

Genesis 16:1-16  
Failure of Faith

*From reasonable Doubt ...*

- I. Faltering Faith and Folly
  - A. "Ingenious" Scheme
  - B. Complicated Results
  - C. Distressing Fallout
- II. God's Goodness and Grace
  - A. God's Shows Mercy
    1. Sees
    2. Appears
    3. Hears
    4. Provides
  - B. God's Exercises Patience
- III. Trust – Tried and True
  - A. Avoids Folly
  - B. Believes the Word
  - C. Trusts in His Ways
  - D. Waits on the Lord
  - E. Gives Birth to Blessing

*... to beyond the shadow.*

*Children, Listen ...*

1. Do you remember why God had told Abram to count the stars?
2. Was Sarai's idea a good one?
3. What does the name Ishmael mean?
4. Is trusting in the Word and ways of God always easy?
5. What kinds of things will help to strengthen our faith?

### Shortcuts

Shortcuts are good for many things, but they are never good when it comes to submitting to God's will. God's Word is sufficient, His ways are perfect and His timing is impeccable. True faith requires trusting what God has said, submitting to His ways (that are not our ways) and patiently awaiting his fulfillment. That is not always easy - but who ever said faith was easy – it may and should be simple – but not necessarily easy? Abram and Sarai had many reasons to doubt, that is, from a worldly perspective. They catered to their skepticism and took matters into their own hands. The result of their distrust complicated things, brought conflict to their marriage and resulted in a bad witness to their Egyptian servant girl. God is merciful and patient and He deals with both Hagar and the elderly covenant couple with grace. But Abram the father of our faith faltered badly and undoubtedly regretted his weakness. If only he had remembered the basis of his faith to begin with he may have prevailed over his own doubts and his wife's "clever" scheme. He would learn and God would reassure him and he will move ahead with an even more solid faith because God is patient with the likes of Abram just as He is with the likes of us.

In the end when we return to the very basis of our faith, God's faithfulness and the surety of His Word, and then we trust and obey – even the most circuitous and challenges path with prove to be the best and most blessed.