

# Sarah...

## A Woman of Faith

**Lesson 2**  
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### Introduction

Women throughout the ages have faced great challenges and great choices. As we look at the life of Sarah we find that she faced the same challenges and choices we often experience in our everyday lives. Despite her difficulties and discouragements, she remained a woman guided by her faith in a great God. Sarah certainly wasn't a perfect woman or wife. She had failures, doubts and fears but she steadfastly held on to the God of Israel leaving a legacy for us to follow.

Sarah was born in Ur of the Chaldees. It was traditionally thought to have been the site of the Garden of Eden. Ur was an old city when Sarah was still young. The city was filled with skilled artisans and craftsmen, was a bustling and prosperous city located at the mouth of the Euphrates River. It was equal in wealth and culture to Babylon. The people of Ur worshipped the god of the moon whose name was Sin. In the midst of this heathen culture God called two ordinary people to serve and follow Him. Sarah was married to her half brother, Abraham. They shared the same father but had different mothers.

While in the city of Ur, Abraham's father led the family to the land of Canaan, to the city of Haran. It was in Haran that two major events occurred. Abraham's father died and Abraham received a call from God to go to an unknown land.

### Study and Personal Questions

Read Genesis 12:1-3

1. What did God ask Abraham to do?
2. List the promises God gave to him.
3. How would God bless Abraham's obedience?
4. Why is obedience vital to our relationship to God?
5. How do you respond when asked to obey Him?

Because she was the wife of Abraham, Sarah also was called to obedience in following him, trusting that God was truly leading. They were called to leave family, home and nation. This must have been very difficult for Sarah but we never hear her complain. God moved them in order to separate them from the influences of their ungodly culture.

6. Read 1 Peter 1:13-16. How do these verses speak to you about being separated from the influences of our culture today?

7. What positive aspects do you observe in Sarah as she chose to follow her husband's nomadic lifestyle?

8. Read and respond to Ephesians 5:22-24.

Sarah was 10 years younger than her husband who was 75 years old when called by God. Even though they were senior citizens they still had purpose in God's economy.

9. How would you have responded if called to venture into the unknown at this point in your life?

10. Share an experience when God has called you into the insecurity of the unknown.

11. Read Genesis 12:10-20. Record your thoughts as you read through. What do you see?

12. Sarah was placed in a precarious position. It must have been very frightening to her but once again she walked by faith and not by sight. What was her response?

13. How did God protect her?

14. In what ways has He protected you in fearful circumstances?

Sarah was a barren woman. She was well past menopause, however, she had an Egyptian servant whose name was Hagar. Hagar had most likely been acquired when the couple had fled to Egypt because of the famine. (This is the first famine mentioned in Scripture). Sarah was about 75 years old at this point and began to take matters into her own hands in order to obtain a child and fulfill the promise of a son in Genesis 15:4.

15. Read Chapter 16. Describe the mistakes Sarah made as she ran ahead of the Lord.

16. What mistakes did Abraham make?

17. Describe the results of their failure to wait on the Lord.

Pastor Chuck Smith: “Ecclesiastes 8:6-7. God’s timing often frustrates us. It is hard to wait for His perfect timing. So we tend to impetuously move ahead of God, bringing even more misery. God does everything right on time. Just wait on Him.” (The Word for Today Bible, 2012, p. 857).

18. Read Proverbs 3:4-5 and record your thoughts.

Genesis 17 records God’s reaffirmation of His covenant with Abraham and His changing of their former names of Abram and Sarai to Abraham and Sarah. Read Genesis 17:15-19.

19. What does Sarah’s new name mean?

20. Record in your own words the promises given specifically to her in verse 16.

Abraham was concerned for his son Ishmael and requested that he would live before the Lord but God, once more, affirmed that the covenant would be from Abraham and Sarah’s seed.

21. List the promises made to Abraham concerning Ishmael in verse 20.

Genesis 18 tells us that Abraham was sitting by his tent when three men suddenly appeared to him. Abraham instructed Sarah to prepare a meal for the travelers. The men inquired after Sarah who was listening at the tent door. The men were again reiterating the promise that this couple would have a child together in spite of their old age. (Abraham was 100 and Sarah was 90). God was again promising the impossible would be possible. He had said the son born to them would be called Isaac. God’s promises never fail!

