How to get back on the right path after making a bad decision. Just ask Abraham

**Experience restoration**

**Monday**

Read Genesis 16, Genesis 17:1,2

Think about the bad decisions you have made in your life. **Journalize** how you got back on the right path again.

**Tuesday**

Read Genesis 16:1, 2 Peter 3:9, Isaiah 48

Don’t focus on God’s unfulfilled promises. Keep focusing on the promises He has made to you. **Pray** about what you are missing in your life and **ask** God to fulfill His promise to you.

**Wednesday**

Read Genesis 16:1-5, 1 Samuel 13:7-14, Acts 5:27-29

You can’t afford to be influenced by others when their faith in God starts dwindling. **Meditate** on standing strong even if those around you are affected by your unanswered prayers.

**Thursday**

Read Genesis 16:6-12

**Journalize** the answer to these two Spirit-led questions: Where have you come from and where are you going? Don’t let your future be defined by your past.

**Friday**

Read Genesis 17:1-2, Genesis 6:9, Matthew 5:48, 1 Corinthians 11:1

How can you get back on the right path after making a bad decision? Live close to God (in His presence) and follow the leading of the Holy Spirit (be perfectly obedient). Spend some time **praying** today, **asking** God to help do these two simple things.

How to get back on the right path after making a bad decision. Just ask Abraham

Spirit-led people definitely make mistakes and bad decisions. How can we get back on right path again?

Genesis 16 New International Version (NIV)

Hagar and Ishmael

**16**Now Sarai, Abram’s wife, had borne him no children. But she had an Egyptian slave named Hagar; **2**so she said to Abram, “The Lord has kept me from having children. Go, sleep with my slave; 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 slave 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 slave in your arms, and now that she knows she is pregnant, she despises me. May the Lord judge between you and me.”

**6**“Your slave 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, slave 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 increase your descendants so much that they will be too numerous to count.”

**11**The angel of the Lord also said to her:

“You are now pregnant

    and you will give birth to a son.

You shall name him Ishmael,[a]

    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[b] 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[c] the One who sees me.” **14**That is why the well was called Beer Lahai Roi[d]; 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 17 New International Version (NIV)

The Covenant of Circumcision

**17**When Abram was ninety-nine years old, the Lord appeared to him and said, “I am God Almighty[a]; walk before me faithfully and be blameless. **2**Then I will make my covenant between me and you and will greatly increase your numbers.”

**Genesis 16**

**16**Now Sarai, Abram’s wife, had borne him no children. But she had an Egyptian slave named Hagar;

Neither what you don’t have, nor what you have, has an impact on God promise to you.

Don’t focus on God’s unfulfilled promises. Keep focusing on the promise He has made you.

**2 Peter 3:9 New International Version (NIV)**

**9**The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness. Instead he is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance.

He is patient with us as we are waiting on His promises because through the waiting process He is conforming us to His image.

God is the God of the suddenlies.

Isaiah 48:3 New International Version (NIV)

I foretold the former things long ago,

    my mouth announced them and I made them known;

    then suddenly I acted, and they came to pass.

**2**so she said to Abram, “The Lord has kept me from having children. Go, sleep with my slave; perhaps I can build a family through her.”

“Its God’s fault so I am going to take matters into my own hands.”

Man’s schemes and plans simply don’t work, and worse still they leave you with challenges you might have to deal with the rest of your life.

If you are spirit-led instead of self-led you get to avoid all these unnecessary complications.

**Proverbs 1:31 New International Version (NIV)**

**31**they will eat the fruit of their ways

    and be filled with the fruit of their schemes.

Abram agreed to what Sarai said.

One of the toughest things about waiting for God is when those who depend on you are affected by the unanswered prayer.

You can’t afford to be influenced by others when their faith in God starts dwindling. You stand strong even if those around you are affected.

Saul’s example

**1 Samuel 13:7**Some Hebrews even crossed the Jordan to the land of Gad and Gilead.

Saul remained at Gilgal, and all the troops with him were quaking with fear. **8**He waited seven days, the time set by Samuel; but Samuel did not come to Gilgal, and Saul’s men began to scatter. **9**So he said, “Bring me the burnt offering and the fellowship offerings.” And Saul offered up the burnt offering. **10**Just as he finished making the offering, Samuel arrived, and Saul went out to greet him.

**11**“What have you done?” asked Samuel.

Saul replied, “When I saw that the men were scattering, and that you did not come at the set time, and that the Philistines were assembling at Mikmash, **12**I thought, ‘Now the Philistines will come down against me at Gilgal, and I have not sought the Lord’s favor.’ So I felt compelled to offer the burnt offering.”

**13**“You have done a foolish thing,” Samuel said. “You have not kept the command the Lord your God gave you; if you had, he would have established your kingdom over Israel for all time. **14**But now your kingdom will not endure; the Lord has sought out a man after his own heart and appointed him ruler of his people, because you have not kept the Lord’s command.”

Apostles’ example

**Acts 5:27**The apostles were brought in and made to appear before the Sanhedrin to be questioned by the high priest. **28**“We gave you strict orders not to teach in this name,” he said. “Yet you have filled Jerusalem with your teaching and are determined to make us guilty of this man’s blood.”

**29**Peter and the other apostles replied: “We must obey God rather than human beings!

**3**So after Abram had been living in Canaan ten years, Sarai his wife took her Egyptian slave Hagar and gave her to her husband to be his wife. **4**He slept with Hagar, and she conceived.

