

# 8

## What If I Make the Wrong Decision?

### *Genesis 16*

A major barrier to making a decision can be the fear of making the wrong choice.

GROUP DISCUSSION. On a scale of 1-10 (1 = I'm sure everything will work out; 10 = A wrong decision will destroy my entire life), how fearful are you about making a wrong decision?

What experiences in your life have contributed to or relieved your fears?

PERSONAL REFLECTION. Think of the worst decision you have made. Why was it wrong?

God had promised Abram and Sarai that they would have many descendants and become a great nation. On the basis of this promise, Abram had left everything familiar and had followed God to the strange land of Canaan. However, after living there for ten years, Abram and Sarai were still childless (and at eighty-five years old, well past their childbearing years). Impatient with God's failure to act, they made a desperate decision.

Read Genesis 16.

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1. Which character in this story are you most like and why? (Sarai—regretful of a decision you have made? Abram—wondering what went wrong? Hagar—blamed for someone else's bad choice? Ishmael—the product of others' dysfunction?)

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2. What decisions do Sarai and Abram make in this story?

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3. Looking at these decisions from our perspective, several millennia after the fact, why were these decisions so flawed?

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4. Why do you think Abram and Sarai believed these decisions to be for the best?

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5. What were the consequences of Abram and Sarai's decisions for themselves?

for Hagar?

for the world?

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6. What have been the consequences of your worst decisions?

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7. Where does Sarai place the blame for her troubles?

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8. Why do you think people are reluctant to take responsibility for their decisions?

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9. What good does God bring out of these bad decisions?

10. Why did God intervene instead of simply letting everyone live with the mess they had made?

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11. After reading this report of Abram and Sarai's mistake, what can you expect God to do with your own bad decisions?

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12. What is comforting about being seen by God, even at our worst moments (v. 13)?

*Confess to God the mistakes you have made and ask him to bring good from them.*

**Now or Later**

King David seemed to make as many bad decisions as he did wise ones. He tried to hide from King Saul by living among the enemies of Israel and almost had to go to war against his own people (1 Samuel 27—29), he committed adultery and covered

it up with murder (2 Samuel 11—12), he contributed to a family feud (2 Samuel 13—14), and he took a census of Israel and Judah (2 Samuel 24). *Read what he has to say about finding forgiveness for our bad decisions in Psalm 32.*

According to this psalm, what should we do about our bad or sinful decisions?

What will happen if we do not come to God with our mistakes?

What will happen if we do?

In what ways have you acted like a horse or a mule (v. 9)?