

New Hope Missionary Baptist Church
Dr. Aaron L Chapman, Pastor
23455 W. Nine Mile Road
Southfield MI. 48033
Phone: (248)353-0675
Website: www.newhope-mbc.org
Participants' Handout

2026 Annual Theme: Hope in Motion

BIBLE STUDY September 9, 2026

September 2026 Theme: Conflict Resolution

Lesson Subject : “Conflict Resolution” *Unit one: Abraham, Sarai, and Hagar*
Genesis 16:1-16 (Key Verse: vs.13)

Topics

- ❖ Scripture Reference
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Scripture Reference: Genesis 16:1-16 New American Standard Bible

16 ¹Now Sarai, Abram's wife, had not borne him a child, but she had an Egyptian slave woman whose name was Hagar. ² So Sarai said to Abram, "See now, the Lord has prevented me from bearing *children*. Please have relations with my slave woman; perhaps I will obtain children through her." And Abram listened to the voice of Sarai. ³ And so after Abram had lived ten years in the land of Canaan, Abram's wife Sarai took Hagar the Egyptian, her slave woman, and gave her to her husband Abram as his wife. ⁴ Then he had relations with Hagar, and she conceived; and when *Hagar* became aware that she had conceived, her mistress was insignificant in her sight. ⁵ So Sarai said to Abram, "May the wrong done to me be upon you! I put my slave woman into your arms, but when she saw that she had

conceived, I was insignificant in her sight. May the Lord judge between you and me.”⁶ But Abram said to Sarai, “Look, your slave woman is in your power; do to her what is good in your sight.” So Sarai treated her harshly, and she fled from her presence.

⁷ Now the angel of the Lord found her by a spring of water in the wilderness, by the spring on the way to Shur. ⁸ He said, “Hagar, Sarai’s slave woman, from where have you come, and where are you going?” And she said, “I am fleeing from the presence of my mistress Sarai.” ⁹ So the angel of the Lord said to her, “Return to your mistress, and submit to her authority.” ¹⁰ The angel of the Lord also said to her, “I will greatly multiply your descendants so that they will be too many to count.” ¹¹ The angel of the Lord said to her further,

“Behold, you are pregnant,
And you will give birth to a son;
And you shall name him Ishmael,
Because the Lord has heard your affliction.

¹² But he will be a wild donkey of a man;
His hand *will be* against everyone,
And everyone’s hand *will be* against him;
And he will live in defiance of all his brothers.”

¹³ Then she called the name of the Lord who spoke to her, “You are a God who sees me”; for she said, “Have I even seen *Him* here *and lived* after He saw me?” ¹⁴ Therefore the well was called Beer-lahai-roi; behold, it is between Kadesh and Bered. ¹⁵ So Hagar bore a son to Abram; and Abram named his son, to whom Hagar gave birth, Ishmael. ¹⁶ Abram was eighty-six years old when Hagar bore Ishmael to him.

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

Question 1: What affect does conflict have on you?

Question 2: What price does a person possibly have to pay for handling conflict in an inappropriate manner?

THE BOOK OF GENESIS OUTLINED

The book of Genesis has been classified as the book of beginnings or origins. Genesis gives us a very in-depth description of the beginning of creation which includes humanity other creatures like animals on the sea and land, and of course the world itself with its various facets and the origins of Israel. God has placed his divine fingerprint all over creation.

Genesis is also a book of genealogies which is the beginning of families. It does not take those who study Genesis long to discover that Genesis is the beginning of sin. (Gen. 3) There is one more observation and that is Genesis is the beginning of the promised return to God after humanities depravity (corruption) because of man's rebellion against God.

The book of Genesis was dictated by God to Moses. Moses is credited as the author of the first five books of the Old Testament.

The book of Genesis derives its name from Greek translation the book of origin *biblos geneseos*. In Jewish tradition the book is called *Bereshit*, after the first word of the book which means in the beginning of.

