

# Pastoral REFLECTIONS

March 9, 2025



## God's Design

Why do couples, who once had a great dating relationship, get married and struggle repeatedly for long periods of time? I did not say that couples struggled in their dating relationships. I genuinely mean couples who had a lot of good times together, knew that this was the person for them to marry, had good communication, supported each other through difficult times, spent a lot of time together, got married, and struggled after years went by. This is a problem that is repeated over and over again.

There are several answers to this question. Some say that over a period of time, character weaknesses become more evident. People change and financial difficulties create stress. Differences of opinions become more apparent in raising children, politics, and resolving problems that create a distance between couples so that over time it becomes too difficult for the couple to remain together. Even though most of this seems true, it is not entirely the reason for the distance developing over time.

When a couple dates and has a good, productive relationship, they have established key pillars that are significant to a relationship. Communication was established because the individuals in the relationship listened well and gave each other respect when there were differences. They developed good problem-solving skills because they worked hard to get along and wanted to have a relationship. They spent a lot of time together, considering each other's needs. When there were differences, they showed respect and allowed each other to be different. Men would patiently go shopping, and women who do not like sports would patiently sit with their boyfriend and watch it with him or allow him to watch it with his friends. These characteristics are just as necessary in a marriage and must be practiced in a marriage. Stress, complex time schedules, raising children, and focusing more on one's weaknesses than strengths often causes a couple to no longer practice these foundational processes.

Another reason is that couples forget that God designs marriage and must take on the principles that God instituted. God never said that marriage brings joy, but He did say that spiritual growth brings "love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control..." (Galatians 5:22-23) This is why God gave instructions for the man to wash his wife with the Word, instruct both individuals to come to church, commit to being a disciple (not just a church attendee), and serve in the church so that everyone grows up into the fullness of Christ (Ephesians 4:12-13). This is crucial because marriage requires both individuals to mature to Christ and the church (Ephesians 5:32). When both individuals are full of the Holy Spirit, they get along well (Ephesians 5:21; Philippians 2:1-5). They get along better because they renew their mind to the same Word; the same Spirit controls them, and they become the same Christ (Galatians 2:20; Ephesians 4:1-7). So when a man leads, he takes on the characteristics of Christ (1 Corinthians 11:3), and when a woman lives before her husband, she displays the attitude of Christ (Philippians 2:1-11). As a result, instead of a couple growing apart over time, they grow closer together.

When marriage is more about what each person desires and wants rather than a spiritually developing process, it becomes distant and not cohesive. "Now the deeds of the flesh are evident, which are: immorality, impurity, sensuality, idolatry, sorcery, enmities, strife, jealousy, outbursts of anger, disputes, dissensions, factions, envying, drunkenness, carousing, and things like these, of which I forewarn you that those who practice such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God." (Galatians 5:19-21). To inherit the kingdom of God is to experience the Holy Spirit that Christ provided after His death as our inheritance (Ephesians 1:13-14). Instead of a couple growing spiritually, they become fleshlier. To become fleshlier is to grow apart. To trust God and apply His principles (Proverbs 3:5-8), no matter how vulnerable it makes a person, is to experience the powerful presence of our inheritance. This leads to a marriage that glorifies God, strengthens each individual for their own benefit, and blesses a marriage and a home (Psalm 127-128; Proverbs 24:3-6).

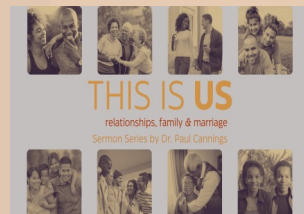
## UPCOMING Events



**LEGACY YOUTH SPRING BREAK**  
Legacy Youth ages 13-18, join us for fun, food, games, fellowship & more for Spring Break Tues., March 11th—Thurs., March 13th.  
**March 11th—SERVICE DAY 1:00-6:00 p.m.**  
**March 12th—Youth Lock-In 6:00 p.m.-10:00 a.m.**  
**March 13th—Youth Field Day 10:00 a.m.-1:00 p.m.**  
Register at <https://bit.ly/YouthSpringBreak2025> or contact Angela Holmes for more information at [angholmes32@gmail.com](mailto:angholmes32@gmail.com)



