



# Character Study **SARAH - A MOTHER OF NATIONS**

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Sarai's life begins in the city of Ur, where she was born into the lineage of Terah. Little did she know that her life was about to take an extraordinary turn when her husband, Abram, received a divine call from God. The call led them to embark on a journey to an unknown land, away from their familiar surroundings, and into the realm of God's promises.

God called Abram to take his family and leave his land. God had something better in store for him. God promised Abram that he would have descendants as numerous as the stars, and this promise included Sarai conceiving and bearing a child. The only problem? Sarai was barren.

In a culture where bearing children was deeply significant, Sarai's barrenness was a burden she carried for many years. Despite her devotion to God, she faced moments of doubt, wondering if God's promise of descendants would ever come to pass.

God's promise to make Abraham a great nation seemed improbable and unlikely with Sarai's inability to conceive. Despite her advanced age, Sarai yearned for a child, and she pleaded with Abram to have a child through her servant Hagar. Abram complied, and Hagar bore a son named Ishmael. However, this decision led to conflicts and tensions within the family.

While Sarai's actions were driven by a desire to see God's promise fulfilled, it became evident that human interventions to fulfill God's plans often lead to unintended consequences.



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Despite her good intentions, Sarai's decision brought discord into her family, leaving a lasting impact on future generations. However, God's plan was not yet fully realized, and the birth of Ishmael was only part of the intricate tapestry that would eventually unfold, leading to the fulfillment of God's promise in the birth of Isaac.

Sarai's longing for a child was not in vain, as God had a greater plan for her. In Genesis 17, God reaffirmed His covenant with Abraham and made a covenant with Sarah as well. He changed their names, signifying a new beginning and divine intervention. Sarai became Sarah, which means "princess". This renaming marked her role as the mother of nations and emphasized the fulfillment of God's promise through her.

The visitation of three angels to Abraham and Sarah at the Oaks of Mamre brought an astonishing revelation. They announced that Sarah, despite her old age, would conceive and bear a son within a year. When Sarah overheard this divine proclamation, she initially laughed in disbelief. "After I am worn out, and my lord is old, shall I have pleasure?" (Genesis 18:12). Her laughter reflected her doubt, but it also revealed the human struggle to trust God in the face of impossibility.

God's response to Sarah's laughter was not one of condemnation, but rather a question that resonates throughout time, "Is anything too hard for the Lord?" (Genesis 18:14).



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This question encapsulates the essence of faith: to trust in God's power and sovereignty, even when circumstances seem insurmountable, improbable, or extremely unlikely. Sarah's laughter turned to awe and submission, acknowledging God's ability to do the impossible.

True to the angels' words, Sarah conceived and bore a son, whom they named Isaac. His name means "he laughs," signifying the joy and laughter that came from God's fulfillment of His promise. Isaac's birth brought immense joy to Sarah, Abraham, and their entire household, but it also led to a challenging situation when Sarah witnessed Ishmael mocking her son. This prompted her to demand that Abraham cast out Hagar and Ishmael, which he eventually did, under God's guidance.

Sarah's story reflects a pattern of faith, wavering at times but ultimately anchored in God's faithfulness. Despite her mistakes and moments of doubt, she remains a remarkable example of a woman who walked with God, leaving a legacy of faith and obedience.



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## **LESSONS LEARNED**

Sarah's decision to take matters into her own hands and have Abraham conceive a child with Hagar holds valuable lessons for us:

**Impatience and Trust in God's Timing:** Sarah's impatience in waiting for God's promise to be fulfilled led her to take matters into her own hands. This impulsive decision teaches us the importance of trusting in God's timing and not resorting to our own solutions when things seem delayed or uncertain. Patience and faith in God's plan are essential virtues in our journey of faith.

**Consequences of Human Interventions:** Sarah's choice to use Hagar as a surrogate had unforeseen consequences, leading to tensions and conflicts within her family. It serves as a reminder that human interventions to fulfill God's plans can bring about complexities and hardships we may not anticipate. When we try to manipulate circumstances instead of trusting God's sovereignty, we risk facing unintended consequences.

**The Danger of Jealousy and Comparison:** Sarah's jealousy and feelings of inadequacy in comparison to Hagar highlight the danger of comparing ourselves with others and the destructive nature of jealousy. Comparing ourselves to others can lead to resentment and cloud our judgment, preventing us from seeing God's unique plan for our lives.