In the ancient world as in the modern, the era of origins has a special authority--its formative events set the rules and conditions for all subsequent developments.

- The creation accounts Genesis 1:1-2:25
- The fall of man Genesis 3
- The flood stories in Genesis 6-9
- The Covenant with God Genesis 12
- The three wife-sister stories Genesis 12:10; Genesis 20-26

INTRODUCTORY/ CONTEXTUAL CLUES

As we explore the book of Genesis there are several important concepts in which we learn ranging from how we honor God through communing with him in harmony, to giving God our first fruits of our numerous blessings but it also gives us nourishing examples of how to properly handle conflict resolution.

What is Conflict or interpersonal Conflict? According to biblical sources Conflict comes from the Hebrew *milkhamah* (shoving, from conflict to antagonism) 168 times it means to do battle. and the Greek *agonizomai* contest or fight amid great strain an intensity of forces or an athletic contest a type of virility (strength or muscle). Conflict in the Bible includes violence and suffering. Therefore, among the more notable instances of interpersonal conflict it gives rise to hostilities. The book of proverbs characterizes those who stir up conflict as persons given to anger. **Proverb 15:18, Gossip Proverb 16:28 the Lord hates one who stirs up trouble among brothers Proverb 6:16.**

Here are interpersonal conflicts that are cited in scripture:

Cain and Abel **Gen. 4:1**

Abram and lot **Gen 13:8-18**

Jacob and Esau **Gen. 25- 27; 32-33**

Saul and David **1 Sam. 18-31**

Mary and Martha **Luke 10:38-42**

Jesus Disciples **Mark 9:33-37**

Paul and Barnabas **Acts 15:36-41**

The focus of our lesson today will be on the triangle conflict between Abram, Sarai, and Hagar which produced a vitriolic (bitterness) exchange between the interconnected parties in Genesis 16:1-16.

The Road Block? Barrenness !

One of the glaring points that Genesis presents after the fall of man in Gen. 3 is that we cannot accomplish things alone based upon human strength! If there is ever a case for the demand of God in human affairs it transpires in the life of Abraham in **Genesis chapter 11 and 12. Walter Brueggemann calls this the “intrusive word of God which makes a Genesis for this family” (Abraham and Sarai). Genesis 11:29-31**

In this calling of Abraham which is articulated as the most incredible announcement in the tradition of Israel.

Barrenness is in the way of human history. It is an effective metaphor for hopelessness. There is no foreseeable future. There is no human power to invent a future.

But barrenness is not only the condition of hopeless humanity. The marvel of biblical (truth) faith is that barrenness is the arena of God’s life-giving action.

This God does not depend on any potentiality in the one addressed. Abraham and Sarah were quite without potential.

With all of the Circumstances that surrounds Abraham and Sarai we must ask Can God be Trusted in the face of these seemingly insurmountable odds? **Genesis 15:4 and Genesis 16:1**

EXPLORE THE TEXT

Lessons from the Triangle of Conflict Abram, Sarai, and Hagar:

- **Voicing of Concerns**
- **View of the Circumstances**
- **Visitation in spite of the Conflict**

Voicing of the Concerns

Abram and Sarai up until this point were attempting to have the promise child but to no avail. During this time Sarai is having a critical conversation with Abram about the Lord disallowing her conception. Because of these challenges Sarai turns to the alternative and that is her maid servant Hagar. Hagar's name is interpreted "stranger" she is an Egyptian. Sarai gives Hagar over to become Abram's Concubine.

A concubine is a wife of a lower status than a primary wife- usually a slave.

