

## Case Study: Sarah – Misery Loves Company

### Description

1 NOW SARAI, Abram's wife, had borne him no children. She had an Egyptian maid  
2 And Sarai said to Abram, See here, the Lord has restrained me from bearing [  
3 So Sarai, Abram's wife, took Hagar her Egyptian maid, after Abram had dwelt  
4 And he had intercourse with Hagar, and she became pregnant; and when she saw  
5 Then Sarai said to Abram, May [the responsibility for] my wrong and deprivat  
6 But Abram said to Sarai, See here, your maid is in your hands and power; do

Genesis 16:1-6 AMPC

Sarah, or Sarai as she was named from birth was a very complex individual, much like everyone else in the Bible. I want to make it clear that this post is not a bashing of Sarai, or any other woman, rather it is an assessment of the ramifications of our actions when we move out of alignment with God.

To truly understand Sarai and gain some perspective on how she could have arrived to the point that we see in the text above, we need to revisit some major points in her life. Sarai, the wife of Abram had left Haran with Abram after God made a covenant with him and instructed him to leave his father's house (Genesis 12). Sarai was taken by Pharaoh and placed in his harem after Abram asked her to identify him as her brother out of his fear that Pharaoh would kill him for her (Genesis 12). Sarai observed Abram allow Lot to move around with them and increase in wealth because of his association with Abram, to the point where their wealth began to cause strife between them, even though God had never instructed him to bring Lot along (Genesis 13). When you consider these experiences, one could understand that Sarai had observed her husband conduct himself in ways that didn't line up with God's ordinances for his life, or in a way that protected her. It is perfectly plausible to believe that Sarai struggled with thoughts of whether her husband actually loved her given his ability to deny their love for his safety, or whether his love for Lot and/or children was more important to him than his love and appreciation for her. Understand that I am not saying these feelings are validation for her behavior in the text above, I am merely laying a foundation to show how she could have arrived at a place where she was willing to abuse another woman spiritually, mentally, emotionally, and physically.

- It may be that I can obtain children by her (v2) – Sarai at this point is attempting to exert control in her life at a point where she likely had never felt in control of anything. This moment is eerily similar to what Sarai experienced in Egypt when Abram made a decision that was in his best interest, that put her body at risk. As laid out earlier, Sarai had most likely felt like a passenger in her own life, and it was now where she had identified someone that appeared to be more vulnerable than she was, that she saw an opportunity to exert power. Sarai appeared to stepping in the place of God with trying to bring about a result and control a situation that she actually had no power over. Like Abram had done her in Haran, Egypt, and other areas of their relationship, Sarai took Hagar's voice and self-agency away from her in this moment. The belief that Sarai could take possession and credit for orchestrating God's plan, or for the birth of Hagar's child is in direct opposition to God's will for our lives.
- May my wrong and deprivation of rights be upon you (v5) – It takes two to tango, and situations

are typically the result of a series of events/decisions, however we must take accountability for our role in all outcomes. This comment by Sarai displays a clear lack of accountability for what she contributed to this situation. Abram's prior behavior had exposed Sarai to situations that negatively impacted her views of him, possibly her sense of worth, and maybe even her relationship with God. Abram was responsible for making the decision to lay with Hagar, and not standing strong in God's promise which would have enabled him to rebuke Sarai's proposal. In spite of all of that, Sarai must still realize she played a pivotal role in their arrival at this moment. It is never healthy or responsible to absolve one's responsibility in a situation, and seeing your problems solely through the viewpoint of how another individuals actions impacted you can cause you to never grow as you should.

- Sarai dealt severely with her, humbling and afflicting her, she [Hagar] fled from her (v6) – Sarai made a bad situation worse when she thought that she could fix what she had broken herself. After seeing the fruit of her decision, Sarai panicked; first blaming and expressing anger towards Abram, and then abusing Hagar whom she had previously exploited. Abram's weakness and lack of leadership caused him to place the burden on Sarai to solve the situation, and exposing Hagar to unjust treatment in an effort to shield himself. Rather than Sarai seeking God's help, and submitting to him, she chose to condemn Hagar, who was vulnerable to exploitation, in an effort to put herself back right with God. How awful is it for us as believers and messengers for God to abuse those whom God has entrusted to us. I believe that Sarai's disappointment, shame, regret, and loneliness caused her to "bleed" on Hagar, and traumatize her to the point where she had to separate herself from Sarai in order to breathe. Denying your errors and placing unrealistic burden on others doesn't correct your wrongs, or help their relationship with God, but rather it places you in a position to not hear from God or minister to others.

## Reflection Time

Are you carrying heavy burdens or weight from unmet expectations, disappointments, or previous wrongs that is negatively impacting your decisions? Have the honest conversation with God, and with those whom have wronged you if possible to address some of those issues. Take the opportunity to uplift and minister to those within your reach when it is within your power to do so. Honestly evaluate the condition of your heart and mind to see where you need help from God that can help you to gain victory over areas of you life that have afflicted you.

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**Author**  
guytonjj

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