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**Trusting God's Provision:** Sarah's actions stemmed from a desire to see God's promise fulfilled, but she failed to trust God's ability to bring it to pass without her intervention. The lesson here is to have faith in God's provision and to trust that He knows the best way to fulfill His promises, even if it doesn't align with our human understanding.

**God's Redemption of Our Mistakes:** Despite Sarah's actions, God remained faithful to His promise and eventually fulfilled it through the birth of Isaac. Sarah's story shows us that even when we make mistakes or take wrong paths, God can redeem those situations and bring about His divine plan in unexpected ways.

**Learning to Surrender:** Sarah's actions stemmed from a lack of trust in God's ability to fulfill His promise in His own time and way. Her story encourages us to surrender our desires, fears, and doubts to God, acknowledging that His plans are higher and more significant than our own.



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Sarah's laughter and doubt provide essential lessons for us:

**Human Frailty and God's Grace:** Sarah's laughter and doubt remind us that even the most faithful individuals can experience moments of human frailty. God's grace is sufficient to understand and address our doubts, fears, and uncertainties with compassion and love.

**Honesty in Our Relationship with God:** Sarah's laughter serves as a testament to the importance of honesty in our relationship with God. God knows our hearts, and we should feel free to express our doubts and questions to Him. Rather than pretending, we can approach God with authenticity, knowing that He welcomes our openness.

**God's Understanding and Patience:** God's response to Sarah's laughter reflects His patience and understanding. He didn't condemn or punish her for her initial doubt but gently reassured her. This teaches us that God is compassionate and patient with us, meeting us where we are and leading us toward greater faith.

**The Power of God's Word:** Sarah's laughter turned from skepticism to awe when she witnessed God's promise fulfilled. It shows us that God's word has the power to transform our doubts into faith, and His promises are never empty.

**Overcoming Doubt Through God's Faithfulness:** Sarah's journey of doubt and faith illustrates that God's faithfulness is unwavering, even when our faith wavers. We can draw strength from God's consistent character and trust that He will fulfill His promises, no matter how impossible they may seem.



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**Trusting in the Unseen:** Sarah's doubt was rooted in the apparent impossibility of her situation. Her story challenges us to trust in God's unseen hand at work in our lives, even when circumstances seem improbable. God's ways are higher than our understanding, and we can rest in His wisdom.

**Perseverance in Faith:** Sarah's laughter didn't mark the end of her faith journey; she continued to follow God despite her initial doubts. Her story encourages us to persevere in faith, even when we face moments of uncertainty. We can learn from Sarah's resilience and commitment to God's plan.

**Witnessing God's Miracles:** Sarah's experience teaches us that God is a God of miracles. When we encounter situations that seem impossible, we can look to Sarah's story as a reminder of God's ability to perform miracles and bring about the fulfillment of His promises.



# Character Study **NOTES**

NAME:

MEANING:

KEY VERSES:

KEY LIFE EVENTS:

SUMMARY OF LIFE:

APPLICATION: HOW CAN I APPLY WHAT I'VE LEARNED TO MY LIFE?

PRAYER/NOTES:



RELATED VERSES



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WORDS TO LOOK UP



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# Character Study **DEEPER REFLECTION**

What is deeply distressing to you right now? What is causing you pain, grief, or annoyance? What action do you need to take?

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What actions have you taken through impatience and/or frustration instead of waiting on the Lord? What happened? What could you have done differently?

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# Character Study **DEEPER REFLECTION**

When have you laughed at what God said He would do? When have you doubted God's promises for you? What happened?

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There are always consequences to taking matters into your own hands. Not only will you suffer, but others will too. What ways can you minimize taking matters into your own hands?

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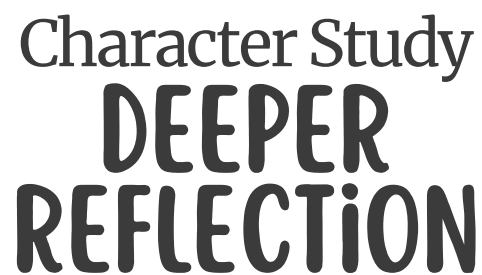
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It's natural to condemn ourselves whenever we find that we are not walking by faith. God's response to Sarah is very encouraging. He didn't condemn her. Instead He let her know that nothing is impossible for God. Today, thank God that His mercies are new every morning. That He is a faithful God who loves His children. Have you been condemning yourself? Have you been too hard on yourself? How can you move past the condemnation and allow yourself to receive grace, truth, and mercy? Where has God turned your doubt into awe and joy?

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