

Heavenly Composting



**How God Makes
the Evil, Bad, Terrible, and Horrible Things
of Our Lives Work for Good**

Part 2

**The Consequences of
Your Worst Mistakes
Do Not Have to be the
End of the Story**

Genesis 16:1

Now Sarai, Abram's wife, had not been able to bear children for him. But she had an Egyptian servant named Hagar.

Genesis 16:2

So Sarai said to Abram, “The Lord has prevented me from having children. Go and sleep with my servant. Perhaps I can have children through her.” And Abram agreed with Sarai’s proposal.

Genesis 16:3

So Sarai, Abram's wife, took Hagar the Egyptian servant and gave her to Abram as a wife. (This happened ten years after Abram had settled in the land of Canaan.)

Genesis 16:4

So Abram had sexual relations with Hagar, and she became pregnant.

But when Hagar knew she was pregnant, she began to treat her mistress, Sarai, with contempt.

Genesis 16:5

Then Sarai said to Abram, “This is all your fault! I put my servant into your arms, but now that she’s pregnant she treats me with contempt. The Lord will show who’s wrong—you or me!”

Genesis 16:6

Abram replied, “Look, she is your servant, so deal with her as you see fit.” Then Sarai treated Hagar so harshly that she finally ran away.

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Heavenly Composting

It is a collaborative process that compiles all of the evil, bad, terrible, and horrible events of your life in order to transform and repurpose them for His good and your good.

The process of Heavenly Composting requires a collaboration between you and God. Through it you get to co-labor with God to intentionally transform all of the events of your life that you thought were a total waste, forever lost, unspeakable, unforgiveable, and un-healable;

So that they can go from being a disgusting, toxic wasteland to becoming good, nutrient-rich fertilizer that will specifically feed and fuel your spiritual growth. That same spiritual fertilizer will help you produce sweet, healthy, beautiful, spiritual fruit in your life.

The Necessary Elements

- **The Word of God (the water)**
- **The presence of the Holy Spirit (the air)**
- **Love, Forgiveness, Mercy, Grace (the micro-organisms)**

The Necessary Elements

- **A safe space to take all of the garbage (the compost bin)**
- **A spiritual guide to help you see the events from God's point of view (turning over the pile)**

The Necessary Elements

- **A spiritual family that will love you through the smelly process (greens and browns)**
- **Repeat, repeat, repeat**
- **Unknown Amount of Time**

Principle #1

God does not promise to bring good to us in every situation.

The Not So Good

- **Sarai is barren her whole life**
- **Hagar is a slave**
- **Abram's child with Hagar creates a problem between him and Sarai**
- **Hagar begins to treat Sarai with contempt**

The Not So Good

- **The relationships between Abram, Sarai, Hagar, Ishmael, and Isaac are all very dysfunctional**
- **God's first chosen family will suffer the consequences of this decision for many, many years.**

Principle #1

God does not promise to bring good to us in every situation.

Principle #2

When scripture says that “all things work together for good” it also includes our worst mistakes.

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Now Sarai, Abram's wife, had not been able to bear children for him. But she had an Egyptian servant named Hagar.

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Ancient Near East Customs

If Gilimninu bears children, Shennima shall not take another wife. But if Gilimninu fails to bear children, Gilimninu shall get for Shennima a woman from the Lullu

Ancient Near East Customs

country (a slave girl) as concubine.
In that case, Gilimninu herself shall
have authority over the offspring.

- Harvard Semitic Studies 5:67

Ancient Near East Customs

Laqipum took (in marriage) Hatala, the daughter of Enishru. In the country Laqipum shall not take (in marriage) another (woman), (but) in the city (of Ashshur) he may take (in

Ancient Near East Customs

marriage) a priestess. If within two years she has not procured offspring for him, only she may buy a maid-servant and even later on, after she procures somehow an infant for

Ancient Near East Customs

him, she may sell her wherever
she pleases.

- *Hamilton, Genesis 1-17, pg 444.*

Sarai's Mistakes

- **Believes that she can give Abram the promised child through Hagar**
- **She blames Abram for the fact that Hagar is treating her with contempt**

Sarai's Mistakes

- **Sarai treats Hagar so cruelly that Hagar runs away and takes what Sarai believes is the promised child with her.**
- **This puts Sarai back at square one**

Principle #2

When scripture says that “all things work together for good” it also includes our worst mistakes.

