

CLEANSE YOUR MIND

Father, waiting on Your timing can be a challenging endeavor. Although You have given us Your Word, the gap between the promise and its fulfillment can become unbearable and appear impossible to bridge. Give me the courage to continue. Lord, allow me to look beyond my circumstances and keep my mind focused on Your promise. Teach me to walk by faith not by sight.

HEAR GOD'S WORD

One of the most widely known promises of the Bible is the one God gave to Abram and Sarai. Although they were far beyond the childbearing years God promised them a son. Since we know the end of the story we have a tendency to glamorize it without investigating the struggle they encountered in believing this promise.

In Genesis 16:2 Sarai says to Abram, *“Now behold, the Lord has prevented me from bearing children. Please go in to my maid; perhaps I shall obtain children through her.”* Sarai had to live with the constant reminder of her barrenness month after month. Her own emotional pain probably created an atmosphere of defeat in their home.

Although God had promised the couple a child, each day seemed to push this reality further and further beyond their reach. The distance separating the promise and its fulfillment appeared to be too great. Sarai's impatience with God finally reached a climax and as some might agree, rightly so. She allowed her impatience to weaken her faith, and resolved to take matters into her own hands.

ANALYZE YOUR STATUS

Is there a promise God is challenging you to accept by faith? Are you growing weary of waiting? Do you find yourself overcome by impatience each day the promise remains unfulfilled? Faith is an exercise of trust--trusting in what God has promised.

Impatience increases as our trust in God diminishes. It finds a foothold in our lives when we allow worldly circumstances to deny the validity of God's promise. In this case Sarai knew, even when God gave her and Abram the promise, that she was beyond childbearing years but to wait another twenty or more years would challenge anyone's patience. Some of us have a difficult time waiting a week, much less twenty-five years.

Live It!

1. How does impatience hinder us in our journey of faith?
2. When do you find it most difficult to believe God's promises?
3. What promise has God given you today to help you overcome impatience?

NEUTRALIZE YOUR OBSTACLES

How can we remain faithful as we face these pressing circumstances? We must begin by acknowledging that the most basic element of faith is trust. Where we place our trust determines how we will respond to our circumstances.

Genesis 16:2 says, *“And Abram listened to the voice of Sarai.”*

Sarai listened to the voice of logic and experience while Abram listened to the voice of his wife. Each of these voices took priority over God's promise, although God had specifically told Abram that the heir of his household would come from his body (Genesis 15:4).

For Sarai the logical path caused her to believe their heir would be from Abram's seed, not hers. She therefore assumed God expected her to take matters into her own hands and give her husband permission to sleep with her maid. The road which logic takes when challenged by an unfulfilled promise from God appears right in the beginning, but it always leads us away from God's best. Where you put your trust in the midst of life's circumstances, will determine the plans you accept and the actions you take.

GLEAN GOD'S PROMISES

The prophet Habakkuk received a word from God that remains practical and relevant for all who seek to patiently wait on the fulfillment of God's promises. *“For the vision is yet for the appointed time; it hastens toward the goal, and it will not fail. Though it tarries, wait for it; for it will certainly come, it will not delay”* (Habakkuk 2:3).

This promise to God's prophet is practical because it applies to every promise God has given. Just like He promised Jacob, God Himself will make sure all He has said comes to pass (Genesis 28:15). Only God's plans, not ours, will remain forever (Psalm 33:11). Although the challenges we face are just as intense as what Abram and Sarai encountered, we must learn from their mistakes. Trust God fully until He turns your faith to sight.

EXPEDITE YOUR DECISION

Impatience has robbed many people of the fulfillment of God's promises in their lives. If we are trusting by faith in a promise God has given, we must not let impatience steal His blessing. By taking our eyes off our circumstances we are able to focus more clearly on God who can do everything He has promised.

God's supernatural power transcends our logic and our finite understanding. Remember *“that with the Lord one day is as a thousand years and a thousand years as one day”* (2 Peter 3:8). Therefore, He is not concerned by our worldly deadlines. You might pray that the latter would be true in your situation!