

The Ishmeal Effect

God's gracious remedy for my sin.

Father Abraham who is also considered by Christianity, Judaism, and Islam to be the faithful father and also the father of the faith, was not always the most faithful and at times he certainly wasn't a good, good father!



Isaiah 43:19 Behold, I am doing a new thing; now it springs forth, do you not perceive it? I will make a way in the wilderness and rivers in the desert.

God called Abraham when he was 75 years old at a time when Abe was worshiping idols or a moon goddess, but God reached out and looking down to Abraham said; "Abe, I'm calling you!"

He's called you too! So let's redeem your story!

God asked him to leave everything behind even his family and He told him "I'm going to lead you into a new land and make you the father of a great nation!" But as time went on and 10 years passed his faith began to get a little bit wobbly. He was going through a time when things were seemingly a little shaky and finally Sara His wife comes to him and says "I know God has promised you that we would have a family but we aren't spring chickens any more!" So, Take my handmaiden Hagar, have relations with her, she will be a surrogate, and we will make him our son and start the process. Now the by-product you remember was a son by the name of Ishmael.

The Ishmael effect!

Now time goes on and Abe is now 99 years of age - 14 years later and God comes to Him and says "Abe, now I'm going to make good on my promise! What you did is not how I wanted it done!" I promised you a son and now I'm going to do what I promised to do! Sure enough Abraham and Sara had a son and his name was Issac. Now Abe was aware that he had messed things up with Hagar and that it had produced Ishmael, he knew that he had dropped the ball, and that he had missed the mark!

Have you ever failed miserably as a dad? Have you ever missed the mark? Well, there is good news for you!

Ishmael became the father of the Arab people whereas Issac became the lineage of the Jewish people and the two were at odds growing up and they are at odds even to this day. The Root of all the tension that we are experiencing in the world today goes all the way back to the mistake that Abraham made. He got in the flesh, he lost his faith a bit, he tried to do things in his own energy and we are seeing the repercussions in the world today. Now time goes on and Ishmael is sent off, It breaks Abe's heart but God says "I want you to listen to your wife, your doing the right thing!" And off Ishmael and Hagar go. Time goes on and Issac grows up has a family and the he dies like Abraham before him but he has a son named Jacob and Jacob has 12 sons one of which who was named Joseph. Joseph was the favorite son of Jacob and the other sons became increasingly jealous of that fact so they threw him into a pit and left him there to die taking his coat, dipping it and blood and planning to convince their dad that he was attacked by wild animals and killed so as not to take any blame for their evil plot. But, while they were waiting for Joseph to die there in the pit, there were caravan's coming along and one of the brothers convinced the others to sel him into slavery so josephs blood would not be on there hands. Genesis 37:28 says that merchants who were Midianites came by and pulled Him from the pit and then sold him to Ishmaelites, descendants of Ishmael who then brought Him to Egypt and sold him to a guy named Potipher. Now here is the kicker! The Ishmaelite's, Abrahams mistake, Abrahams goof, Abrahams missing the mark, Abrahams sin, as a father who fathered Ishmael. He got ahead of the Lord, He wasn't obedient to the lord, and now Joseph, the great, grandson of Abraham is being taken by Ishmaelite's to Egypt where through a series of miraculous events winds up becoming the Prime Minister of Egypt. Meanwhile in the promise land there is a famine the whole story hinges on the question, who got Joseph to the place where he needed to be to save the descendants of Abraham, Issac, and Jacob? It was Ishmaelite's It was the descendant's, the offspring of Abrahams mistake! What God does through the mistake of a father ultimately saves an entire nation. We all as fathers have Ishmael's in our lives, we have all dropped the ball at some point, but God had a plan to redeem your story, to restore his people, and to keep us on the Path of Jesus.accomplish something. God uses means to bring people into his family, and then he uses means to help us become fully-devoted followers. There is a divine-human cooperation which lies behind Christian growth and transformation. It requires intention, devotion, and pursuit. God doesn't just zap us into maturity. He works in us...and we practice, to

grow in our faith. Now... God uses means, but his grace is the ultimate source and cause of our growth. The Word of God tells us that grace is a teacher! Just as a coin has two sides, so does God's grace. Titus 2:11-14 reveals these two sides of grace: what it positively aims to do, and what it does in the face of failure—it's remedial side. One side brings instruction and the other side brings love. My hunch is that many of you are just like me—my sinful heart works to make me forget the positive goals of grace and to think only of God's gracious remedy for my sin.