Character Study: Abraham
Part 5 – Things Get Complicated
Genesis 16

What's happening?

● After another ten years passed, Abraham and Sarah still had no children. Convinced that she was unable to bear children, Sarah devised a plan. She gave her maidservant (Hagar) to Abraham to be his wife in hopes she would bring a baby into their family. *(16:1-3)*

● Before long, Hagar was with child, but this did not make things better. Hagar began to despise Sarah, and Sarah blamed this on Abraham. Sarah began mistreating Hagar so badly that Hagar decided to leave. *(16:4-6)*

● The Angel of the Lord saw Hagar's pain and visited her. He told her to return to Sarah and submit herself to her. He said that she would have a son, and that he should be named Ishmael. She was warned that this son would live in conflict with all the people around him. She was also promised that she would have many descendants one day. *(16:7-14)*

● Abraham was 68 years old when this son was born to him, and the boy was named Ishmael. *(16:15-16)*

What's God doing?

> God knew what He was doing, but because of Sarah's doubts, she decided she needed to step in and take matters into her own hands. Though her action was a customary way of adopting a son in that day, it was not what God desired. His plan would be accomplished as He intended and in His timing.

> God had compassion on Hagar since she was thrown into the middle of Sarah's problem and had to face the brunt of Sarah's frustration.

What's to learn?

→ When God asks us to do something, He desires obedience, but when God says He will do something, He desires trust.

→ Sarah could have avoided many problems had she understood that God did not need her manipulating things in order to accomplish what He was going to do. Such efforts to "help" God only complicate things. Rather than taking matters into our own hands, we must learn to surrender our concerns over to His sovereign hand. Only then are we able to witness the full glory of His will unfolding in the circumstances around us.