

Kicking Out the Ishmaels That Distract You From Your Prophetic Destiny

Many people today fall for Ishmaels in their walk with the Lord and they don't even realize it until it gets really complicated. You can read the story of Ishmael in Genesis 16-21, but I'll give you my abbreviated version. Basically, God told Abraham that even though he was really old, and his wife Sarah was long past her child-bearing years, they were going to have more descendants than one could count.

They couldn't understand how this was going to happen given that their physical bodies were too old to bear children. So Sarah hatched what she thought was a well-thought-out plan. She was just going to help God along with this prophetic destiny and make it happen herself. In that time period, it was a semi-common practice to give one's maid to one's husband in order for the duo to procreate, because that would be considered the same as the wife and husband having a child. So Sarah gave her maid Hagar to her husband so they could produce a son.

I'd like to add here that in no way do we read in the Bible that Abraham protested this decision. So Hagar and Abraham produced a son. I am sure at this point they were all satisfied with themselves. They thought they were helping God along here. Fast forward a few years, and God again told Abraham that He was going to give them a son. Sarah laughed at this idea. But eventually, Isaac was born.

Isaac was the promised child. Ishmael was the one they produced in their own ability. They tried to force what God said was going to happen before its time. Eventually, Abraham had to tell Hagar and Ishmael to leave the camp because

Ishmael and Isaac couldn't be raised together.

It was a horrible situation if you think about it. Ishmael was Abraham's son. Abraham had to decide that He couldn't keep the two boys together, and one of his children had to go. I'm not suggesting anyone put a child away from them, but this story has spiritual implications.

I have seen this scenario play out in many people's lives, including mine. My story with Ishmael and Isaac was about the man I knew God wanted me to marry. God spoke to me early about praying for my future spouse. I had received prophetic word after prophetic word regarding this man, but I was getting tired of waiting. When I met and dated a man in college, I tried to force this dating situation to fit what I thought God was saying. Honestly, I think I was lying to myself. I was willing to be deceived because I was sure I was going to help God. But really, I was like a little kid banging the wrong puzzle piece into a puzzle, pretending it would work.

Here is a list of things you need to remember when dealing with life situations and discerning if something is an Ishmael or an Isaac:

- Ishmaels will take you away from God. Isaacs will draw you closer.
- Getting to the Isaacs—those things that seem impossible—in your life will require patience. I have often joked that there is a reason patience is listed in the Bible as part of the fruit of the Spirit. It's because it is only by God's Spirit one can truly be patient.
- The circumstances around Ishmaels do not have genuine fruit of the Spirit. Where is love, joy, gentleness and self-control?
- You don't have to force Isaac situations to happen. They happen because they are God-ordained.
- Ishmael situations will start to get ugly, complicated

and snarky. You cannot let emotions be your guide in life, especially in Ishmael situations. You have to come back to God and discern what God is saying.

- Ishmaels will try to derail your destiny.

My Ishmael and Isaac story has a happy supernatural ending. Despite this speed bump, I found myself in a place coming back to God and desperately seeking His will for my life. Walking away from the Ishmael situation I had created was excruciating, but I'm so thankful to God that I have my Isaac. While it is true I do not know how I would have ever met my husband had it not been for the Ishmael in the story, it's what I tried to make happen with the Ishmael relationship is where it was an issue. I didn't need to make it happen. God knew best.

Perhaps by listening to my own story you saw yourself. Ishmaels aren't always obvious, but you must pray to God and let Him shed light onto your situations. The truth is, Ishmaels will often appear in your life before Isaacs do. Don't fall for the Ishmael. Trust God. When He is bringing about this new step in your journey, it's going to be awesome and fruitful. Stop trying to bang that puzzle piece in place and wrestle with the divine. Take it from me, wrestling with God is exhausting, and He always has a better plan.

Let God be God. When you do that, you'll see your life transformed. {eoa}

Anna M. Aquino is a published author, guest minister and prophetic voice. Her books *Cursing the Church or Helping It?*, *Confessions of a Ninja Mom* and *An Ember in Time* are available wherever books are sold. *Marriage in Time* is set to release in July of 2017. Please feel free to check out her website at .