After 10 years…after 10 years of doing the right thing, being Spirit-led, one self-led decision affected Abraham and Sarah the rest of their lives.

**But** you have to notice that one bad decision did not keep God’s promise from happening for them!  We all make bad decisions, but God’s promise is still in His queue for you.

Don’t think that you can stop God’s plan for your life. With God, you can run but you can’t hide…bad decisions, good decisions. God’s is working his will.  The decisions you make though can definitely increase the misery index in your life, so why not always make Spirit-led decisions??

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 slave in your arms, and now that she knows she is pregnant, she despises me. May the Lord judge between you and me.”

Even before you plan is hatched, your misery for bad decisions will begin to take from.  And notice that the very person who pressured Abraham into making a self-led decision, was the one who blamed Abraham.

Don’t be pressured by people because of their feelings because when they see that things don’t work out, the same people’s feelings will blame you and worse still leave you.

If there is one thing I am learning is to not let other people’s feelings pressure me. People are not going to like you for a variety of reasons so you might as well get used to it and not fall for the trap of approval addiction.  People’s feelings are certainly to be considered but not be the final deciding factor.

**6**“Your slave is in your hands,” Abram said. “Do with her whatever you think best.” Then Sarai mistreated Hagar; so she fled from her.

I’m not sure sure this was a Spirit-led decision.  When you make one bad choice, it is easy to make one after another. Stop the cycle and stop making things worse and worse.

Go back to the simplicity of being Spirit-led and not being feeling lead (whether your own or someone else’s).

**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, slave of Sarai, where have you come from, and where are you going?”

That is a Spirit-led question that we should all ask ourselves…where have I come from and where am I going?

Where have I come from, in other words, What have I learned??

Maybe you have learned:

* Lessons through failure
* How not to raise a family
* How to listen to God’s voice and follow Him
* How to lead and how not to lead

A Spirit-led person is a self-aware person.  We should have a high emotional IQ…understanding people, understanding ourselves, growing in our understanding of God (high spiritual IQ).

When you ask yourself where you have been and where you are going…those should be two very different answers.  The path we have gone on, should be very different from the path we will go on.

Don’t just your future be defined by your past.

I don’t want to keep making the same mistakes over and over again. I don’t want to try the same thing again that didn’t work the first time. I want to change, I want to improve, I want to grow, I want to progress.  And I want that for those around me as well.

Where am I going?

To a place of God-centered fruitfulness. To a place of always waiting, watching and listening. I want to be Spirit-carried.

“I’m running away from my mistress Sarai,” she answered.

I’m running away from my problem, I’m running away from my challenge.

I’m amazed at inability to cope and tolerance for suffering.

What does a person who doesn’t cope do? Drugs, alcohol, extra-martial affair, spending sprees, or they just give up.

**9**Then the angel of the Lord told her, “Go back to your mistress and submit to her.” **10**The angel added, “I will increase your descendants so much that they will be too numerous to count.”

**11**The angel of the Lord also said to her:

“You are now pregnant

    and you will give birth to 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.”

God tells us to go back to our problem, to address it, to submit to the process instead of running from it, to learn from it, to grow from it and from that obedience comes a fruitful promise.

Mercy me…Bart couldn’t break through in his dream of being a godly musician until he went back and reestablish a relationship with his abusive father. When we submitted himself to God and God’s process, everything turned around for him.

**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.

Hagar gave God a name.

What names would you give God, based on the experience you have had with Him?

Revealer of solutions, Answerer of prayers, Rescuer of hopelessness, giver of all good things, feeder of my soul, my guide, healer of my sicknesses and injuries, my rescuer from overly aggressive people, my consistent provider, my promise maker and my promise keeper.

Hagar felt unnoticed, overlooked, ignored, abused, neglected…everything changed when God showed her that He knew who she was, He had a plan for her and she could see God and God could see her.

**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.

13 years later God taught Abram how to get back on the right path after making a major mistake.

**Genesis 17**

**17**When Abram was ninety-nine years old, the Lord appeared to him and said, “I am God Almighty; walk before me faithfully and be blameless.

Walk before me and be perfect (ASV)

Walk [habitually] before Me [with integrity, knowing that you are always in My presence], and be blameless *and* complete [in obedience to Me]. (AMP)

Live in my presence and be led of my Spirit.

There is a point that we get to where God expects us to living consistently following Him, obeying His direction each and every day. When we haven’t received clear direction, inquiring of the Lord.

This is what it means to be perfect and to be blameless. To no longer be self led, but rather Spirit-led.

**Genesis 6:9 New International Version (NIV)**

**9**This is the account of Noah and his family.

Noah was a righteous man, blameless among the people of his time, and he walked faithfully with God.

**Matthew 5:48 New International Version (NIV)**

**48**Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect.

I used to think that perfection was not doing anything wrong. But perfection, blamelessness as depicted by Abraham and Noah is to stay daily in the presence of the Holy Spirit, being led by the Spirit in all our decisions and activities. You can’t go wrong when you take this approach!

**1 Corinthians 11:1 New International Version (NIV)**

Follow my example, as I follow the example of Christ.

What do you do after making either a feeling-led (whether minor or a massive life-altering)?

Let God bring you back to living in His presence - close to him- and cooperate and in harmony once again with the Holy Spirit’s leading.