



No.03 - Sarah – Nothing is too hard for God.

Genesis 11:29-23:20

Sarah is an amazing woman of great spiritual strength. There is more written about her in the Old and the New Testament than any other woman. Yet because of her husband being the Father of Faith, our attention is not fixed on her and we do not appreciate how strong she was.

It is said that behind every successful man there is a good woman and this is so true of Abraham and Sarah. She must have loved her husband very deeply in order to leave her family and friends in Ur of the Chaldeans,

a wealthy, prosperous port to become semi-nomads. At the young age of sixty five she was going to move to a new and unknown land. God had appeared to her husband and told him to get up and go to a place that He would show him. He was going to make Abraham great and through him the whole earth would be blessed. Their forefathers had worshipped the moon god Allah, but Sarah knew by the reaction of Abraham that he had found the One True God, so it was not difficult for her to obey.

They left their extended family but got side-tracked at Haran and settled, **Genesis 11:31**. But after the death of Terah they moved on to Canaan, **Genesis 12:5**. During their journey Abraham put a lot of emphasis on worship. At every important stopping spot he built an altar (**Genesis 12:7; Genesis 13:4**) as a point of communication with his Father. He was so grateful to God for safe travel but he also required direction for the next step. He was reminding himself of the covenant promises he had with God, and showing God that He was at the centre of his life and the chief priority in every situation.

The couple had to go to Egypt because of a famine. Isn't it amazing that when we follow God's direction to do something new everything seems to go wrong! We begin to wonder if we heard correctly or if we listened to the wrong voice. All the enthusiasm seems to drain away; we are not sure we can continue this way and many of us even turn back when the going gets too tough.

We have to learn to: - Keep focused on what God has said, **Psalms 119:105**.

Guard our joy, **Nehemiah 8:10**.

Give thanks in all circumstances, **1 Thessalonians 5:18**.

Guard our mouths at all times, **Psalms 141:3**.

Recognise where the problems have come from, **Ephesians 6:12**

See ourselves in the victory, **1 Corinthians 15:57**.

Abraham asked Sarah to say she was his sister, which was partly true as she was his half sister, Terah was their father, **Genesis 20:12**. Abraham looked at the situation with his 'tree of knowledge eyes' and panicked, fearing that he would not prosper but would die, **Genesis 12:11**. Sarah's response was total obedience and obviously she had great peace and trust in the God of Abraham as she still was radiant in her beauty. As Abraham continued to fear she was taken into Pharaoh's harem, **Genesis 12:15**.

But as Sarah had time to think she would perhaps have felt let down by Abraham;

.....why did he not believe the promise for a child?

.....why did he put me into such danger?

.....does he really love me?

.....how can I respect a man that says one thing and does another?

.....where is my security?

But the God in whom she has decided to put her **full** trust, not any person or possessions, intervenes and sends a plague (**Genesis 12:17**) and she is restored to her husband. You can imagine the remorse Abraham feels as they come back together, and the amazing excitement Sarah has as they share experiences and how God had protected her. Sarah does not condemn him, instead she finds her God totally dependable, and her marriage is strengthened because of her relationship with God. The situation is repeated by Abraham when Sarah is eighty-nine years old. This is Satan's 'last ditch effort' to bring God's Word to nothing one year before the birth of Isaac, They have moved to Gerar and Abraham told everyone 'Sarah is my sister', **Genesis 20:2**. He didn't even ask her this time, but again God protects Sarah from King Abimelech (**Genesis 20:6**) whom He warns in a dream.

What is this woman's beauty secret?

