



Breathe

Session 3

with guest speaker, Lina AbuJamra

To view the accompanying video,
go to <http://ariseministries.net/breathe>

We've all had seasons of uncertainty—when we don't know what to do next or where to go. It's difficult to know who we can trust and where to look for answers. Hagar's uncertainty took her to the desert where she encountered the Lord. Despite a world that claims to know what is best for us when we lose our way, there is only One who holds all the answers. Discover the truth Hagar experienced: God leads us well when we have the will to follow.

1. When have you felt lost or wounded by a relationship?
2. Read **Genesis 16** again. Record the highlights as you read.

This passage describes Hagar's first departure from the home of Abraham and Sarah. Where was Hagar going? Was she going back to Egypt to live with her family? Did she have a well thought out plan or did she flee impulsively? Scripture does not say. We only know she was leaving because of the abuse she suffered at the hand of Sarah. The angel of the Lord found her in the desert and asked her two questions, "Where have you come from, and where are you going?" When we are caught in a crisis, we must ask the same two questions of ourselves.

3. Where had Hagar come from? Consider the geographical location, the people group with whom she lived, and the problem she faced. **Genesis 16:3-6**

Do you recall how Hagar answered the questions? She didn't directly identify where she came from. She pointed to a person who had exasperated her so intensely that running away seemed like the best solution. She had come from abuse, rejection, belittling, bullying, loneliness, and fear. Where have you come from?

4. Apply this question to your life. Are you facing a difficult season? How did you get here? Are there specific people or occurrences that led you to your current situation? Prayerfully answer the question, "Where did I come from?"

Identifying where we came from and how we got here, to our place of "wilderness," can help us move forward. Do you recall that Hagar encountered God in the desert in Genesis 16 and Genesis 21? In both accounts, she is far from the familiarity of her home, trying to figure out her next steps as she journeys through the desert. It's likely she replayed the series of events leading her to this place over and over in her mind, trying to make sense of it. We do the same thing—retracing steps, replaying conversations, and desperately trying to plan our next move. Do you seek God's answer first before taking advice from other people or acting on your own impulses? Would Hagar's misery been lessened if she had inquired of God before she fled from Sarah? Maybe. We can find ourselves in a spiritual desert when we fail to seek God's plan for our life.

Consider this teaching point from the video.

❖ ***When you're not sure what to do next, ask God.***

5. What situation are you facing in which you need a "next step" plan? Are you seeking God's will or taking matters into your own hands?
6. Read the following scriptures. What does the Bible say about seeking God and knowing His will?

Matthew 7:7-8

Deuteronomy 4:29

Jeremiah 29:13

Consider the second teaching point from the video.

❖ ***When you're not sure where to go, go exactly where God tells you to go.***

That sounds simple enough, doesn't it? Yet sometimes where God tells us to go is contrary to what feels right or what is familiar. In Genesis 16, God tells Hagar to go back to Sarah. This was definitely not the easy choice. Return to the one who ridiculed her and submit to her? Not many of us would willingly march back to Canaan with a happy heart. In contrast, in Genesis 21 Hagar is not told to return. God was leading her in a different direction to accomplish His purpose.

Scripture speaks about contrasting seasons in our life in Ecclesiastes. There is a time to embrace and a time to refrain, a time to search and a time to give up, a time to be silent and a time to speak. We must be mindful that the answer God provides in one situation may not be the same for the next. The answer will always, however, be consistent with His character and His Word. His direction for our lives will always advance His Kingdom. But how do we know where to go next? The only way we know with certainty, is to listen to the One directing our steps.

Remember the second question asked of Hagar, "Where are you going?" Our response must always be, "Wherever you send me, Lord."

7. Do you have a clear sense of where God is leading you next? Is He asking you to embrace or cast away? Are you being called to begin or end something? Is it time to return or move forward? Read the following scriptures. What does the Bible say about seasons of life and how God directs our steps?

Ecclesiastes 3:1-8

Proverbs 3:5-6

Psalms 32:8

8. Read **John 10:27**. Write a prayer asking God to give you ears to hear his voice and the discernment to know which way to go next.

Consider the last teaching point from the video.

❖ ***When you're not sure who to trust, trust the One who's Word is sure.***

Who do you trust with your thoughts and emotions? From whom do you accept advice and wisdom? Think about Hagar's situation when Sarah first began to mistreat her. Were there friends around, encouraging her to fight back? It's not likely she inquired of the Lord before running away. Imagine her crying to her closest girlfriends about the awful predicament she was in, caught in a no-win situation. Maybe trusting the bad advice of others is what set her feet in motion toward the desert. Once she was alone, away from opinions, and away from the high drama of Sarah's emotions, she encountered God and trusted Him.

It's critical to remember that social media, the latest self-help book, and the opinions of others—even close friends—are no substitutes for seeking God's will. When we trust cultural norms and the advice of other people more than we trust the truth of God's Word, we will always find ourselves lost and wandering.

9. Read **Genesis 16:9-15**. How did Hagar demonstrate her trust in the Lord? Do you think it was easy or difficult for her? Explain your answer.

10. Read the following passages. What do these tell you about the usefulness of scripture?

2 Timothy 3:16-17

Psalms 119:105

Hebrews 4:12

11. Read **Romans 10:17**. How do we increase our faith to trust God more? What practical steps can you take this week to be more attentive to the Word of God?

Where God guides, He provides.

Notes for Small Group Discussion:

1. Briefly share your thoughts on the video.
2. Briefly talk about spiritual concepts you learned.
3. Share with your group a choice you need to make that will honor God.
4. Consider practical ways to find accountability with these truths.

To share your thoughts regarding this study, contact us at info@ariseministries.net.

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LINA ABUJAMRA

Arise Ministries is excited to partner with Lina AbuJamra to bring you *Breathe: Finding Rest in the God Who Cares*. Lina is a Pediatric ER doctor and founder of [Living with Power Ministries](http://LivingwithPowerMinistries.com). Her vision is to bring hope to the world by connecting biblical answers to everyday life.