According to “Getting More out of Life,” the difference between living and existing consists of at least four things:

1. Those who just exist allow themselves to get boxed in; those who live experience regular self-renewal.
2. Those who just exist are passive; those who live are enthusiastic.
3. Those who just exist take themselves and their problems far too seriously; those who live learn to laugh at themselves.
4. Those who just exist never trust others; those who live have the courage to trust.

This provides a “Jethro insight” into today’s passage. Genesis 16 outlines three tried and true methods for getting less out of our spiritual lives.

I. BE AFRAID (GEN. 16:1-3)

A. Sarah’s Fear – Why?
   1. Gen. 11:27-30
   2. Gen. 12:2-3
   3. Gen. 12:14-16
   4. What Sarah proposed was culturally permissible

“If Gilimminu (the bride) fails to bear children, she shall get for Shennima (the bridegroom) a woman from the Lulu country (high quality slaves) as wife . . . she shall have authority over the offspring.”
B. Sarah’s Blindspots – What?
1. She didn’t consider God’s original plan (Genesis 2:24; 3:15)
2. She didn’t consider Hagar

“Sarah, as far as we can tell, showed no regard for Hagar’s human dignity or acknowledged that her handmaid had the same feelings, hopes, and longings as any other woman. The young girl was nothing more than Sarah’s last chance of becoming a mother.” – Carolyn James

B. Sarah’s Blindspots – What?
1. She didn’t consider God’s original plan (Genesis 2:24; 3:15)
2. She didn’t consider Hagar
3. She didn’t fully consider the outcome

C. Sarah’s Alternative – How?
David said, “I have sinned.” Nathan replied, “The Lord has taken away your sin. But the son born to you will die.” After Nathan had gone home, David pleaded with God for the child. He fasted and went into his house and spent the nights lying on the ground.

The elders of his household stood beside him to get him up from the ground, but he refused, and he would not eat any food with them. On the seventh day the child died. David’s servants were afraid to tell him that the child was dead, for they thought, “While the child was still living, we spoke to David but he would not listen to us. How can we tell him the child is dead? He may do something desperate.” David noticed that his servants were whispering.

“Is the child dead?” he asked. “Yes,” they replied. Then David washed, put on lotions, changed his clothes, and went into the house of the Lord and worshiped. Then he went to his own house and he ate. His servants asked him, “Why are you acting this way? While the child was alive, you fasted and wept, but now that the child is dead, you get up and eat!”
He answered, “While the child was still alive, I fasted and wept. I thought, ‘Who knows? The Lord may be gracious to me and let the child live.’ But now that he is dead, why should I fast? Can I bring him back again? I will go to him, but he will not return to me.” – 2 Samuel 12:13-23

II. BE DIENGAGED (GEN. 16:4-6)

I write to you, dear children, because your sins have been forgiven on account of his name. I write to you, fathers, because you have known him who is from the beginning. I write to you, young men, because you have overcome the evil one. – 1 John 2:12-13

Abram’s life:
1. Gen. 11:31 – 15:21 = the awakening of faith
   - Rescue from Ur (11) – idolatry
   - Rescue from Egypt (12) – famine
   - Rescue from Retaliation (15) – fear

2. Gen. 21:22 – 25:18 = the perfecting of faith
   “Now I know that you fear God because you have not withheld from me your son, your only son.” – Genesis 22:12

3. Gen. 16:1 – 21:21 = the disciplining of faith
   “But solid food is for the mature, who because of practice have their senses trained to discern good and evil.” – Hebrews 5:14
“The most wise, righteous, and gracious God, doth oftentimes leave for a season his own children to manifold temptations and the corruption of their own hearts, to chastise them for their former sins, or to discover unto them the hidden strength of corruption and deceitfulness of their hearts, that they may be humbled; and to raise them to a more close and constant dependence for their support upon himself, and to make them more watchful against all future occasions of sin, and for sundry other just and holy ends.” – Westminster Confession

God’s grace leads to Hagar’s restoration – possibly her salvation.

CONCLUSION

“Life is like a coin. We can spend it any way we want – but only once.”

• Trust or Fear?
• Passive or Active?
• Victim or Victor?