22. How did Sarah respond to this news?

23. Record verse 14a and commit it to memory.

24. In what ways does this encourage you?

25. Challenge: who were the three men who appeared to Abraham and what was the task ahead of them as they left? (see verses 18-33)

Genesis 20 records the repeat of a sad lack of faith on Abraham's part, putting Sarah in another precarious position by pretending she was his sister. Once more, however, we see Sarah obeying and submitting to her husband, depending on God to rescue her again. She exhibited nothing but confidence in God's ability to perform what He had promised. The Lord intervened and preserved her. In chapter 21 we see the promises of God fulfilled for this couple who walked so completely by faith. In their old age they were able to conceive and bear a son just as God had spoken. Verses 6-7 record Sarah's joy and rejoicing over the birth of her child. The barren woman was now a nursing mom.

26. Take time and record your joy and rejoicing over all the blessings He has given you.

The strife between Sarah and Hagar began to escalate after the birth of Isaac, but Abraham was told to listen to the counsel of his wife. Abraham was asked to cast out the bondwoman and her child. God had a plan for them as well as for Abraham and Sarah. God promised Hagar that a nation would arise from Ishmael. From his seed has come the Arab nations and from Isaac has come the Israelites. These two children who struggled so intensely are continuing to struggle to this day in the Middle East.

27. Challenge: Galatians 4:21-31. What do you see?

Sarah lived one hundred twenty years and died in Hebron. Abraham mourned her loss and wept at her death. Hebrews 11 lists only two women in the "Hall of Faith," giving us the example of a woman who trusted in the Lord no matter the circumstances of her life. Sarah's faith was not based on her own abilities to perform but it was based on the ability of God to perform and fulfill His promises. Hebrews 11:11 "By faith Sarah herself also received strength to conceive seed, and she bore a child when she was past the age, because she judged Him faithful who had promised."

## Discovering Jesus in the Story

The entire Old Testament points toward Jesus as Savior. If we miss that we miss the entire point of the Scriptures.

1. According to the Bible verses we've studied this week, what promise or revelation points to the coming Messiah, Jesus Christ?

## Reflection

2. Write a short paragraph explaining how the life of Sarah has impacted your life, challenged you or corrected you concerning your choices.

## A Hero's Vignette

### Amy Carmichael

Amy was born in Ireland in 1867 of devout Presbyterian parents and was the oldest of seven children. While in college Amy heard Hudson Taylor, founder of China Inland Mission, speak about mission life. Soon after, at the age of 18, she sought to follow God's call on her life, applying to mission organizations that turned her down because of health issues. Amy knew, however, that God had a call on her life so didn't give up her desire to serve Him.

Amy went to Japan for 15 months but returned home after becoming ill once more. She later went on for a brief time to serve in Sri Lanka and then went on to Bangalore, India.

While in India Amy became increasingly aware and distressed over the practice of young girls and women who were left at Hindu temples and dedicated to the heathen gods. They would then be forced into prostitution to earn money for the temple priests.

As a child Amy had often asked Jesus to turn her brown eyes into blue. Her brown eyes, however, played a major role in her ministry in India. They allowed her to veil herself and go into the temples, rescuing the children and women. Amy founded the Donhnavur Fellowship as a refuge for these women and children and this became her lifelong ministry. Those who came to live there saw her great love for them.

After many years Amy suffered a serious injury from a fall at the mission and became bed-ridden for the rest of her life. Rather than letting this tragedy defeat her she spent those days and years writing letters and books of encouragement to fellow laborers. They have been read around the world and have brought hope and exhortation to many serving in lonely and isolated situations. Her life embodies Romans 8:28 and is an example of how all things work together for our good.

While in India Amy received a letter asking her what mission life is like. She responded by saying "missionary life is simply a chance to die." She served 55 years in India, never returning home.

1. How does Amy's life encourage you, challenge you?

*Challenge Question:*

2. Are there any Bible verses that come to mind after reading about her life?