" and "the LORD"? Why or why not? (compare Exodus 3:1-6)
- Why is it significant that Hagar is not referred to by Abram or Sarai, but the Lord does call her by name?
- Why would God tell Hagar to do such a hard thing?
- At the end of the chapter, do you think that Abram was convinced that Ishmael was the son of promise? Why or why not?

APPLICATION.

- What are some characteristics of a humanly engineered solution?
- Faced with an obstacle, which question more naturally comes to mind and why?
 - a. "What does God want me to do?"
 - b. "What can I do?"

- How does God's concern for Hagar inform our concern for others, especially those who are outside our faith and culture?
- Why would God call us to endure the uncertain misery of today? What is the goal?
- Consider the following signs an easy solution is wrong. Can you find each one in the text?

5 Signs an Easy Solution Is Wrong:

1. It involves disobedience.
 2. It exploits other people.
 3. It avoids the hard work of endurance.
 4. It violates relational trust.
 5. It distances you from God.
- According to Hebrews 12:2-3, how does considering Jesus help us?
 - Fact: What is a key truth that you understood from this passage?
 - React: What did you feel?
 - Act: What are you going to do?