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January 3, 2021

GENESIS 16

Series: Understanding Your Roots

Please open your Bibles with me to Genesis 16 today. I'm going to pray now and let's settle our hearts as we come before the Lord and hear what He has to say to us today.

[PRAYER] Father, we are grateful for this year. We don't know what this year is going to be like. So sometimes, Lord, in our prayers we pray "thank you for this day." Today we pray "thank you for this year," but we have no idea what's going to happen. But we know that you do. And we know you and because we know you, we can trust in you. Really, whether this is a good year or bad year, it depends mostly on our relationship with you and how you carry us through the challenges. We get to know you better. We experience your blessing, and we get to watch you work. So we're actually eager to see what's going to happen in this year because of our relationship with you. Lord, we thank you for your word and the power that it has to change the way we think to equip us with the tools we need to face the challenges of life. So today as we open your word, Lord, provide us with some new insight into it. In Jesus' name, amen.

Today I'm going to share with you a truth that you need in your life. Some of you are going to need this tool that I'm going to share right now in your hearts. The challenges you're facing right now require this tool to be ready and available for you so you can put it into practice now. It's a word from the Lord for you today that you can take advantage of. For others of you, you might not need it right at this moment. You're going to need it through. This is one of those things you've got to have in your tool box. I call it a secret weapon. It's really the ability to deal with mistreatment.

When someone mistreats you at work, someone mistreats you at home, someone mistreats you at school or in any situation, this is the secret weapon. In fact often when I'm talking to young people about bullying, I say to them there are three tools you have and one secret weapon. Let me just go over them real quick so you know about them. These are biblical principles you can apply in your situation whether you're young or old. But often when young people or children are feeling bullied, they need these tools.

Number one is to confront. It's a skill. You confront without being mean. Skill number two is to ignore, but you ignore without becoming angry and bitter inside. It's a skill. Skill number three is to get help, but you want to get help without whining and complaining. Three very important skills that we all need. And that's what I tell... If a young person is being bullied, I say practice those things.

But those of us who have been around for a while know that even sometimes when you do all those things, still the problem continues. And that's when you need the secret weapon. The secret weapon is a very important tool that God has given to us and it applies in any situation. If you're experiencing some form of mistreatment at school, or work, or home, or in the neighborhood, or driving, or whatever it is, you need this tool. Let me show it to you in God's word in 1 Peter 2 and then we're going to see how it's implemented as we get into Genesis 16. This is the tool.

Notice it says in 1 Peter 2:19 – *For it is commendable if someone bears up under the pain of unjust suffering because they are conscious of God.* Basically what this means is their conscience is facing toward God. Literally when it says *conscious of God* it's their conscience is facing toward God. They're doing the right thing and they're still getting mistreated. Notice it says *it is commendable*. You get commendation points. In other words, you can feel good in your relationship with God because He is demonstrating commendation to you even when you suffer because someone is mistreating you. If you're doing the right thing your conscience is facing toward God.

Then he says down in the latter part of the verses – *To this you were called.* This is not something that's optional. You were called to this, *because Christ suffered for you, leaving you an example, that you should follow in his steps.* Obviously an example because He was the one who was ultimately mistreated, more than anyone.

“He committed no sin, and no deceit was found in his mouth.” So He didn't even do anything wrong. *When they hurled their insults at him, he did not retaliate; when he suffered, he made no threats. Instead* (and here's the rest of the secret weapon), *he entrusted himself to the one who judges justly.* He gave the justice, the personal justice to God and said, “God, I'm going to give it to you. I can't carry this myself.” God has not designed our heart big enough to do that, so we turn it over to the Lord. That is the secret weapon.

When you understand that secret weapon, sometimes it really helps you in really difficult situations when you're being mistreated to be able to endure them. Because you know that you're right close to God's heart and you don't have to carry around that personal injustice. It is the secret weapon that we all need. You'll need it now, some of you. Some of you will need it in the future. You'll need to know that it is there and it is available to you.

Well now we're going to go into Genesis 16. Let's look at this story unfold. Everything I've said about the secret weapon I want you to put on the side just for a moment. Because we're going to take this story verse by verse, and this part of the secret weapon comes in at the end. In fact there's another very important principle that we're going to learn first in Genesis 16.