From the age of **sixty-five until ninety years of age** she is desirable enough to be noticed by kings and to be called into their harems, winning the beauty contests over teenagers!! The tree of Life gives the answer in **1 Peter 3:1-7** which says in three versions 'what matters is not your outer appearanceinstead....the unfading beauty of **a gentle and quiet spirit** which is of great worth in God's sight. Cultivate inner beauty, the gentle, gracious kind that God delights in. The holy women of old were beautiful before God that way, and were good, loyal wives to their husbands. Sarah, for instance, taking care of Abraham, would address him as "my dear husband." You'll be true daughters of Sarah if you do right and let nothing terrify you (not giving way to hysterical fears or letting anxieties unnerve you).' She concentrated on her relationship with God. We should not forget she didn't know Jesus, or have the Word, or the Holy Spirit. But as her inner person grew in trust and obedience and love for God, she had a quiet confidence that she was valuable to Him. This caused her outward appearance to radiate the gentleness and peace of her inner person, **Psalm 131:1-2**.

Sarah had one key that we need to note, and that is that she did not **idolise** her husband, **1 Corinthians 10:14**. She knew he had faults but loved him deeply anyway and accepted him 'warts and all' **1 Corinthians 13:4-8**. Don't make your husband an object of worship; give him love, honour, acceptance and admiration but don't put him on a pedestal. He will fall off it! We can also be very possessive and critical if we idolise our children. We need to give them the freedom to walk in self-control, just like God gives us. They learn from their own experiences rather than when we control them from our fears. If we take an example from Sarah we will see God protect us even when what our husband decides to do put not only us, but our children at risk.

Waiting...waiting...waiting!

Sarah received the promises that God gave Abraham that they would have a son, but as time went on, the mechanics of how God was going to actually do it baffled Sarah, so she decides that God needed help. She was repeating the same situation as Eve, by looking at knowledge and at the Word of Life and choosing knowledge over God's promises to Abraham. Abraham was drawn into the plan very easily (**Genesis 16:2-4**) and so Ishmael was born to Hagar. Immediately Sarah became very upset. Discontent came and peace went. Sarah immediately blamed Abraham instead of repenting herself. Sarah humiliated Hagar treating her very badly and was certainly not grateful for the future child. Like all 'flesh' decisions this caused Sarah and Abraham great heartache, and even has very far-reaching effects in the world today with the Arab-Israeli conflict still needing to be resolved. This just shows what destructive power can be unleashed when we walk away from God and work things out in our own strength.

"Is there anything too hard for God?" Genesis 18:14

Sarah knew that a life of faith in God also meant a life of patience. They are the 'power twins' to bring things to pass in the earth. Faith has to be anchored on the solid **foundation of the Word**, God's precious promises. Sarah looked too hard at her own body and at the impossibility of the situation and made a rash decision. We must learn from Sarah to come to the place of 'staggering not' at the promises of God then God can do what He has said He will do, **Genesis 21:1**. Faith is our victory that overcomes the world (**1 John 5:4**) and it is impossible to please God without it, **Hebrews 11:6**. Therefore it is vital for our growth in God to walk by faith and not by sight. There is no shortcut to growing our faith; it comes by hearing the Word. So we just keep speaking the Word of God out of our mouth 'giving praise and Glory to God' until faith comes **and then we receive** the promise, **Romans 4:18-24**.

ABC's of faith are '**A**' Agree with the Word of God; '**B**' Believe (cling to; rely on and trust in) the Word of God; and '**C**' Confess the Word of God, speak His promises out loud, **Romans 10:17**.

No.03 - Sarah - Nothing is too hard for God - Challenge Questions.

1. What sticks in your memory from the study on Eve?
2. **Read the notes about Sarah.** What part of Sarah's life was relevant to you?
3. Is there any characteristic in Sarah that you could apply to your relationships?
4. Is there anything you are being patient for, holding onto a promise from God, that you feel God needs some help? Share here if you want friends to pray for you in this situation.

Read Matthew 25:1-13 and 1 Thessalonians 4:16-5:6. The ten virgins.

Pray now that God will open my eyes to see amazing things in this Word and that as a result I will never be the same again, having a real sense of urgency that Jesus is coming very soon.

5. Which two groups were involved in the story that Jesus told? Who were they going out to meet? What did they take with them?
6. What difference was there in the two lots of lamps?
7. When nothing happened what did **everyone** do?
8. What problem did the foolish virgins have? What response did they get from the wise women?

