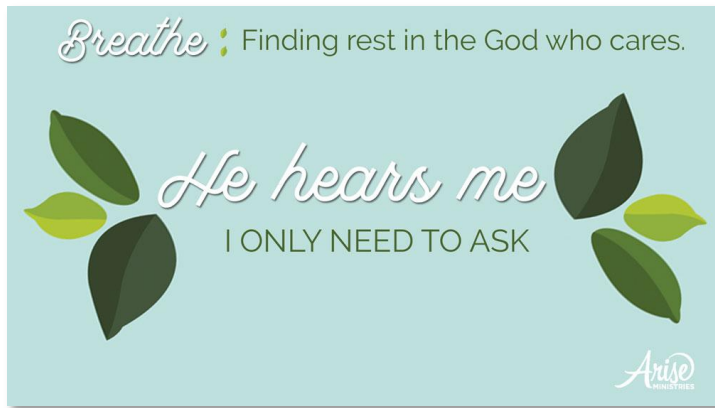




Breathe

Session 4

with guest speaker, Lina AbuJamra

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

Have you ever felt like you're in distress and no one hears your cry for help? Our desperation can lead us to Jesus, or it can tempt us to give up. This week, walk through the anguish Hagar felt as her deep need threatened her life. Discover how God heard her plea for help, and see how He responded to Hagar and Ishmael. Do you know the God who listens to the words of our mouth and the cries of our heart? He hears us. We only need to ask.

1. Describe a time when you had come to the end of your rope. Write five to ten words or phrases to describe your emotions.
2. Read **Genesis 21:8-20** again. Record the highlights as you read.
3. Read **Genesis 16:4-6** and **Genesis 21:8-10**. What similarities do you see in Hagar and Ishmael's behavior? In your opinion, do you think he was just being an immature teenage boy, or do you think he could have learned some of those bullying attitudes from his mother?

In Genesis 16, Hagar had the sassy mouth and intimidating behavior toward Sarah. Years later, in Genesis 21, her son's similar antics got them evicted. No matter what our circumstances may be, it is wise to be mindful of the example we set for our kids. It's worth the mention that bitter, jealous mothers have a tendency to raise bitter, jealous children. Consider what Ishmael had possibly witnessed in his mother's attitude all those years.

4. Describe how both Hagar and Ishmael *may* have felt as they left with modest provisions. How do you feel when you struggle to provide for your children?

As we come to the end of this series, we see Hagar coming to the end of her strength. On the move in the desert of Beersheba, she found herself lost and desperate. Can you imagine the scene? Hagar is an emotional wreck, a single mother forced to leave the safety of her home and the only the provision she had with her was what could be carried. Ishmael is a teenager. Have you ever been around teenage boys? A bit of food and a skin of water was a mere snack to him. And hungry, tired teenagers are not always the easiest to get along with. Hagar had to have felt incredibly inadequate to care for her child. Did she feel like she had failed Ishmael? Do you think she blamed herself? When your most basic needs are not met—food, water, and shelter—your ability to think clearly diminishes. Hagar and Ishmael had reached a point of desperation and hopelessness.

5. Read **Genesis 21:15-17**. Scripture says Hagar put the boy under a tree and sat away from him so she didn't have to watch him die. According to **Genesis 21:16**, who lifted up her voice? Whose voice did God acknowledge hearing?

We don't know if Ishmael was crying out to the Lord for mercy or if he was just fussing and crying about being hungry and tired. Was he pleading with God to show Himself to them and make good on His promise, or was he reacting to his circumstances in a self-centered, childish way? Whatever the situation, it was enough to cause Hagar to distance herself from watching something so painful. Her son was beside himself and perceivably on the cusp of death, and she couldn't bear to watch his agony. There she sat, 50 to 75 yards away from him, helpless.

There isn't a mother in the world who hasn't felt helpless in parenting. It's disheartening to realize we cannot always meet our children's every need. We can't shelter them from pain and suffering inflicted by this broken world. Whether from choices they made themselves, or as a result of someone else's mistakes, our children will experience disappointments and struggles that a mother's heart cannot fix, nor can she bear to watch.

Scripture cites Hagar as the one who cried out to the Lord, and Genesis 21:17 says the angel responded to the boy's voice. Let that soak in. Read it again and again until it encourages you.

Consider this main point from the video.

❖ **God not only hears the words of our mouths, but He hears the cries of our hearts.**

This passage could be highlighted in the pages of every mother's Bible. It's a powerful reminder to all of us. God sees our children and He hears them. When they can't put into words their need for a Savior, He shows up and introduces Himself. When life is lonely and cruel, He fills in the gaps. He sees every heartache, feels every emotional wound, and hears every spoken and unspoken word.

6. Read **Genesis 21:17**. Apply this verse to your life.

What question did God ask Hagar? How would *you* answer this question?

Scripture says, "God has heard the boy's voice where he is," which was right in the middle of hungry, lost, and desperate. Where are your children? How does it encourage you to know God hears your children where they are?

7. What does the Bible say about God hearing us? Read the following verses and record your thoughts.

Psalms 10:17

Romans 8:26-27

Psalms 145:18

Consider the second point.

❖ ***God hears our present despair, and He hears our longing for future blessings.***

It wasn't enough that God heard Hagar and Ishmael as they came to the end of their strength; He also heard their desire to see their brokenness redeemed. Genesis 21:18 exemplifies this as God instructs Hagar to take Ishmael's hand, lift him up, and be reminded of the blessing that awaits him.

Your story, even with all its brokenness, can be redeemed. Like Hagar in verse 19, we must open our eyes to see the blessing set before us.

8. Read the following verses and record your thoughts about God's desire for your future. How do these verses encourage you?

Jeremiah 29:11

2 Corinthians 4:16-18

Romans 8:18-25

Consider the last point.

❖ ***God hears us with joy, and He rejoices in giving an answer.***

Not only does God hear us, He delights in providing what we need. Think about your children. Because you love them, you want to give them what is good. Matthew 7:11 teaches us, "If you, in your human nature, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father who is in heaven give good things to those who ask him." We can have confidence that because God loves us, He hears us and answers with what is best.

9. How did God answer Hagar? Read **Genesis 21:18-20**. How does that encourage you?

10. Read the following and record your thoughts. What is required of us to receive what we ask for in prayer?

1 John 5:14-15

Psalm 37:4

John 15:7

As we grow in Christ, our will becomes conformed to His. Our wants and desires change to reflect the nature of His character. Praying according to His will means we boldly ask Him to accomplish His purpose in our life, and we accept His answer as His best for us. When Hagar's eyes were opened, she saw God's provision. He heard her cries and led her to a well that would sustain her and her son. Whatever trial you are facing, you can be assured God hears you. We only need to ask Him to lead us.

11. How can you apply these principles to your life? In what way can you teach these to your children?

God is never blind to your tears, never deaf to your prayers, and never silent to your pain.

He sees. He hears. He delivers. -iBelieve.com

The LORD is near to all who call on him, to all who call on him in truth. —Psalm 145:18

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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Video Content Author

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.



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