This is the story of Abraham and Sarah who were not able to have children, at least not yet. But God had promised a son to Abraham. So now the dialogue continues and you see what happens in the passage. In Genesis 16 it says – *Now Sarai, Abram's wife, had borne him no children. She had a female Egyptian servant whose name was Hagar.* So those are going to be our three characters in our story – Abram, Sarai, and Hagar.

And Sarai said to Abram (now listen to her words; you can get inside into her heart when she says this), “Behold now, the Lord has prevented me from bearing children.” Now notice what she has a tendency to do. We’re going to see this is her weakness. She blames problems on other people. Maybe you know somebody who does that. That’s what Sarai’s going to do, blame problems on somebody else. So even when she’s talking about this, she talks about it in terms of blaming. She says – “Behold now, the Lord has prevented me from bearing children. Go in to my servant.” “I have an idea!” she says. “Go into my servant; it may be that I shall obtain children by her.” And Abram listened to the voice of Sarai. So, after Abram had lived ten years in the land of Canaan, Sarai, Abram's wife, took Hagar the Egyptian, her servant, and gave her to Abram her husband as a wife. And he went in to Hagar, and she conceived.

Now this was a common practice of the day. It was disgraceful for a woman not to have children. So one of the solutions was she could have a child by giving her servant or her maidservant to the husband and he would have a child through her and then that child would be given to the wife and that would be her child. It was commonly practiced. But does that make it a good idea just because it’s culturally relevant or culturally practiced? In this case it is not a good idea. Obviously you know this story and you know that it turns out to not be a good idea. But let’s just see how it unfolds.

Abraham is making a decision here and notice what Abraham doesn’t do. He doesn’t go back to the Lord and talk about it. He doesn’t ask God, “Sarah has this idea here. I wonder if we should do this.” He just says, “Okay, we’ll do it.” He just listens to her, takes this idea, this new idea, this creative idea. It seems to be an idea that will solve the problem. This will take away the waiting period of time that they have. This will solve the problem. Seems like a good idea. So Abraham agrees to do it, but doesn’t really consult the Lord.

I want to make a suggestion to you in your decision making. As you’re making decisions, I want you to understand something about life. This is very important that we understand that often when we’re trying to make a decision Satan will bring his best idea before God brings His best solution. Remember that. Write it down. Save that piece of information. Because sometimes Satan will bring his best idea before God provides His best solution. And there are indicators. There are indicators that are out there and you have to be sensitive to those instead of ignoring them. When we’re trying to make a decision and we really want something, sometimes we disregard the indicators, the red flashing lights that are there. We don’t pay attention to them.

A young man might say, “Well I really love her. I think she’s the one for me. I know she’s not a Christian (red flag flashing), but I really love her and maybe I can help her come to know Jesus over time.” Red flag flashing. Marry her and we’re going to have a problem over time. Dangerous situation.

A young lady says, “Oh I’m twenty-five years old. I don’t know. Boy, I’m getting old here. I probably should try to get married and I really like this guy. I know he has an anger problem (red light flashing), but I think I can help him with that. Oh and he really loves me. He won’t be angry with me.” And then we have a major problem in the dynamic. Just keep in mind that Satan often brings his best idea forward before God brings His best solution to the situation.

Guy says, “I’m going to get a job. I got this job offer. It’s a great one. I’m going to have to travel a lot, but it pays me twice as much money. I’ll be able to retire when I’m fifty. I know I’ve got young children here, but this…” Red flag flashing. Just realize that.

In Abraham’s life Satan produces, brings out a great idea, the best idea he can before God’s going to bring the best solution to the problem. Abram doesn’t pay attention to the warning flags. He doesn’t come to the Lord and talk to the Lord about it. He goes ahead and participates in this and it’s going to create some problems.

We’re going to look at the problems. We’ve got some dynamics going on here that are going to be challenging. So now we have Abraham and we’ve got these two women. I mean you could bring this story into the 21st century, right? You just think about a guy and he’s got this child with this woman over here and he’s got this wife. I mean this is something that’s very real in a situation today.

Now I spend a lot of time working with families. As I work with families it gets to be rather complicated. Because if you’ve got five people living in a family that means you’ve got five broken people. All the brokenness contributes to whatever tension, conflict, and problems exist in the relationships. You can’t have five people and have only four people that are broken. Everybody’s broken.

