

# HOW GOD REPURPOSES YOUR PAIN



**Women of Worth Mentorship  
Academy -WOWMA**

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*Linda P Jones Ministries* ~ Equipping you for Life and Ministry

*Women of Worth Mentorship Academy- WOWMA* -Healing, Equipping and Restoring to Serve

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**HAGAR & ISHMAEL**

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### **HAGAR & ISHMAEL**

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## **HOW GOD REPURPOSES YOUR PAIN**

### **HAGAR & ISHMAEL**

#### **SESSION 1 – INTRODUCTION**

##### **The Story of Hagar – Genesis 16:1-16; 21:1-21**

Hagar's misfortune provides valuable insights from which you can learn how God can repurpose your pain. You will be encouraged how God can redeem your tangled up life and repurpose it for your joy and His glory.

To 'repurpose', means *to find a new purpose or function for an already existing material*. When an item is repurposed it doesn't look like its original form. That is exciting especially in terms of this teaching.

*Now Sarai, Abram's wife, had borne him no children. And she had an Egyptian maidservant whose name was Hagar. So Sarai said to Abram, "See now, the LORD has restrained me from bearing children. Please, go in to my maid; perhaps I shall obtain children by her." And Abram heeded the voice of Sarai. Then Sarai, Abram's wife, took Hagar her maid, the Egyptian, and gave her to her husband Abram to be his wife, after Abram had dwelt ten years in the land of Canaan. So he went in to Hagar, and she conceived. And when she saw that she had conceived, her mistress became despised in her eyes. Then Sarai said to Abram, "My wrong be upon you! I gave my maid into your embrace; and when she saw that she had conceived, I became despised in her eyes. The LORD judge between you and me." So Abram said to Sarai, "Indeed your maid is in your*

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*hand; do to her as you please." And when Sarai dealt harshly with her, she fled from her presence. –Genesis 16:1-6*

Life is going along fine, you are minding your business and doing what is expected of you – serving. Without warning someone makes a decision that involves you, without your consent or your input, which alters the trajectory of your life forever. This was the case with Hagar.

The end result of Hagar's 'obedience' to Sarah's request (to sleep with her husband Abram) upended in her life. She gave birth to what was supposed to be a source of rejoicing but it became the source of her rejection – Her son Ishmael.

Fast forward – **Genesis 21:9-16**

In the meantime Sarah got pregnant with the promised child (had she waited)... Genesis 21:1-7. Then one day she saw the son of Hagar mocking her child and she was mortified.

*And Sarah saw the son of Hagar the Egyptian, whom she had borne to Abraham, scoffing*  
– Genesis 21:9

Sarah's solution:

Realizing that she was the mastermind behind this whole mess, and she came up with another solution for Hagar and her son.

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*Therefore she said to Abraham, "Cast out this bondwoman and her son; for the son of this bondwoman shall not be heir with my son, namely with Isaac." And the matter was very displeasing in Abraham's sight because of his son. But God said to Abraham, "Do not let it be displeasing in your sight because of the lad or because of your bondwoman. Whatever Sarah has said to you, listen to her voice; for in Isaac your seed shall be called – **Genesis 21:10-12.***

But God made sure to remind Abram of the promise He made him earlier concerning Ishmael. *"And as for Ishmael, I have heard you. Behold, I have blessed him, and will make him fruitful, and will multiply him exceedingly. He shall beget twelve princes, and I will make him a great nation" – Genesis 17:20)*

Now when Hagar and her son had to go, it grieved Abraham's heart but the Lord reaffirmed His promise to him regarding Ishmael.

*I will also make a nation of the son of the bondwoman, because he is your seed." So Abraham rose early in the morning, and took bread and a skin of water; and putting it on her shoulder, he gave it and the boy to Hagar, and sent her away. –**Genesis 21:13-14b***

- Maybe you were abused by a family member, or abandoned by a spouse for someone else after many years of marriage, or betrayed by a 'loyal' friend...had a miscarriage or had an abortion. And now you are living with the fallout of these

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experiences. Those fateful decision still haunt you. What do you do with all that mess?