**SPRING SPRUCING MAR. 12 & Mar. 13TH** — Volunteer with us on either Wednesday March 12 & 13th, or both days to help spruce up our church! Operations needs your assistance in various ways to prepare for the new season including cleaning our prayer garden, planting new plants, and general organizing. Everyone is welcome! Contact Rashaud for more details and Keron or Jeff when you arrive day of. Please register on <https://bit.ly/3xv7eQ4>



**THIS IS US SERIES—MARCH 2025 RELATIONSHIPS, FAMILY & MARRIAGE**  
Join us during the month of March for the "This Is Us" series as we focus on relationships, family, and marriage. Attend Services and Life Application classes every Sunday and Bible Studies and Center for Christian Living classes on Tuesdays. As John would say "And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us, and we saw His glory (God in His full excellence exposed in day-to-day life), as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth." (John 1:14) This series takes the Word to your home, so that you grow through the application of God's Word as it relates to relationship challenges.



**LEADERSHIP TRAINING SATURDAY, MARCH 15, 2025 8:30 AM**  
All elders, pastors, deacons, ministry leaders and coordinators, minister, and staff, join us for our first Leadership Training of 2025. Leaders your attendance is required as we plan, execute vision, and prepare for our year of Light In Truth (LIT). Please register at <https://bit.ly/LWFCLeadershipMarch2025> or on the events page of the website.



**JOIN THE LEGACY YOUTH BAND APP**  
Legacy Youth parents and youth, join the **BAND APP** to stay connected. WE have an exciting year planned for our youth and we don't want you to miss a single event or activity. Use the link below to join:  
<https://band.us/n/a8adA2G6V4fd0>  
For more information, contact **Angela Holmes** at [angholmes32@gmail.com](mailto:angholmes32@gmail.com)



## ORDER OF WORSHIP

Announcements

Communion

Worship In Giving

*Offering boxes are located at all perimeters under crosses*

Special Music

**"God Sees You!"**  
*Genesis 16:3-6, 10-14*

Click "Sermon Notes" on the Website

Call to Discipleship  
Please remain seated at this time

Visitor's Welcome

Benediction

Children are now required to check-in upon arrival. Please report to the registration desk located in the children's wing.

Infants—6th grade





God Sees You!  
Ruth 2:5-6, 8-13

A. Caught Up (16:3-4):

- 1. After living a nomadic life, fighting the king of Chedorlaomer, Abraham made Canaan a residence. The family finally had stability. Sometimes, the more comfortable we become; the worse things can become. Sometimes, we want to run from the challenges God gives us for a normal life, only a normal one to lead us away and make us apathetic in our faith.
- 2. Hagar was not given an option as to whether she would be a surrogate mother. Sarai took her to be given to Abraham to have a child for Sarai. There was nothing that was going to stop Sarai. Other people’s decisions, like parents, may have made your life challenging.
- 3. Abraham did not pray about this matter; seek godly advice, maybe from Melchizedek, if not God. Abraham, with no hesitation, sought to fulfill Sarai’s wishes. Like Adam, Abraham, under pressure, followed his wife’s lead. When Satan is going to make a move, he always reverses God’s order.
- 4. Hagar gave Sarai no respect as her superior. She continuously did not take Sarai’s directive seriously once Hagar knew she was pregnant. In all this, Abraham said nothing.
- 5. Relationships often become messy because we choose not to wait for God to fulfill His Word. We choose to lean to our own understanding (Proverbs 3:5-6).

