

The Single Parents

“1 Now Sarai, Abram's wife, had borne him no children. But she had an Egyptian maidservant named Hagar; 2 so she said to Abram, "The LORD has kept me from having children. Go, sleep with my maidservant; perhaps I can build a family through her." Abram agreed to what Sarai said. 3 So after Abram had been living in Canaan ten years, Sarai his wife took her Egyptian maidservant Hagar and gave her to her husband to be his wife. 4 He slept with Hagar, and she conceived. When she knew she was pregnant, she began to despise her mistress. 5 Then Sarai said to Abram, "You are responsible for the wrong I am suffering. I put my servant in your arms, and now that she knows she is pregnant, she despises me. May the LORD judge between you and me." 6 "Your servant is in your hands," Abram said. "Do with her whatever you think best." Then Sarai mistreated Hagar; so she fled from her. 7 The angel of the LORD found Hagar near a spring in the desert; it was the spring that is beside the road to Shur. 8 And he said, "Hagar, servant of Sarai, where have you come from, and where are you going?" "I'm running away from my mistress Sarai," she answered. 9 Then the angel of the LORD told her, "Go back to your mistress and submit to her." 10 The angel added, "I will so increase your descendants that they will be too numerous to count." 11 The angel of the LORD also said to her: "You are now with child and you will have a son. You shall name him Ishmael, for the LORD has heard of your misery. 12 He will be a wild donkey of a man; his hand will be against everyone and everyone's hand against him, and he will live in hostility toward all his brothers." 13 She gave this name to the LORD who spoke to her: "You are the God who sees me," for she said, "I have now seen the One who sees me." 14 That is why the well was called Beer Lahai Roi; it is still there, between Kadesh and Bered. 15 So Hagar bore Abram a son, and Abram gave the name Ishmael to the son she had borne. 16 Abram was eighty-six years old when Hagar bore him Ishmael.” (Genesis 16:1-16)

Abraham and Sarah thought they would build family and have children through the relation of Abraham with Hagar but that was not God's will.

Single parents situation will arise out of wrong principle of how to have family. Abraham was married, he was not eligible for a second wife, and Hagar was a victim of a wrong decision of Sarah and Abraham. Many are the women and the men who became victims of men or women who used them and they found themselves with children out of the realm of what the Word of God and what He ordained for the family.

Hagar might be happy for the first instance to have Abraham as a husband, especially when Hagar came to know that she is pregnant, ***“she began to despise her mistress.” (Genesis 16:4)*** That is the flesh work of Hagar, and she received the consequences of that, but it is also the short coming of Abraham and Sarah who allowed this second marriage to happen.

Sarah started to blame Abraham about the situation, ***“You are responsible for the wrong I am suffering.” (Genesis 16:5)*** Abraham should send Hagar away, but instead he handed over the responsibility of Hagar to his wife, ***“Your servant is in your hands,” Abram said. "Do with her whatever you think best.” (Genesis 16:6)***

“Then Sarai mistreated Hagar; so she fled from her.” (Genesis 16:6) Then the angel met Hagar and instructed her, ***“Go back to your mistress and submit to her.” (Genesis 16:9)***

Hagar was a servant and she needed to go back and work and submit to her master so she can feed herself. Hard work is God's provision for the single parents to provide for their children. The angel did not send Hagar back to Abraham but to Sarah for God will not approve adultery. Abraham is not the one to provide for Ishmael. God sent Hagar back to Sarah because he wanted Abraham to send her away himself, so it will be a clear teaching to each and every one. The meaning of 'Hagar', is 'flight,' or 'departed' or 'separated', and truly it needed to be sent away by Abraham.

God told Hagar that she will give birth to a son and she will name him Ishmael. The meaning of 'Ishmael', is God hears. Truly God hears the cry and the prayers of the single parents. That was the first encounter of Hagar with the Lord; Hagar met the Lord and seen Him, and, ***“She gave this name to the LORD who spoke to her: “You are the God who sees me,” for she said, “I have now seen the One who sees me. (Genesis 16:13)***

The crisis that Hagar passed through was a way for her to know God. She was mistreated from Sarah her master, and even when she ran away she was directed by the angel of God to send her back to Sarah her master. The various trials and the troubles that each and every single parents are passing through is a way for them to know Christ. Therefore these points are important for the church to declare to the single parents in order to be directed well of what they need to do. The church should be consistent in this teaching and to pray for the single parents to understand, that they will be blessed by the Lord as they obey the instructions and focus to take care of their own children.