Principle #3

The process of Heavenly Composting takes time. It usually takes a lot more time than we want it to take.

Genesis 16:16

Abram was eighty-six years old
when Ishmael was born.

Genesis 17:1

When Abram was ninety-nine years old, the Lord appeared to him and said, “I am El-Shaddai—‘God Almighty.’ Serve me faithfully and live a blameless life.

Principle #3

The process of Heavenly Composting takes time. It usually takes a lot more time than we want it to take.

Principle #4

God's ability to bring blessings from even our most terrible and horrible mistakes flows from His merciful loving heart, because He is a Good, Good Father.

Genesis 17:1

When Abram was ninety-nine years old, the Lord appeared to him and said, “I am El-Shaddai—‘God Almighty.’ Serve me faithfully and live a blameless life.

Genesis 17:2

I will make a covenant with you, by which I will guarantee to give you countless descendants.”

Genesis 17:3

At this, Abram fell face down on the ground. Then God said to him,

Genesis 17:4

“This is my covenant with you: I will make you the father of a multitude of nations.

Genesis 17:5

What's more, I am changing your name. It will no longer be Abram.

Instead, you will be called Abraham, for you will be the father of many nations.

Genesis 17:15

Then God said to Abraham,
“Regarding Sarai, your wife—her
name will no longer be Sarai. From
now on her name will be Sarah.

Genesis 17:16

**And I will bless her and give you
a son from her! Yes, I will bless
her richly, and she will become
the mother of many nations.
Kings of nations will be among
her descendants.”**

Principle #4

God's ability to bring blessings from even our most terrible and horrible mistakes flows from His merciful loving heart, because He is a Good, Good Father.

Principle #5

**Whenever and wherever our
terrible and horrible mistakes
increase, God's gracious unmerited
favor increases even more!**

Genesis 17:17

Then Abraham bowed down to the ground, but he laughed to himself.

“How could I become a father at the age of 100?” he thought. “And how can Sarah have a baby when she is ninety years old?”

Genesis 17:18

So Abraham said to God,
“May Ishmael live under your
special blessing!”

Genesis 17:19

But God replied, “No—Sarah, your wife, will give birth to a son for you. You will name him Isaac, and I will confirm my covenant with him and his descendants as an everlasting covenant.

Genesis 18:10

Then one of them said, “I will return to you about this time next year, and your wife, Sarah, will have a son!” Sarah was listening to this conversation from the tent.

Genesis 18:11

Abraham and Sarah were both very old by this time, and Sarah was long past the age of having children.

Genesis 18:12

So she laughed silently to herself and said, “How could a worn-out woman like me enjoy such pleasure, especially when my master, my husband, is also so old?”

Genesis 18:13

Then the Lord said to Abraham,
“Why did Sarah laugh? Why did she
say, ‘Can an old woman like me
have a baby?’”

Genesis 18:14

Is anything too hard for the Lord? I will return about this time next year, and Sarah will have a son.”

Genesis 18:15

Sarah was afraid, so she denied it,
saying, “I didn’t laugh.”

But the Lord said,
“No, you did laugh.”

Principle #5

**Whenever and wherever our
terrible and horrible mistakes
increase, God's gracious unmerited
favor increases even more!**

Principle #6

With God, our mistakes are never wasted, because He repurposes them as excellent training grounds aimed at propelling us forward into the next level of our faith and true Christlikeness.

Principle #7

**Good must always be defined from
God's point of view.**

Where's My Miracle?



Joni Eareckson - 1967

Joni's Good?

- **At 17, a careless dive into shallow water left her as a quadriplegic**
- **Too disabled to commit suicide**
- **Came to Christ after her accident,
-If I can't die, show me how to live.**

Joni's Good?

- She is a best selling artist
- She is a best selling author
- Her daily radio program received *The Radio Program of the Year award* from the national religious broadcasters in 2002.

Joni's Good?

- **Founder and President of *Joni and Friends*, an organization that “accelerates Christian ministry in the disability community.”**
- **She has earned 8 honorary doctorates & won over 22 awards**

Joni's Good?

- **Several appearances on *Larry King Live***
- **Diagnosed with stage 3 breast cancer in 2010. Has been cancer free since 2015.**

Joni's Good?

- **Diagnosed with a different cancer 2018. Cancer free again in 2019.**
- **Married Ken Tada in 1982**
- **She remains a quadriplegic today, 54 years later.**

Principle #7

**Good must always be defined from
God's point of view first.**

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