B. Thrown Down (16:5-6):

- 1. Sarai viewed how Hagar was treating her as an injustice. Sarai followed the Nuzu Law, so Hagar was still her handmaiden. Hagar was acting very disruptive, and Abram was not doing anything about it.
- 2. Using personal pronouns, Sarai implies that Abram had complete control of Hagar. Now that Hagar is mistreating Sarai, he has the authority to stop her, especially when Hagar is disrespecting her.
- 3. Abram’s response to Sarai demonstrates that he will not take responsibility for what Sarai did.
- 4. Sarai constantly tried forcefully (which may have included inflicting pain) to get Hagar to submit to her.
- 5. Hagar refused to accept how Sarai was treating her, so they determinatively ran from being the presence of Sarai.

C. Built Up (16:10-14):

- 1. God will bless any child from Abraham. God’s mysterious messenger is sometimes described as the Lord Himself (Gen 16:10-13; Ex 3:2-6; 23:20; Judges 6:11-18) because He speaks for God in the first person and directly communicates with Hagar concerning her son.
- 2. The Lord, who is always in control and has authority over everything, told Hagar that He knows everything she is going through.
- 3. The Lord was not just aware of Hagar and her son; He also was well aware of her emotional pain and physical punishment. God’s silence during her pain did not mean He was absent.
- 4. Hagar responds to the Lord by shouting the name of the Lord. It is as if she is acknowledging that the Lord has His authority based on His reputation to make things come through. Hagar so acknowledges the Lord’s power and authority she returns to Sarai. This exposes us to how much she believes in who the Lord is.
- 5. Hagar was exposed to many gods in Egypt. To now hear from the Lord God, who tells her about her son, explains her future, and provides her His promise to care for her, causes her to become convinced that the Lord God must be a true God and has eyes through which He can clearly see and understand all that is taking place.
- 6. God is faithful in serving us in our worst times and providing us with hope for a great future if we continue to listen to Him.

Scan For Full Notes



# LEADERSHIP TRAINING

## MARCH 15<sup>TH</sup> | 8:30 AM

### LEGACY SANCTUARY

\*ELDERS - DEACONS- AND MINISTRY LEADERS YOUR ATTENDANCE IS MANDATORY\*

REGISTER TO ATTEND AT: <https://bit.ly/LWFCLeadershipMarch2025>

FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT DUANE LAWRENCE AT [DLAWRENCE@LWFELLOWSHIPCHURCH.ORG](mailto:DLAWRENCE@LWFELLOWSHIPCHURCH.ORG)

# THIS IS US

## relationships, family & marriage

# COMMUNICATING EFFECTIVELY

### BIBLE STUDY

#### TUESDAY MACRH 11TH

[www.lwfellowshipchurch.org/bible-study-notes](http://www.lwfellowshipchurch.org/bible-study-notes)

## DR. PAUL CANNINGS, PH.D

# PRAYER REQUESTS

**Grieving:** Sylvia Edwards & family, Jeffrey and Charlotte Allen & family, Lula Hayes & family, Robert James & family, Michael Harris & family, the family of Susie Farley, Joselyn McCain & family, and Melvin Bates & family.

**Health and Healing:** Lurlean Lane, Florence Wiggins, Retha Amos, Margaret Baptiste, Cici Sharpe, Eunice Johnson, Jeffrey McQueen, Eric White, Pat Crawford, Tan-isha Collins, Jon Heard, Rutha Patrick, Kevin Carey, Sherri Love, Elizabeth Clarke, Clara Williams, Kathryn Ford-Cheatham, Anthony Thomas, Beverly Austin, Joshua Williams, Ruby Hunter, Elizabeth Bean, Patsy Gatterson, Joyce Newsome, Arleatha Housley, Patrina Johnson, Cheryl Walker, Walter Banks, Sheryle Crowe, Arnie Glover, Clarence Coleman, Diana Doyle, Shannon Rice, Freddie Reid, Janie Buchanan, Yolanda Barnes, Rochelle Carter Brown, Terrance Ford, Robert Edwards, Jessie Austin, and Evelyn Harvey.

# GOD SEES YOU

Genesis 16:3-6, 10-14