#### Hagar Departed

*Then she departed and wandered in the Wilderness of Beersheba. And the water in the skin was used up, and she placed the boy under one of the shrubs. Then she went and sat down across from him at a distance of about a bowshot; for she said to herself, "Let me not see the death of the boy." So she sat opposite him, and lifted her voice and wept. – Genesis 21:14c-16*

This was Hagar's way of dealing with her pain. She wandered in the wilderness and eventually when her own resources dried up, she hid her son Ishmael under the bushes and then she went and sat down a little way from him and said "I don't want to see the death of the boy."

Rejected, abandoned, hungry, despairing, and in pain, Hagar came to the end of herself.

- Unresolved pain will cause you to live a life wandering around in an emotional even mental wilderness. Your inner resources to cope will eventually be depleted and then your next step would be to hide your "Ishmael" under the bushes of pretense and distance yourself from it.

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Now here is where God intervened asking her a penetrating question – “*Hagar, What Aileth Thee*”. This question initiated a transformational journey for her and her son and propelled him into fulfillment of his destiny. The full and intriguing story is found in my book [What Aileth Thee](#) which walks the reader through the details of this journey and its fascinating ending.

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#### **SESSION 2 – GOD’S REPURPOSING PROCESS**

Hagar had come to the end of herself. The food is all gone, she and her boy are abandoned in a wilderness, facing a sure death. She hid her son under some shrubs and went a distance away from it and sat down and wept. She did not know what else to do.

Hagar’s final act of self-preservation

*And the water in the skin was used up, and she placed the boy under one of the shrubs. Then she went and sat down across from him at a distance of about a bowshot; for she said to herself, "Let me not see the death of the boy." So she sat opposite him, and lifted her voice and wept” – Genesis 21:15.*

- For some of us all your strategies, you well-thought out plans, schemes etc. have all failed and you are at wits end. This is typical of what most of us do. We try to cover that which is hurting us, but deep down inside you are crying in desperation.

#### **God’s Intervention Strategy:**

*And God heard the voice of the lad. Then the angel of God called to Hagar out of heaven, and said to her, "What ails you, Hagar? Fear not, for God has heard the voice of the lad where he is. Arise, lift up the lad and hold him with your hand, for I will make him a*

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*great nation." Then God opened her eyes, and she saw a well of water. And she went and filled the skin with water, and gave the lad a drink. So God was with the lad; and he grew and dwelt in the wilderness, and became an archer – Genesis 21:17-21.*

1. **He is Attentive to your Pain** – *“And God heard the voice of the lad where he is”*

- a. You have become one with your pain, regardless of how much you try to distance yourself from it.
- b. Your pain has a voice and it will be heard no matter how much you try to conceal it. God hears it...

- God’s first step in repurposing you pain is that He wants you to know that He has heard you where you are at!

2. **You are on His Agenda** – *“Then the angel of God called to Hagar out of heaven, and said to her”*

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#### **3. He Asks You a Question – “What Aileth Thee.”**

He wants you to acknowledge that there is a problem. We cannot conquer that which we won't confront. Neither what we conceal will be healed. God cut to the chase, basically saying ‘This thing if you keep hiding from it, pretending it doesn't exist, it will kill you – maybe not physically, but it would kill your dreams, your relationships, even your destiny...

#### **4. He Quickly Addresses the Fear – “Fear not” – vs. 17b**

We are afraid of disclosure. We are afraid of being vulnerable, and that is understandable. But where there is no willingness to disclosure it impedes the way to closure.

