

LEADER'S GUIDE FOR A MATTER OF TIMING STUDY

Being on and adapting our lives to God's timing is not always an easy matter. We become impatient, feeling that what may have been promised should happen "sooner" rather than "later."

This study is to help individuals realize that part of the trusting process in our lives is the waiting for whatever God's time table is for those things we may be waiting for. We need to realize that our impatience sometimes is due to trying to bring God into our time table rather than we adapting and being patient for His.

In this study: using Sarai as the object of our study (along with Hagar). You are free to adapt this to others as examples from Scripture as well but this particular study focused only on Sarai (before she became Sarah).

1. Introduction:

Bring out: our time-tables are clocks, calendars and appointment books. We are going to take another view of this trying to change our "mind-set" to God's "mind-set."

- 2. Pass out the sheets and have the group fill in the first portion (which is more of a "self inventory." They may need to have concordances or topical concordances available for their use in looking up some Scriptures.**
- 3. When finished, have them come back as one group for a teaching/discussion time on Sarai.**

In your preparation and study time: these are some points you might bring out regarding Sarai:

- a. God does not need us to accomplish His plans**
- b. Sarai's name: means "princess"**
- c. She was barren: back in these times, this was the ultimate disgrace: they looked at it as a sign of divine disfavor. She probably felt shunned by God.**
- d. God's promise to Abram and Sarai was a test of faith for them (just as it will be for us)**
- e. In Sarai's impatience: she made a decision on what she could see...not what she could not see. In her weakness, she did not cry out for God's help.**
- f. The laws of the land at this time were that if a wife did not have a child within 2 years, they were to give a slave to the husband. This is an example of following man's laws...not God's (it was not God's law).**
- g. By giving Hagar, she would belong to Abram as a secondary wife: equal to Sarai**
- h. Sarai didn't realize her actions would not just give her a child, but would also give her a rival.**

i. We often don't think of our actions causing a ripple affect....down many generations as this did.

j. Sarai mistreated Hagar: her actions may have opened a door for jealousy. The meaning of the word mistreated here is Sarai used force, abused her. See how our impulsive actions may lead to further sin in our lives.

k. God carried out His promise to Abram (father of many nations) in spite of the impulsive actions of Sarai.

4. After your teaching/discussion time: use the "pondering the issue of timing" portion for further discussion and closing.

5. Close with prayer/ministry time as needed. If your group is larger, perhaps divide into smaller groups with a facilitator for each group to lead in any prayer needs regarding the issue of God's timing in their lives.

A MATTER OF TIMING

IN OUR SOCIETY, OUR TIMING IS GOVERNED BY:



Have you ever stopped to think about what God's "time piece" looks like? Have you ever seen a picture of one? He has never shown us His clock, calendar or appointment book. Why do you think that is?

Anytime we read about His timing, all we read are such phrases as:

- ✿ "The time is fulfilled."
- ✿ "The fullness of time."
- ✿ "The day of salvation."
- ✿ "In the last days"
- ✿ "The last day"

Ecclesiastes 3:1 says:

"To everything there is a season, and a time for every matter or purpose under heaven."

Timing is important to God. The secret to peace with God is to discover, accept and appreciate His timing. The danger can lie when during the "waiting process" we may begin to resent or doubt His timing which can then lead to despair, rebellion, or even moving ahead on our own.

When it comes to His timing: the proper perspective on our part should be as **Ecclesiastes 3:11** states: (what phrase is used regarding His timing?)

How do you look at God's timing?

We may have the tendency to refer to **“God’s timing”** when it comes to the “major” things in our lives. How can His timing be important in other ways and areas?

Do you look for His timing even in what we may classify as “smaller matters?” What may these be?

Has there been or is there now something regarding His timing you are waiting on?

Was there a promise or Word from Him in relation to what you are waiting on Him for? If so, what was it?

If it has not come about as yet, have you had the tendency to become discouraged or impatient in the waiting?

Have you ever (in the past or even presently) “jumped ahead” of Him in order to bring it about sooner? If so, have you seen anything occur as a result of your action(s)?

Looking in God’s Word, can you find a Scripture reference that He might (or even He may have already) used to point out your “running ahead of Him?”

In relation to something you may still be “waiting on” regarding His timing: As you again go to the Scriptures and re-commit yourself to His timing, did He lead you to any reference that would be an encouragement to you?

Look at Ephesians 5:16 and Colossians 4:5:

Key phrases: “buying up for yourselves”

“the seasonable time (whenever it occurs)”

The word “redeem” implies the preciousness of the opportune season as well as commanding the time as a master does his servant.

Is there anything about your life you feel might need to be changed in order to do this?

“EMBRACE EVERY OPPORTUNITY TO GLORIFY GOD!”

TEACHING TIME: LOOKING AT SARAI

LOOKING AT SARAI....RESULTS OF HER NOT WAITING FOR GOD’S TIMING
RUNNING AHEAD OF HIM AND A LESSON TO EACH OF US

Intro: God does not need us to accomplish His plans. (An added thought: however, He sometimes needs our cooperation and willingness)

Sarai: In the NIV – her name is mentioned 53 times

Meaning: princess (one source: argumentative)

Was barren: no children

4,000 years ago: barrenness was an ultimate disgrace: a sign of divine disfavor

She would have felt shunned by God

NOTES:

PONDERING THE ISSUE OF TIMING

4,000 years ago Sarai's biological clock was ticking louder by the hour. Our midlife matriarch feared she might never give birth. As we have seen, she took the matter into her own hands instead of trusting God to honor His word. Sarai soon learned a hard lesson (is there any other kind), demonstrating to us the value of waiting on the Lord. Our actions ahead of God's timing might be costly.

Look at: Psalm 27:14

What words of action do you see in this verse? Look at it in other translations as well.

In looking at Sarai as we did in regards to "timing," she ran out of patience. What do you feel you can personally learn from her in regards to your life and something you may be "waiting on?"

Often (when having to "wait" on God's timing), we tend to become impatient. The society we live in often attributes to our impatience. How can **James 5:16** help us if this is a struggle?

Any other thoughts as a result of this study? Anything the Lord may have spoken to you about that your group can pray with you concerning timing and waiting on God?