In this case we have three people in this dynamic. And in this dynamic we’re going to see three people who are broken. Now I’m going to read this passage to you and I’m going to comment on it. I want you to just to see the brokenness that exists in the passage. Each person has their issues. And when multiple people with brokenness come together it just can create all kinds of problems. That’s why God created families. So when we see our own brokenness we’re humbled and we work out our salvation in the midst of a home. It’s a beautiful place to grow, if we’re willing to be humble and do that.

Well let’s look at the story and see who we have. *And when she saw that she had conceived, she looked with contempt on her mistress.* To look with *contempt*. The word means to look down upon. Now she’s a servant. She should be looking up to her mistress, but now she knows something or she has something that her mistress doesn’t have. So she develops an attitude.

Know anybody with an attitude? It happens in a family. A person has an attitude and why? Because they think they know more, they have more than you do. It happens all the time with young people. They think they know more. They think they have more than the parents, and so they get this attitude. And the attitude is a problem. Sometimes a mom or a dad will say to me, “Well at least she obeys, so I can ignore the attitude.” Whoa, who, whoa. Be careful. Don’t ignore the attitude. The attitude is a window inside of a person’s heart. It indicates a problem that exists there.

Now this particular woman, Hagar, had an attitude issue and it’s coming out in this whole situation. So she’s pointing this out and she’s pointing out to her mistress somehow. Maybe just by that look. You know how it is with an attitude. Just a look. It’s just a sarcastic remark. It’s just

walking away. When she's probably told what to do she says, "Oh yeah." A smug attitude. She's got that and she is contributing to the problem. That is Hagar.

Let's go the next person. Verse 5 says – *And Sarai said to Abram...* Now you've got to remember. Whose idea was this in the first place? It was Sarai's idea. She says (she's talking to Abram, her husband) – "*May the wrong done to me be on you! I gave my servant to your embrace, and when she saw that she had conceived, she looked on me with contempt. May the Lord judge between you and me!*" I mean Abraham is sitting over there, "Well I wasn't even part of the problem here. This thing is going on between you and her, and you're blaming me for it." So Sarai has this blaming problem. We saw it earlier in the last verses. That she has a tendency to blame the problem on other people. That's going to contribute to some significant tension in this whole dynamic.

Now Abraham is not innocent in all this. Notice him. Notice what he does in verse 6. *Abram said to Sarai, "Behold, your servant is in your power; do to her as you please."* In other words, "I'm not getting involved in this problem. You go take care of it yourself." It's like he did in the earlier verses when Sarai comes with a solution. He says, "Okay." He seems to be this husband who lacks leadership or this person in the family who is afraid to speak his mind. It looks like he just wants peace at any price. He says, "I don't want to get in any conflict here. You just deal with it yourself." So Abraham's lack of leadership is a problem. What he should be doing is saying, "Okay. Let's get together here. Let's go before the Lord. Let's find out what God is saying to us. Should we do this in the first place." That's what should have happened. Now he's got conflict and he ought to be saying, "Okay, we've got a problem here. Let's go to God and see what God wants us to do in this midst of this." Does he do that? No. He just passes it off to her because he wants her to be happy. She's not going to be happy. It's going to contribute to some significant challenges over time.

Notice the last phrase there. *Then Sarai dealt harshly with her, and she fled from her.* Hagar runs away from her problems. She's going to run away from this problem because she's being emotionally abused. I think that's how she would phrase it if she were going to the counselor and saying, "I'm being emotionally abused, so I fled this situation."

Wow. We got a mess on our hands here. We've got a family that's in conflict. We've got challenges. We've got all kinds of stress points. And it's not just because of one person. It's because of the nature of family life. It's brokenness taking place here.

Now I really enjoy looking at the Lord and how He deals with situations. I think if you want to become a counselor in your life, you want to look at all the passages you can that talk about how God is the counselor, how God works with people, how He deals with the Israelites, how Jesus deals with the Samaritan woman. Just look at all of the passages in the Bible where God or Jesus are working with people. We'll learn a lot. Now we're going to do that now as we go into the next passage or the next part of the verse and we're going to see what God is going to do here.

The angel of the Lord found her by a spring of water in the wilderness, the spring on the way to Shur.

I just got to stop right there because if you feel like Hagar sometimes – “This wasn’t my problem. I’m just caught in the middle. And I’m running away from this thing. I’m trying to get away from this problem.” If you feel like “nobody sees me, nobody hears me, I’m totally misunderstood,” you’ve got to see the Lord goes and finds those people. He’s initiating. I know we talk about coming to the Lord and that God is waiting for us to come to Him. But He’s not just doing that. He’s pursuing us.