God was gracious to Abraham, and He fulfilled what He promised, that Sarah will be conceived and gives birth to a son who will be a heir for Abraham. Truly after fifteen years when Sarah gave birth to Isaac and after he was weaned the following events happened: ***“8 The child grew and was weaned, and on the day Isaac was weaned Abraham held a great feast. 9 But Sarah saw that the son whom Hagar the Egyptian had borne to Abraham was mocking, 10 and she said to Abraham, "Get rid of that slave woman and her son, for that slave woman's son will never share in the inheritance with my son Isaac." 11 The matter distressed Abraham greatly because it concerned his son. 12 But God said to him, "Do not be so distressed about the boy and your maidservant. Listen to whatever Sarah tells you, because it is through Isaac that your offspring will be reckoned. 13 I will make the son of the maidservant into a nation also, because he is your offspring." 14 Early the next morning Abraham took some food and a skin of water and gave them to Hagar. He set them on her shoulders and then sent her off with the boy. She went on her way and wandered in the desert of Beersheba. 15 When the water in the skin was gone, she put the boy under one of the bushes. 16 Then she went off and sat down nearby, about a bowshot away, for she thought, "I cannot watch the boy die." And as she sat there nearby, she began to sob. 17 God heard the boy crying, and the angel of God called to Hagar from heaven and said to her, "What is the matter, Hagar? Do not be afraid; God has heard the boy crying as he lies there. 18 Lift the boy up and take him by the hand, for I will make him into a great nation." 19 Then God opened her eyes and she saw a well of water. So she went and filled the skin with water and gave the boy a drink. 20 God was with the boy as he grew up. He lived in the desert and became an archer. 21 While he was living in the Desert of Paran, his mother got a wife for him from Egypt.” (Genesis 21:8-21)*** The following points we can learn from the Scriptures:

1. God declared His will in full to Abraham to send Hagar away. God declares His will to the single parents to be separated from their adulterous relationship: God spoke to Abraham to send Hagar and her son away. God knew it is a painful thing for Abraham to do **“Do not be so distressed about the boy and your maidservant. Listen to whatever Sarah tells you, because it is through Isaac that your offspring will be reckoned.”** (Genesis 21:8-12) God wanted from Abraham to control his feelings and emotions and repent fully and correct the wrong thing he did against God’s will. His relationship with Hagar was adultery and He needed to send her away. God confirmed to Abraham that he needed to send away Hagar, and He confirm that Hagar she need to live as a single mother to care for her child. Single mother, single father or single parent is a way of God to correct of such sin of adultery. A single parent is the justice and the righteousness of God to raise up godly children and to preserve godly principles for the marital life. The church should have clear mind to deal with the single parent issue. We instruct them that they and their children will be blessed if they separate themselves from adulterous relationships and concentrate on their children. The Lord will bless their children if they do that.

2. God promised Abraham that HE will bless Ishmael and care for him. God declares His will that He will bless the children of the single parents if the adulterous relationship will be terminated: **“I will make the son of the maidservant into a nation also, because he is your offspring.”** (Genesis 21:13) As Abraham would obey God then the Lord will bless the child. Some they go with their emotions and will tell who will take care of the child and the mother, and keep the adulterous relationship. But that is not godly. You need to obey God and trust Him; you obey Him and do your part and He will do His part. God will care for the single parents and care for their children.

3. Hagar was tempted to escape her responsibility as a watchman and a caregiver for her child. The single parents will do try to escape their responsibility from watching their own children: **“14 Early the next morning Abraham took some food and a skin of water and gave them to Hagar. He set them on her shoulders and then sent her off with the boy. She went on her way and wandered in the desert of Beersheba. 15 When the water in the skin was gone, she put the boy under one of the bushes. 16 Then she went off and sat down nearby, about a bowshot away, for she thought, ‘I cannot watch the boy die.’ And as she sat there nearby, she began to sob.”** (Genesis 21:14-16) Hagar, her faith failed her (because being alone, in the desert, being hot weather, without water or provision, and no hope), and she thought that she cannot do, being a watchman over the boy when she said, **“I cannot watch the boy die.”** (Genesis 21:16) But later on she was able to overcome because God was with her. The same for the single parents today, they should not gives way to temptation and give up and go back to the previous life of sin, or to get remarry again. They will be able to make it and care for their children because God is with them. God will encourage the single parents as He encouraged Hagar. **“17 God heard the boy crying, and the angel of God called to Hagar from heaven and said to her, ‘What is the matter, Hagar? Do not be afraid; God has heard the boy crying as he lies there.’”** (Genesis 21:17) God told Hagar, **“What is the matter, Hagar? Do not be afraid; God has heard the boy crying as he lies there.”** The Lord encouraged her and God will continue to encourage the single parents to continue to do their ministry in caring for their children.

4. God confirmed to Hagar her ministry as watchman to care for her child. God will continue to insist on the single parents to care for their own children: **“Lift the boy up and**

take him by the hand, for I will make him into a great nation.” (Genesis 21:18) That was the second encounter of God with Hagar. God here instructed her and gave her once again her ministry to take care of the child herself and promised her that He will bless him; that He will make him a great nation. God did not advise her to go and marry because Abraham the father of her child is still alive. This we advice the single parents to care for their children, they can do it without having another partner and fall into adultery again. The Lord will help them and bless their children as long as they will obey God.

