

WEEKLY REFLECTION

There is something satisfying about a good DIY project. But while a "do-it-yourself" mindset is great for fixing things around the house, it leads to trouble when we apply it to the promises of God.

In Genesis 16, Abram and Sarai are exhausted from waiting for God's promised child. Like many of us, they grow anxious in the delay. In their impatience, Sarai suggests a DIY solution: Abram should take her servant, Hagar, and have a baby with her. They take matters into their own hands, following the cultural norms around them over God's design for marriage.

Taking shortcuts with God's plan always leaves a mess. Sarai wants a kid, but all she gets is conflict, contempt and jealousy. Her harshness eventually drives a pregnant Hagar to flee into the wilderness. When we act out of anxious fear rather than faith, we only create heartbreak and conflict.

Yet in the middle of the mess, God meets Hagar in the wilderness. He corrects her but also comforts her with the promise of numerous descendants and telling her to name her child Ishmael, meaning "God hears." In return, Hagar calls Him "The God Who Sees Me." For someone who felt used and disposable by Sarai, it was enough for her to know that God truly saw her affliction.

God doesn't need our striving or scheming to keep His word. To balance taking faithful action with waiting on the Lord, we can ask a few questions. Does our plan align with Scripture? Are we acting out of faith or out of fear? Are we praying and relying on God for the outcome?

If you are in a season of waiting, don't try to DIY the outcome. Look to Jesus. On the cross, He did the ultimate work for us so we don't have to do it ourselves. And if we can trust Him with our souls, we can stop striving, surrender our timelines, and trust the God who sees us.

QUESTIONS

QUESTION ONE:

What's a DIY project, recipe or life-hack you tried that ended up in disaster? Have you ever taken a shortcut that ended up taking twice as much time?

QUESTION TWO:

Sarai's plan to use Hagar was acceptable or even expected in their culture. What are some things in our culture that seem totally normal but are harmful to us? What are you tempted to do because everybody else is doing it also?

QUESTION THREE:

What are you currently waiting for? Are there places where you're tempted to take a shortcut and do it yourself?

Jesus obeyed the Father, even when it meant immense suffering. How does His surrender and His words, "it is finished," help us surrender our own timelines and trust Him rather than strive?

QUESTION FOUR:

How do you balance the call to trust God with the need to study for exams, apply for jobs, do work and take action? How do you figure out whether you're taking faithful action or anxiously trying to force an outcome?