The angel of the Lord finds Hagar by this little well, by this little spring. And notice what he does. *And he said, “Hagar, servant of Sarai, (two questions) where have you come from and where are you going?”*

If you’re going to be a counselor, those are your two questions. You just want to ask those. When you start a session you say, “Okay, where have you come from and where are you going?” That’s basically what you’re saying. You’re saying, “Tell me your story. Tell me what’s been going on. Tell me where you’re going with it all.” So then as a counselor you might speak into that. That’s what’s happening in the passage. Use those questions in whatever way you might to hear a person’s story. It’s so precious when you get to listen to a person’s story. If you don’t know how to start a conversation with someone, just start it this way. “Tell me where you come from, tell me where you’re going” is a great opening to let someone talk.

Now Hagar is going to speak into this and she’s going to answer the question, at least the first one. She doesn’t know how to answer the second question because she doesn’t know where she’s going. But she does know where she comes from. So that’s how she’s going to respond to the angel of the Lord. *She said, “I am fleeing from my mistress Sarai.”* She knows where she’s come from. I’m running away from this problem that I have. I don’t want to be there anymore. I’ve got to get out of there. This is not good for me. It is not a healthy place for me. I need to leave. So she says, “I’m leaving. I’m running away from here.”

Now notice what the counselor says. This is the *angel of the Lord said to her, “Return to your mistress and submit to her.”* Now isn’t that fascinating. She’s being emotionally abused and what’s happening in this particular situation is the angel of the Lord is sending her back into this situation. Now I don’t want to suggest that everyone who is being emotionally abused needs to stay in the situation. I wouldn’t suggest that. In fact five chapters later in Genesis 21 Hagar is going to leave that family again and God is not going to send her back. So there’s an appropriate time when she’s going to leave. But in this case the angel of the Lord is sending her back into the situation.

Why? Because she’s got something that needs to be worked out in the situation, in this family. Her attitude issue is not appropriate. It needs to change. And how is she going to change that? She’s going to go in and submit, put herself under Sarai instead of over Sarai in order to work out the situation.

This is the essence of God’s work in our lives. That many times we as Christians go back into challenging situations because we know that’s where God is going to grow us. That’s where He’s going to develop some things inside of our hearts. We aren’t just quickly running away from situations. What we recognize is that through suffering that we develop perseverance; and

perseverance, character; and character, hope (according to Romans 5). We are often quick to run away and God would say wait, wait, wait, wait a minute here. There's some things you need to learn before you start running away from this situation. Right now in the midst of this you can develop more graciousness. You can learn how to submit to your mistress instead of looking down on her with contempt. You can do a better job here. I'm going to send you back into that situation. Now maybe that's what God is doing for you. Maybe you wish you could get out of this job, but God isn't opening something else. So He's saying I want you to go back in there and I want you to learn how to deal with that situation.

It's often that I'm working with young people and the young person says, "It's my annoying brother. I don't like my annoying brother. He's always annoying."

I say, "Okay, well let's work on that. I want you to go in and work with your annoying brother." "Why?"

"Well because God has created this family for you and He's put every person in this family for you, including your brother. I think God put your brother in this family just for you."

"Why?"

"Well because if you can learn how to relate to your annoying brother, you'll develop the ability to relate to annoying people."

"Why?"

"Because someday you're probably going to work in an office with annoying people and you're going to say, 'Oh I'm so grateful I had an annoying brother so I could learn how to relate to them.'"

You know God has work to do in our lives and sometimes the conflict, the struggles, and the pain we have is not something to run away from. But as the angel of the Lord says to her in this situation (I'm not saying in every situation, but in this situation), "Go back in there and submit to her."

But he doesn't stop there. Notice what else he says to her. *The angel of the Lord also said to her...* And now we're going to talk about the second question. She couldn't answer the second question; only the first one. Where have you been? Where are you going? Let's talk about where you're going. And he's going to do this in regards to the child that she's going to have. Because many of us as parents we kind of work out our future through our kids. We like to see our kids develop and we see them grow, and we're thrilled by the things that we see when they're doing well.

So here's what the angel of the Lord also said to her. *"I will surely multiply your offspring so that they cannot be numbered for multitude."* And the angel of the Lord said to her, *"Behold, you are pregnant and you are going to have a baby boy.* This isn't just a baby. Now we know it's a baby boy you're going to have here.