Taking of a concubine dates back at least to the patriarchal period. Abram waits ten years according to the scriptures to take Hagar in. We should take note that this practice of taking on a concubine was a normal practice in Jewish tradition when the husband's wife was barren. There is an exception for Abram and Sarai. Abram and Sarai are not in an ordinary circumstance there has been given to them a promise by God. Divine intervention will be the exclusive way that Sarai will have children it will not come through a concubine or any other source. This chosen family's reliance must be on God and God alone. **Luke 1:37**

This is where the conflict is conceived in Genesis this is when human hands attempt to do only God work. This makes us take a closer look at the cause of interpersonal conflict which is **Sin. Roman 6:23, Roman 3:23; Galatians 5:19-20.**

View of Circumstances

There are four views that are very pronounced in this conflict narrative.

Abram's sight **Gen.16:1**

Hagar's sight **Gen.16:5**

Sarai's sight **Gen.16:6**

God's sight **Gen.16:13**

There are several eyes that are observing what is transpiring in this conflicting situation but the only sight that can make a lasting change for the better for Abram, Sarai and even Hagar is God's eye. The promise of God doesn't remove intervals of family conflict. This is in a patriarchal system, so he received special culpability(blame).

There is a conflict that starts from the way that Hagar views Sarah. The narrative reveals that Hagar discovers that after she has laid with Abram that she is pregnant and she looks at Sarah with contempt. The looking down on Sarai by Hagar makes the silent conflict boil over between the triangular relationship. Hagar attitude toward Sarai changes is significant. Hagar ties actions of contempt. Hagar somehow diminishes Sarai's status in view of her new places as mother to be of Abrams child.

This text must be place within the whole of Genesis, which reveals, in contemporary terms a highly dysfunctional family system in which individuals – both male and female caught up in the swirls of dissension beyond their own making or ability to control.

Visitation in spite of the Conflict

The Surprise in the narrative is the mysterious visitation of the presence of God. The text records that the Sarai says to Abram the Lord is preventing me from bearing children. The term that is used initially is Adonai. Adonai is interpreted *my Lord*.

Following the Conflict between Sarai and Hagar. Sarai turns to Abram to handle the conflict between Sarai and Hagar but Abram tells Sarai to feel free to handle the dissension on her own. Sarai treats Hagar harshly and she leaves for the wilderness. There is plenty of blame being thrown around in the same way as the relational triangle that took place in the Garden of Eden earlier in between Adam, Eve, and the serpent **Genesis 3:12-14**. We discover that Conflicts worsen when you have untamed emotions involved. **James 4:1-3**

After Hagar makes it to the Wilderness she has a visitation from God! The angel of the Lord reassures her (a foreigner) of her future. A wilderness is a place of preparation, but it is also a desolate place. This is where Sarai is located metaphorically she is in a season of preparation and her body is like a wilderness it appears to be dried up by this undesired barrenness.

Even in the midst of the wilderness Hagar is blessed to hear that God will bless her seed Ishmael with the same language that God spoke with Abraham in Genesis 12

but these statements aren't a transferal of the promise of Abram concerning a promised son. Sarai will bear a son after the temporary conflict passes away so that she can deal with the Providential conflict and that is she needs a resolution of her barrenness from God.

Hagar is overwhelmed by the grace extended to her by God she names God El Roi which is interpreted that "God sees"

Hagar is the first person in Genesis to be encountered by the angel of God , and the first woman to be given promises. In response, Hagar becomes the only person in the OT to name God. She engages in theological formulation, using her own experience with God and the knowledge of God gained thereby to shape new language for God.

As we encounter conflict God becomes Adonai and El Roi in our situation, he is my God and he is the God that sees even in the darkest situations and circumstances, God will lead us to the light!

CHECK FOR UNDERSTANDING

1. How did Abraham decided to deal with the Conflict

2. Where does Hagar run after the erupting circumstances between her and Sarai.

3. What does El Roi mean? Why is it important to our personal experience with God?

Life Application

What conflict(s) have you been involved in this week or for a while. How can you resolve the conflict in a godly manner? The conflicts that have taken place that you believe are off limits to change God's word reveals to us that God's eye is in every place, and he sees you! **Proverbs 15:3**