

## Case Study: Rachel – Misplaced Energy

### Description

1 WHEN RACHEL saw that she bore Jacob no children, she envied her sister, and  
2 And Jacob became very angry with Rachel and he said, Am I in God's stead, Wh  
3 And she said, See here, take my maid Bilhah and have intercourse with her; a  
4 And she gave him Bilhah her maid as a [secondary] wife, and Jacob had interco  
5 And Bilhah became pregnant and bore Jacob a son.  
6 And Rachel said, God has judged and vindicated me, and has heard my plea and  
7 And Bilhah, Rachel's maid, conceived again and bore Jacob a second son.  
8 And Rachel said, With mighty wrestlings [in prayer to God] I have struggled

Genesis 30:1-8 AMPC

Rachel was the 2nd wife and lady of affection of Jacob. Jacob served Laban for a total of 20 years just to obtain Rachel's hand in marriage after experiencing love at first sight. The story of Rachel unfolds in a very interesting way in that she goes into marriage with Jacob as the love of his wife, but she's his 2nd wife as a result of her father Laban's scheme. Rachel has Jacob's heart, and her sister Leah's envy, but an inability to have children. In an ancient culture where being married to a wealthy man, and birthing healthy sons was the greatest honor a woman could have, Rachel was struggling in the main area that creates legacy. Leah in her limited interactions with Jacob has been blessed to birth multiple sons, while Rachel, who has Jacob's heart hasn't done so. Rachel cries out to God for the ability to birth a son, but it doesn't happen and she chooses to scheme. Now its important to note that the apple doesn't fall far from the tree with Rachel in that her father, Laban, schemed in her marriage arrangement with Jacob. Rachel chooses to provide her maidservant Bilhah as a wife to Jacob with the intent that any child Bilhah births will belong to Rachel and therefore fulfill her wifely duties/desire for producing a heir for Jacob. Let's transition from this point to see some spiritually detrimental errors from Rachel that we should be aware of in our lives.

- Take my maid Bilhah – How far have we fallen when we subject innocent bystanders or third parties to our brokenness? Rachel in her pain, brokenness, and anger with God and Leah, sacrificed Bilhah to gain a “son.” Now the example may seem extreme, but what do you value so much, and envy that others have that you are willing to violate, and disrespect others for? Rachel put her sibling rivalry, and vision of success or legacy in the place of God's power. When you are willing to manipulate your way into the blessing that you desire for yourself, it is no longer faith, or favor, it is witchcraft. Rachel felt that mishandling others could help her get what she wanted and place her above her sister. Could it have been that God delayed Rachel because he saw her heart?
- Give me children or else I'll die – Rachel saw Jacob as her source rather than God. She had place Jacob on a pedestal in her life that he could not live up to. Jacob was not in a place to produce children, he could participate with her in the activity that brings about children, but he couldn't guarantee success. When we look to other people to fill the throne of our heart that is meant for God, we set ourselves up for disappointment and bitterness, and we set others up for

failure, or put them in a position to abuse us. Rachel saw her ultimate contribution and purpose in what she produced for Jacob, and her own legacy, and with that mindset she created a trap for herself that she couldn't free herself or Jacob from.

- I have struggled with my sister and prevailed – After abusing Bilhah, shaming and almost idolizing Jacob, she still didn't understand God's sovereignty at this point. She was so blinded by envy, jealousy, and conceit that she couldn't see the casualties of her actions. Bilhah now had 2 children that she may not even have desired, she had to lay with Jacob possibly against her desires, 2 children embroiled in future sibling rivalries, and a likely a feeling of hopelessness in a toxic situation. Rachel missed all of the pain around her and viewed life through a lens of what she wanted with no regard of the collateral damage. Instead of waiting on God she contributed to the disfunction of others in a quest to achieve satisfaction.

## Reflection Time

Where do you focus your attention and priorities? How has your feelings about yourself and your own desires impacted the lives and wellness of others? Could you take a moment to seek God and his will for your life when you feel yourself begin to focus on others and what they have.

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