You shall call his name Ishmael, because the Lord has listened to your affliction. Every time she calls his name she's going to be reminded that his name is Ishmael, which is the Lord hears. The Lord hears. You are not alone. The Lord sees. The Lord hears. The Lord pursues you. That's the idea here. You need to realize. We're going to name the child "the Lord hears" because I don't want you to every forget that. The Lord hears.

Well now the next phrase is going to describe this boy. I think some of you would not like this description. When you're having a baby boy, you don't want to hear this description of this child. But this is what he is. *He shall be a wild donkey of a man, his hand against everyone and everyone's hand against him, and he shall dwell over against all his kinsmen.* I think if you were a servant woman having to go submit to your mistress and that was your life calling that you were a servant, you would find some encouragement to find that you're going to have a child who's not going to be a servant person. This person is going to grow up and he's going to be a leader.

Often parents will tell me, "Hey, that's describing my son. That's my son right there. That's my key verse now. He's like a wild donkey of a man and I can tell already and he's only three. But he's wild." And I say to them, "Yeah, you know it's hard. It's hard to raise a leader isn't it? Leaders are just... It's hard to bridle a leader." Because the nature of leadership is the leaders have all these desires of what they want to happen. And they're always telling other people what to do. And leaders know how everyone else in life can fit into their plans, including their parents. So these leaders are the ones who are telling people what to do. It's hard to raise a leader. But we're really careful as we're working with these leader children to help strengthen them in character so they don't become leader tyrants, but they become responsive leaders. They're able to listen and lead in ways that are wise.

But there's some encouragement for this mom of a leader as she's hearing this story and God is sending her back into the situation to work out some things in her own heart as she learns how to submit to Sarai.

Well let's go on to the last part of the passage here. In verse 13 it says (notice what she does. She's so moved by God finding her, touching her. It's like that song we sing. "His name Jesus is so beautiful." She's so moved by this experience that God has met her personally. *So she called the name of the Lord who spoke to her, "You are a God of seeing."* I'm going to call your name God of seeing. I'm going to give you the name. Because you saw me, you found me, you heard me. Don't ever feel like you're alone and away from God because God sees you. Further it's developed here.

It says – *"Truly here I have seen him who looks after me." Therefore the well was called Beer-lahai-roi; it lies between Kadesh and Bered. And Hagar bore Abram a son, and Abram called the name of his son, whom Hagar bore, Ishmael. Abram was eighty-six years old when Hagar bore Ishmael to Abram.*

I want you to realize that in a difficult situation where they made a mistake, Abraham and Sarah made a mistake. It resulted in a conflicting family situation. But I want you to see God is still working in the midst of that. I don't want you to think oh because we made mistakes in our family and there's a divorce, or there's a complication here, or I'm a single mom, or something like that that God isn't working. God works in the lives of people continually, no matter what their situation is. And God is definitely working in this situation.

As I said, as God the Counselor comes into this situation there are three people all broken. We're focusing on Hagar right now and her mistreatment and what God is doing in her life. But God is going to take Sarah and little bit later He's going to say, "Okay, I'm going to work with Sarah now." And He's going to take Abraham and say, "Okay Abraham, I'm going to work with you." And He's going to help each person in this. Because in a complicated family situation, God is working in the lives of each person individually. Yes, we work things out in a family and God's sanctifying work takes place when we rub up against each other. But God is doing something special in each of the lives of these people. And today we're focusing in on Hagar and what God is doing.

Which brings me back to the secret weapon. Because when you try to confront, which is good. When you try to ignore, which is good. When you try to get help, which is good. And those things aren't working and you're still being mistreated... That is you're in middle school and the girls won't let you into their little group. Or you're in high school and there are some Facebook posts that are misunderstanding and misrepresenting you. Or you're in a job where you're trying to do what's right and people are mistreating you in the midst of that, bad things are happening. That's when you need the secret weapon. You need to be able to come to the Lord and say, "Lord, I can't handle this mistreatment and if I keep trying to handle it, it's going to ruin me. I'm going to become an ugly person inside."