#### **5. He Reassures You that He is Aware of Your Situation – “For God Has heard the voice of the lad where he is.” vs. 17 c**

Psalm 18:6 - *“In my distress I called upon the LORD; to my God I cried for help. From his temple he heard my voice, and my cry to him reached his ears.*

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Psalm 102:17 – *“He shall regard the prayer of the destitute, and shall not despise their prayer”.*

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#### **SESSION 3 – GOD’S REPURPOSING PROCESS (Cont’d)**

There comes a time that you have to move on. You cannot stay in that position of crying, blaming or bemoaning your situation any longer. God has a bigger purpose for your pain.

The Lord invites you ‘Hagar’ to join Him in participating in your transformational process.

Therefore the next step is to:

##### **1. Alter Your Position – Arise – vs 18c**

To arise’ means *‘to change your posture, or position; to get up from that familiar place’*.

It takes courage to change:

- a. **Get up in your attitude** – *“Why are you cast down, O my soul? And why are you disquieted within me? Hope in God”* – Psalm 42:11a. The writer of the Psalm decided that it was time to have an attitude check. He realized his attitude will determine his altitude – the level to which he would arise. Get up from the depression in which circumstances have kept you (cf. Isaiah 60:1).

Change your attitude toward this situation. It is not too hard for God.

- b. **Get up in your confession** – *“I shall not die, but live, and declare the works of the Lord”* – Psalm 118:17. The Psalmist made a decision; he said, “This thing is not going to kill me.”

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You have to determine and then confess that this thing is not going to kill you because you have an unfinished assignment and that is to “declare the works of the Lord”.

c. **Get up in your praise** – *“For I shall yet praise Him, the help of my countenance and my God”* – Psalm 42: 11b. He made a conscious decision to praise God. Praise will release the presence of God in your situation to work on your behalf.

d. **Get up and change your perspective.** When you change your position your perspective changes as well. You see things differently and from a different vantage point

2. **The Lord Challenges You to Acceptance** – *“Lift up the lad and hold him with your hand...”* – vs. 18b.

*Get up, help the boy up, and grasp his hand ...” vs. 18b ESV*

You have to face the fact of what happened. No judgement – but face it. It stinks but it is what it is.

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God has to take you back to the point of childlikeness, to the point where you lost your innocence, because what we cover we cannot correct.

3. **He Has An Assignment For Your Pain** – *“For I will make him a great nation”* – vs. 18c.

This is a reminder; apparently Hagar forgot what the Lord had promised her in Genesis 16:8-11.

*And He said, "Hagar, servant of Sarai, where have you come from and where are you going?" She said, "I am fleeing from my mistress Sarai." The angel of the LORD said to her, "Return to your mistress and submit to her." 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 shall bear a son. You shall call his name Ishmael, because the LORD has listened to your affliction*

– **Genesis 16:8-11**

- Go back over the prophetic words the Lord gave to you – rehearse them and pray them.

4. **Shift Your Attention to His Abundant Provision** – *“God opened her eyes and she saw a well of water”* – vs. 19a.

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Where was the well all the time? Right there, but Hagar was so absorbed in her pain and distress she was blinded to the presence of that provision.

We often spend too much time focusing on the problem, and miss God's provision right there available to us.

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#### **SESSION 4 – GOD’S PROVIDENCE**

#### **HIS REPURPOSING PLAN ACCOMPLISHED**

*“And God was with the boy, and he grew up. He lived in the wilderness and became an expert with the bow. He lived in the wilderness of Paran, and his mother took a wife for him from the land of Egypt” – Genesis 21:20-21*

#### **Tracing Ishmael’s Ancestry**

Isaac – the father of Jacob was the father of Joseph, therefore Joseph was the grandchild of Isaac. Isaac was Ishmael’s half-brother by their father was Abraham. Therefore Joseph was Ishmael’s great nephew!

Ishmael, the rejected son of Hagar and Abraham, through his descendants, became the instrument God used to save Joseph, his great nephew, from a sure death.

Through this act of buying Joseph from his brothers and then selling him to the Egyptians, God worked out His amazing plan for Joseph and the people of Israel!