5. God provided for Hagar. God shall provide for the single parents: **“Then God opened her eyes and she saw a well of water. So she went and filled the skin with water and gave the boy a drink.”** (Genesis 21:19) God opened the eyes of Hagar as a watchman for her son Ishmael and showed her His provision to her as she will obey Him. In the same way God will open the eyes of the single parents as watchmen over their own children, and will enable them to see God’s provision for them and for their children.

6. As Abraham obeyed God, Hagar as well obeyed the voice of God. As one of the single parent will obey God, the other partner will be given chance to repent and follow God: Abraham’s obedient act helped Hagar to obey God. When Abraham obeyed God and sent Hagar away, God opened her eyes and she was able to see clearly the presence of God in her life and in the life of her child and obeyed Him.

7. God was with the boy and provided for Him. God will provide for the children of the single parents: **“God was with the boy as he grew up. He lived in the desert and became an archer.”** (Genesis 21:20) God made the child to grow and made him has a job and profession. God will provide for the children of the single parents beyond our imaginations. As they obey the Lord He will care for their children, make them grow, educate them, and give them a suitable profession to sustain their livings.

8. Hagar reaped her obedience - a good family of Ishmael. Obedient single parents, their children will have good families: **“While he was living in the Desert of Paran, his mother got a wife for him from Egypt.”** (Genesis 21:21) Hagar set a good example for her son about how family should be raised up, in a onetime marriage. When she did not remarry she had given good example to her son that he should marry once and marry a single lady and not a married one.

9. Have A Wholesome thinking: Sometime we might be tempted to think in a way contradict to God’s will and ask the following questions; “How about Abraham how he will feel about Ishmael?” or “How about Hagar how she will manage Ishmael without his father?” or “How she will live without a man?” or “How about Ishmael, will he not ask about his father?” The wholesome thinking is this: **“God is in full control and He will provide and take care as the single parents obey Him.”** The life of the single parents is not a suffering but a joy in God’s presence. It will be a life of suffering if they chose to disobey God.

10. Ishmael grew up knowing God’s will. The children of the single will be growing up knowing God’s Will: Ishmael did not meet his father to the rest of his life. He knew that it is God’s will that he will be taken care by his mother. Ishmael met his father again after he died, he buried him with his brother Isaac: **“8 Then Abraham breathed his last and died at a good old age, an old man and full of years; and he was gathered to his people. 9 His sons Isaac**

and Ishmael buried him in the cave of Machpelah near Mamre, in the field of Ephron son of Zohar the Hittite.” (Genesis 25:8-9) Ishmael was taught that he was born as a result of sin. His mother Hagar good example and his father Abraham good example taught him God’s principle about the family. Ishmael as mentioned in the bible is married once and had twelve children. ***“12 This is the account of Abraham's son Ishmael, whom Sarah's maidservant, Hagar the Egyptian, bore to Abraham. 13 These are the names of the sons of Ishmael, listed in the order of their birth: Nebaioth the firstborn of Ishmael, Kedar, Adbeel, Mibsam, 14 Mishma, Dumah, Massa, 15 Hadad, Tema, Jetur, Naphish and Kedemah. 16 These were the sons of Ishmael, and these are the names of the twelve tribal rulers according to their settlements and camps. 17 Altogether, Ishmael lived a hundred and thirty-seven years. He breathed his last and died, and he was gathered to his people.” (Genesis 25:12-17)*** Single parents will reap the fruit of their obedience to see good families for their children. Disobedient single parents who will refuse to separate from adulterous relationships or who will remarry while the parent of their children is still alive; their children will do the same and will have broken families. They will pass the sin and the same curse to their descendents. Obedient single parents who are willing to come out from adulterous relationships and abide with God’s call to remain single and care for their children will cut off the curse of adultery from descending to their children and will raise up obedient children who will know the principle of God’s word of what family is all about.

11. Let us learn from the Scripture: Someone may ask why we learn from the example of Hagar? My dear and beloved, First this is not only the example of Hagar, but as well as the good example of our father Abraham who sent Hagar away, Second this is the word of God and let us learn from the Scripture to abide and live godly life so we can reap the fruit, ***“4 For everything that was written in the past was written to teach us, so that through endurance and the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope. 5 May the God who gives endurance and encouragement give you a spirit of unity among yourselves as you follow Christ Jesus, 6 so that with one heart and mouth you may glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.” (Romans 15:4-6)***

My Prayer: Father God I come before you in the name of Jesus who died on the Cross for my sins and rose from the dead to give me eternal life. Lord I commit myself to abide with your word in doing your will in regard to the issue of single parents. Lord gives me the strength and the good health and the perseverance to achieve that. Lord, as I will obey you then fulfil your good promises to me and to my descendents, this all I ask and pray in Jesus name Amen. Lord bless us, enlarge our territory, let your hand be with us, and free us from harm so that we will not feel pain. May the grace of the Lord Jesus and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with us all in Jesus name, Amen.

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