So I want to go back to that passage now in 1 Peter 2 and I want to read it to you. And just imagine, Hagar is going back into a difficult situation. Look at what God says to all of us in 1 Peter 2. He starts by talking to slaves in verse 18. He says – *Slaves, in reverent fear of God submit yourselves to your masters, not only to those who are good and considerate, but also to those who are harsh.*

So he starts out by talking about slaves. But now he's going to move it to everyone. He's going to move outside of the slave application to everyone and he says this in the next verse. *For it is commendable if someone* (if anyone, not just the slave, but anyone) *bears up under the pain of unjust suffering because they are conscious of God.* Literally translated their conscience is facing toward God. That is, they are doing the right thing.

Which you'll see in the next verse is so important. You do the right thing and you're suffering, then it's commendable. That's what he's saying. But he says then – *But how is it to your credit if you receive a beating for doing wrong and endure it?* That's not good. That's not going to get you any commendation points. *But if you suffer for doing good and you endure it, this commendable before God.* It's like commendation points. God is commending you for what you've done. You can find some comfort in that. That "God, I know I'm doing the right thing before you and so I thank you for working in my life." So your focus is on God, but we still have the problem going on.

So he illustrates this further. He says – *To this you were called, because Christ suffered for you, leaving you an example, that you should follow in his steps.* Ultimately Christ was the one who did everything right and still was crucified. And how did He respond? Notice some practical ideas here. *He left you an example that you should follow in his steps. "He committed no sin, and no deceit was found in his mouth."* So He didn't do anything wrong. He didn't have an attitude

problem. He didn't have anything going on that was a problem. But here's what He did. *When they hurled their insults at him, he did not retaliate; when he suffered, he made no threats. Instead* (and here's the part of the secret weapon we need), *he entrusted himself to him who judges justly.*

See God has not created your heart big enough to manage the personal justice or injustice that you experience. We as Christian have a responsibility to fight injustice. We go out and we're trying to make wrongs right. We're taking a stand for righteousness. But that's different than personal justice.

If you're always trying to get the personal justice for yourself it turns into revenge and it creates problems inside of you. It causes you to become angry. An angry person is always lashing out. So now a simple problem comes from somebody else and you're lashing out at them when they weren't even part of the problem. Anger starts to grow inside; it turns you into an ugly person. Because your heart wasn't meant to handle it. Or maybe you become fearful. So now you're just wondering who else is going to harm me, and so you retract inside and you don't want to take any action. You just become fearful of life itself. Or maybe you become so discouraged with things that are going on that you just become limp. You just don't know what to do and you become depressed and discouraged.

You see, your heart was not made to carry around the personal justice of your life. That's why God has this big suitcase that He can carry this personal justice that you can't hold onto yourself. If you're trying to drag around this suitcase it's going to weigh you down, it's going to damage you, it's going to harm you. But God wants you to be strong, He wants you to be able to experience His grace. So He says, "Let me take your personal justice." So Jesus as our model it says He entrusted Himself to the one who judges justly. Justly for unjust treatment.

God is just. God doesn't always balance the scales in the moment. But God is the one who takes on that justice and we can say, "Lord, you get them. Would you take care of this for me? I can't take care of this myself. If I hold onto this it's going to ruin me inside and I don't want to be ruined by this situation." And that's the secret weapon that can protect us from becoming ugly inside. Because we have a God we can come to. We have a God who sees. We have a God who hears. We have a God who finds us. We have a God who knows us in a very personal way and He wants to give us so much good. He wants to bless us in so many ways. But if we hold onto this personal injustice we become an ugly person. Just be careful. You'll start to see it. It'll start to develop. And that's your cue that says I need to give it to the Lord. I can't keep holding onto this. If I keep holding onto this I'm going to become ugly on the inside.

God has designed us in a special way to embrace the love and the peace and the joy that He wants in our hearts. But it can't exist there at the same time when we're trying to get the personal justice for ourselves. That doesn't mean we don't confront. And it doesn't mean we don't ignore. And it doesn't mean that we don't get help. We do those things. But sometimes in the midst of all of that we still have to trust ourselves to the Lord and allow Him to do that deeper work inside of our hearts.

Let's pray together.

[PRAYER] So Father, we ask that you would touch our hearts in a way that makes them so sensitive. That we would recognize that you would find us, you would see us, you listen to us. That when we're discouraged or downtrodden, when we feel alone that you are right here with us. Lord, give us such a love for you and such an ability to trust you that we can appreciate your grace and your love for us. Lord, we know this is just another piece of the faith package that you give to us where we trust you in yet another way in our lives. We want to practice that, make it real. We thank you for so much goodness that you give to us. Help us to see those good things and appreciate them in our lives. In Jesus' name, amen.