"GOD'S GRACE FOR A BROKEN MARRIAGE"

November 4, 2026/ GATHER & GROW Bible Study / Dr. Chris Williamson

Intro: As a church, STBC does its best to honor the sanctity of marriage without idolizing it. What does it mean to "idolize marriage?" _____
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We can celebrate the goodness of what marriage can be, while grieving with those who find themselves in difficult marriages (**I Corinthians 12:26**). Our goal is to promote and strive for marital permanency without shaming those whose marriages ended early.

The truth is that good people can have bad marriages. A godly person can be married to an ungodly person. A wise woman can have a fool for a husband, and vice versa. **Thankfully, being in a struggling marriage does not negate the grace of God in our lives.**

The marriage between Abraham and Sarah demonstrates the power of God's grace.
God records the story of Abraham and Sarah's **imperfect marriage** to encourage us in our imperfect marriages. We should ask ourselves: What can we learn from them? What can we do differently? Below are some of their spousal wounds:

1) Abraham **lied** at least two times in their marriage, putting Sarah in dangerous and compromising situations with other men (**Genesis 12:13; 20:2**).

How can lying hurt a marriage? _____

2) Sarah's plan of giving her Egyptian maidservant **Hagar** to Abraham as a second wife in order to be a surrogate mother failed miserably (**Genesis 16:2**). Abraham, "the father of faith," accepted Sarah's plan to marry Hagar without praying about it.

What do the flaws of Abraham and Sarah teach us? _____
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3) Once pregnant, Hagar despised Sarah (**Genesis 16:4**). Sarah demanded Abraham to **fix** the problem she created, but Abraham deflected the responsibility back to her (**16:5 – 7**).

4) Sarah dealt harshly with Hagar, the mother of Abraham's baby, causing her to flee. Hagar eventually returned and she and Sarah lived in proximity until Ishmael was born.

How did this wound Sarah? _____

5) For 14 years, Sarah watched Abraham **bond** with a son she couldn't give him.

How did this wound Sarah? _____

6) When the older Ishmael **scoffed** at the younger Isaac, Sarah's anger exploded again and she demanded Abraham cast out Hagar and his son Ishmael (**Genesis 21:10**). Sarah knew how Abraham felt about Ishmael, but she didn't care (**Genesis 21:11**).

How did this wound Abraham? _____

7) Due to the **inheritance** going to Isaac, Sarah probably **restricted** Abraham from giving financial resources to Hagar and Ishmael when they left. This may explain why he only gave them water when he sent them away (**Genesis 21:14**).

How did this wound Abraham? _____

Breakout Question: What can ongoing, unaddressed wounds do to a marriage?

Biblical Observations to Suggest Abraham and Sarah Became Separated:

1. Starting with **Genesis 21:22**, we begin to see Abraham doing life by himself. Sarah is not mentioned in **Genesis 22**, the chapter in which Abraham is called to sacrifice Isaac. The next time we read of Sarah is when she dies in **Genesis 23:1 – 2.**

2. God tested Abraham and told him to sacrifice his son Isaac (**Genesis 22:1 – 2**; **Hebrews 11:17**). **Abraham appears to be a single parent.** Could it be that since Sarah kept Ishmael from Abraham, he was now keeping Isaac from Sarah?

3. Abraham lived in Beersheba (**Genesis 21:34, 22:19**). Sarah died in Hebron (**23:2**). **Beersheba is 26.4 miles from Hebron.** After Sarah died in Hebron, Abraham went there to mourn her (**23:2**). Why was Abraham not there with Sarah when she died? **It's highly possible they were separated at the time of her death.**

4. If Abraham and Sarah separated and Isaac went with Abraham, Isaac still had fondness for his mother. As a grown man, Isaac dwelt in the south (**Genesis 24:62**). Sarah died when Isaac was 37. Isaac got married three years later at the age of 40 (**25:20**). Sarah had a tent in the place where Isaac lived (**24:67**) because he took his new bride Rebekah into his mother's tent to begin their marriage.

God's Super Abounding Grace in Abraham and Sarah's Imperfect Marriage

- God still called Abraham *"the father of faith."* **Romans 4:1, 16**
- God still called Abraham *"My friend."* **Isaiah 41:8**
- God still called Sarai (*princess*) "Sarah" (*princess of a multitude*). **Genesis 17:15**
- God still placed Abraham and Sarah in the Hall of Faith. **Hebrews 11:8 – 12, 17 – 19**

Final Thought: Believers, if you are in a broken marriage, what does God still call you? If you and your spouse are separated or even divorced, where does God still place you? **God's grace** still allows life to go on in spite of marital turmoil, a separation, or a divorce.