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Listening to the God Who Hears

Genesis 16:1-15; 18:1-33

Eons have passed since our last study. The first man and first woman and their descendants have populated the earth. People groups and then nations formed. Language, distance, geography and culture divided these people. So they warred against each other. Few knew or followed the God of creation. God intervened—again—this time to appoint a people group who would continue to know and follow him. God started with one man, Abraham, and his wife, Sarah. Oddly (for a God who created and ruled the universe), God began by listening to these beings he had made.

GROUP DISCUSSION. Describe one situation when you felt you were heard.

PERSONAL REFLECTION. What does being heard do for your relationship with the person who listened to you?

In these texts you will find an almighty, all-knowing, all-powerful God who stoops to listen. *Read Genesis 16:1-15.* Note or mark each set of quotation marks.

1. What details reveal the various motives and emotions of the characters in verses 1-6?

Who do you most empathize with and why?

2. Focus on the conversation between Hagar and the angel of the Lord in verses 7-15. How did the angel of the Lord help Hagar to speak her heart?

3. What did the angel of the Lord reveal to Hagar?

If you had been Hagar, would you have wanted to know all this? Why or why not?

4. Look again Hagar's words in verse 13, "You are the God who sees me." What does this suggest about Hagar's understanding of God's care for her?

Read Genesis 18.

5. What are some ways that Abraham showed hospitality to his guests?

6. In view of the whole story, why do you think Sarah laughed (v. 12)?

7. The text identifies one of Abraham's three visitors as "the LORD." As you listen in to the conversation beginning at verse 16 between Abraham and his visitor, what appears to be the relationship between Abraham and "the LORD"?

8. What do you learn of the character of Abraham?

What did Abraham learn about the character of the Lord from this conversation?

9. In what ways was Abraham a richer man because of his time with the Lord?

10. Of what value to you is it that God hears your prayers even if he does not give all that you ask?

Pray, beginning with the words of Hagar, “You are the God who sees me.” Then open your heart to the Lord who sees and listens to you.

Now or Later

Take an outdoor walk. Listen to the sound of God-created things: the rustle of leaves in the wind, the chirp of a bird, the crunch of grass beneath your feet, the scurry of a squirrel, the creak of a large tree bending ever so slightly in the wind, the rhythmic lapping of tidal water, the whisper of sand adjusting beneath your feet, the laughter of a child, your own breath. Add your own praise in song or prayer to the God who hears.