

# CONTENTS

<b>THE SUPPORTING ROLE</b>	9
<b>HOW TO GET THE MOST OUT OF THIS BIBLE STUDY</b>	11
Week One: <b>USED!</b>	13
Week Two: <b>LESSONS LEARNED FROM SARAI</b>	31
Week Three: <b>HAGAR'S HAUGHTY ATTITUDE</b>	49
Week Four: <b>GOING BACK IN ORDER TO GO FORWARD</b>	63
Week Five: <b>WHEN OLD SINS RESURFACE</b>	81
Week Six: <b>WHERE SHE LEFT HIM</b>	101
Note to Leaders: <b>HOW TO USE THIS BIBLE STUDY IN A SMALL GROUP</b>	117
<b>NOTES</b>	121
<b>ABOUT THE AUTHOR</b>	123

## THE SUPPORTING ROLE

IF HAGAR'S STORY WERE A movie, she wouldn't be the star. Instead she would play a supporting role to Sarah, Abraham's wife. Hagar's story has always intrigued me because it embodies so many things that I have felt at one time or another: used by others, jealous, insecure, fearful, defiant, and even far from God. Generations and cultural barriers may distance us from Hagar, but the more I read her story, the more certain I am that there are glimpses of Hagar everywhere around us—from the girl next door to the girl in the mirror. I knew a few Hagar's in high school, and I have played Hagar in my own life more than once. Of course, her name was never used. But her tendencies came through loud and clear.

I often wish God had told us more about this slave girl who was the victim of manipulation, abuse, and rejection. But her tragedies aren't what I wish I knew more of. No. I wish we were told more about Hagar's strengths. How did she endure time alone with Abraham in

his tent when she knew he was just looking for an heir? When she was sent back to face Sarah after enduring a cruel tongue-lashing and who knows what else, how did she muster the grace to let that woman mother the child Hagar herself bore until Sarah had her own son fourteen years later?

Sarah has always been painted as the beautiful matriarch of the children of Israel. She is commended for her faith in regard to the birth of her son Isaac. But to tell you the truth, I'm not all that impressed with her. When you look at her through the lenses of Hagar's story, you see a different picture, and it's not a very flattering one. But Hagar wasn't innocent either. Her relationship with Sarah was a tumultuous wrestling match for power. Theirs is a story of jealousy and betrayal that makes most mean girls look nice.

We are going to spend the bulk of our time together focusing on Hagar's life, but it would be impossible to do so without casting Sarah in a supporting role. I'm sure that in real life it was almost always the other way around.

Perhaps you feel like a supporting character in someone else's story. Maybe you are tired of playing backup to a superstar and you have felt cheated, used, or rejected. Or, in a more honest evaluation, perhaps you have felt downright jealous of the girl who is hogging your spotlight. I've been there before, and so has Hagar. That's what makes her story relevant. It's what makes it worth reading. Let's see what the girl in the supporting role can teach us when she is finally given the spotlight. Hopefully learning from her mistakes will make us more prepared for our spotlights when they come.