

Life Lesson 11
Abraham and Isaac
Text: Genesis 16-18, 21

Introduction

Have you ever wanted something *very* badly? So badly you could hardly stand it? Maybe you wanted a bicycle for your birthday, or you've begged and begged your parents to let you have a pet. When you *really* want something you think about it all the time, don't you? Sometimes you even dream about it. Have you ever wanted something that way? Then you can understand a little bit about what Abraham felt. He wanted a son more than anything in the world.

The Story

It's natural for people to want children. God gave us that desire. Abraham wanted a little boy to love and to be a companion. God had promised that he would have a son, and that son would be the first of the descendants of Abraham who would grow to be a great nation. He wanted a son to be his heir, and the start of that nation God had promised.

God had promised Abraham a son, not just once, but several times. Abraham believed God and waited for the son God had promised to send. Sometimes God doesn't follow our schedule. He knows when to give us what we need. He wasn't ready yet to give Abraham his promised son. Year after year passed, and Abraham and Sarah still didn't have their son. They began to grow old, and Sarah became very worried. She decided they had better help God out.

"We're getting too old to have children," Sarah said. "Why don't you take another wife. I'll adopt her child, and that way we'll have a son."

What a terrible plan! God meant for men to have just one wife and women to have just one husband. They are to be faithful to each other all their lives. To have more than one wife or

to divorce a husband or wife is a terrible thing! When people get married, they would be faithful to each other no matter what.

Abraham listened to Sarah, I'm sad to say, and took a servant girl named Hagar to be his wife. They had a son and named him Ishmael.

When we don't do things God's way, we can always expect trouble. And did Ishmael ever bring trouble! I'm sure Abraham loved him, but Sarah didn't. She didn't like Hagar either and was mean to her.

When Ishmael was a teenager, and Sarah was a very old lady, God again promised that she and Abraham would have a son. That son, not Ishmael, would be the promised son, the one who would be a great nation. It would be through the descendants of their son that God would send the Messiah, Jesus.

When Sarah heard that God again promised a son, she laughed. "Why, I'm an old lady now, old enough to be a grandmother. I'm past the age of bearing children. How can I have a child now?"

But nothing is too hard for God. He had promised Abraham and Sarah a son and He fulfilled His promise. When Abraham was one hundred years old and Sarah was ninety, God gave them a little boy. They named him Isaac. You can imagine how happy they were, and how much they loved this little miracle baby.

There were one or two people who weren't happy about Isaac, though. Can you guess who they might be? Hagar and Ishmael. This new baby took Ishmael's place as heir to Abraham. Ishmael was hateful to Isaac and made fun of him.

Sarah saw him teasing Isaac and decided he would have to go. She insisted that Abraham send him away. It made Abraham very sad to do it, but he sent Hagar and Ishmael out into the

desert alone.

God took care of Ishmael and made his descendants a great nation, too. They became the Arabic people who even today are enemies of the Jews, Isaac's descendants. For hundreds of years the two families have been fighting. They still are! Do you see how sin causes problems for a very long time?

The Life Lesson

Sometimes we don't understand why God plans things as He does. From our point of view things are all wrong, and are taking too much time. God sees things from a much bigger viewpoint. He knows what He is doing. We just need to trust Him!

Review Questions

What did Abraham want more than anything?

A son

What terrible plan did Sarah think up?

She suggested that Abraham take another wife so he could have a child.

What was the name of the second wife?

Hagar

What was the name of Abraham and Hagar's son?

Ishmael

Was Ishmael the son God promised to Abraham?

No.

How old were Abraham and Sarah when they had a baby?

Abraham was 100. Sarah was 90.

What is the name of Abraham and Sarah's son?

Isaac

Is anything too hard for God?

No, God can do anything.

What happened to Ishmael and Hagar?

Abraham sent them away.

What happens when we try to "help God?"

It's always a big mistake.

What long-lasting result came from Abraham's mistake?

Ishmael's family and Isaac's family are still fighting today.