Had Ishmael died in the wilderness, as his mother expected, and confessed, it would have been the end of his posterity, there’d be no future descendants. But God had a purpose for him.

You cannot die either, that which was meant to kill you – God is going to repurpose for His glory and you will be very glad!

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We hear of Joseph, the one who saved all Egypt and his family during the famine but how about Ishmael and his descendants – the Ishmaelites?

- How will God repurpose your pain? He is going to give it new purpose. Just as Ishmaelites were the ‘deliverers’ of Joseph, setting him on a trajectory that eventually led to the birth of the nation of Israel (Genesis 46:1-3). So too God is repurposing your painful past and giving you new meaning and impact for the kingdom of God.
- You may have been despised, rejected and left for dead emotionally and otherwise, but let Ishmael's story encourage you. There is something valuable and meaningful that God will use you to do to bless this generation or even the very family of the ones who hurt you.
- Your ‘Ishmael’ is connected to your predestined purpose and ultimately His purpose. When you partner with God to heal your pain it is not only for you but it can have significant impact on the destinies of your children and their children, for generations to come.
- You need to know that there is redemption in your pain. Someone who is left in a pit to die is waiting for your transformation of your ‘Ishmael’ to bring their

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redemption. You may have to go back to help some of the very people who have hurt and crushed you, and who threw you out with hardly any concern for whether you lived or died. You may have to deliver them from some pits, but you will have earned the right to do so because you stayed true to the process and paid the price.

### **God Has the Last Word on Your Pain (Ishmael)**

- God does not waste anything; He will gather up the fragments of your life and put them to good use. The testimony of your ‘Ishmael’ will live on long after you are gone.

### **SUGGESTED READING:**

[What Aileth Thee](#): *The probing question God asks that can lead to your healing*

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#### ACTIVATION EXERCISES

God always has a plan in place for your restoration. Just as He did for yours and my salvation before the foundations of the earth.

1. *What Aileth Thee?* – Genesis 21:17a. What is ailing you?

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2. *God Addresses Your Fear* – List the things you are afraid of.

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3. *God Acknowledges that He is Aware of Your Situation* – Write out scriptures of affirmation that God is with you and knows your situation.

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4. ***God Challenges You to Arise*** – Are you ready to shift your position? What do you need to do in order to make that shift?

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5. ***Accept Your Ishmael*** – No more running or denial. Are you willing to face your Ishmael(s), without shame or blame? What would you need to do in order to accept your Ishmael(s)?

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6. ***God's Abundant Provision is Available*** – Identify the ways that God has provided for you and your 'Ishmael'.

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7. ***Apply God's Provision*** – Identify practical ways in which you could apply God's provision.

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8. ***Realize Your Ishmael Has an Assignment*** – Write out a declaration that states that God is going to turn this pain, hurt and rejection around for His glory.

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9. How do you think your repurposed ‘Ishmael’ experience could be used to help others?

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**About Linda Jones**

Rev. Linda Jones is an ordained minister, an expository Bible teacher, an author of several books geared to bringing healing to women and by extension their families and empowerment to the Body of Christ. She pastored a ministry for several years but now is an itinerant minister. Linda is passionate about teaching and equipping individuals so that they are released to walk in freedom, healing and wholeness, and empowered to fulfil the God-given call on their lives. She does this through the various ministries she has founded: – Linda P. Jones Ministries, Women of Worth Ministries and its Mentorship Academy – **WOWMA**

Rev. Linda has hosted seminars, workshops, conferences and productions, and is a sought after speaker. She is very personable in her teaching style; her teachings are practical, profound and yet easy to understand; overall she does not compromise the truth of God's Word.

Rev. Linda holds a Master of Practical Theology from Master's International University of Divinity, Evansville, Indiana, U.S.A, and a Bachelor of Theology from Christian International School, Santa Rosa Beach Florida U.S.A.

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