

A WIFE FOR ISAAC

(Genesis 24)

Introduction: v.1-2: The marriage of our child is an extremely important matter; take it seriously!
How should a young person know who to marry? How does he/she find God's will for a mate?
**** Observe some Biblical principles for spouse finding in the example of Isaac & Rebekah***

I. ISAAC WAS <u>PATIENT</u> IN WAITING FOR GOD'S CHOICE FOR HIS SPOUSE
(He didn't marry until he was 40 years old – Genesis 25:20)

II. ISAAC WAS <u>NOT</u> TO MARRY AN <u>UNBELIEVING CANAANITE</u> (V.3)
(No child of God should unequally yoke up with an unbeliever – 2 Corinthians 6:14-18)

III. ISAAC WAS TO TRUST THE <u>DISCRETION</u> AND <u>INFLUENCE</u> OF HIS <u>FATHER</u> IN THE SELECTION OF HIS SPOUSE. (V.4-61)
(Abraham via his trusted servant Eliezer would arrange for Isaac's marriage- v.4-11)
How do you look for a spouse for your children?

A. Look to God in <u>prayer;</u> (Ask for His kind blessing) (v.12,15)

B. Look for <u>godly initiative</u> and <u>a servant's heart</u> in the potential spouse (v.13-14)

C. Look for one who would be physically <u>attractive</u> and <u>morally pure</u> (v.16)

D. Look for one who shows the virtues of <u>kindness</u>, <u>respect</u>, and <u>diligence</u> (v.17-27)

E. Meet the <u>parents</u>, whose authority the young person is under until given away in marriage (v.28-61)
1. Seek the <u>parental blessing</u> on the relationship (v.50-56; 60)
2. Allow the single person's <u>right to agree to the relationship</u> or not (v.57-59)

IV. ISAAC EVIDENTLY HAD A <u>PERSONAL</u>, <u>CLOSE</u>, <u>FELLOWSHIP WITH GOD</u> PRIOR TO MEETING GOD'S CHOICE FOR HIS LIFE (V.62-63)
(He spent time in quiet "meditation" with God)

V. REBEKAH WAS IMMEDIATELY <u>ATTRACTED</u> TO ISAAC, YET PRACTICED <u>MODESTY</u> IN HIS PRESENCE (V.64-65)

VI. ISAAC <u>LOVED</u> THE ONE HE MARRIED AND FOUND <u>COMFORT</u> IN HER COMPANIONSHIP (V.66-67)

Conclusion: The clear emphasis of Gen.24 centers on <u>God</u>. Trust Him to sovereignly work in the selection of your life's mate! *He gives the best to those who leave the choice with Him!*



A WIFE FOR ISAAC

(Genesis 24)

Introduction: v.1-2.

To find a good wife is to find a great treasure.

Proverbs 31:10
Who can find a virtuous woman? for her price is far above rubies.

Proverbs 18:22
Whoso findeth a wife findeth a good thing, and obtaineth favour of the Lord.

The undeniable heart of this story in Gen. 24 involves God's providential fulfillment of His promise to make for Abraham from Isaac a great nation.

He guides in every detail in the acquisition of a bride for Isaac. As verse 27 records, "The Lord led me."

God is still interested to guide in the matter of marriage if we will let Him.

v. 1
"Abraham was old" – Since Abraham had Isaac when he was 100, and since Isaac married at 40, Abraham would be about 140 at this time.

"The Lord had blessed Abraham in all things" - This chapter would be a continuation of God's blessing on Abraham's life.

"Thigh" – loins. The mid-section of the body where the hip meets the torso. The place from which life stems; the source of reproduction.

Basically the word refers to the lower abdomen (cp. Song 7:1; Num. 5:21). [EX: Jacob was smitten in the hollow of his thigh (Gen. 32:25, 31f), and would limp as a result.]

"The thigh stands for man's foundation (e.g. Jud. 3:16, 21) and for the source of life. Thus a hand placed under the thigh affirmed the strongest oath, especially during the patriarchal age" (T.W.O.T., p. 408) (cp. Jacob requested a similar oath from Joseph – Gen. 47:29).

"Eldest servant" – Eliezer was Abraham's most mature, faithful servant.

Why wouldn't Abraham himself go and find a wife for his son?

1) He may have been <u>too old</u> for the rigors of the journey (v. 1)

**2) He did not have God's permission to ever leave the land God gave him and go back to the place God took him from (Note: He didn't even want his son to leave Canaan land – v. 6).

v. 2-3
Abraham asks Eliezer to make a serious vow about a serious matter.

Marriage is the second most important decision anyone makes in their life, the first being their decision to trust God and surrender their life to Him.

The marriage of our child is an extremely important matter; take it seriously!

How should a young person know who to marry? How does he/she find God's will for a mate?

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I. ISAAC WAS <u>PATIENT</u> IN WAITING FOR GOD'S CHOICE FOR HIS SPOUSE

(He didn't marry until he was 40 years old – Genesis 25:20)

Of all decisions of life, the one to marry must not be rushed. God's timing is perfect. Wait on Him!

Isaac was celibate for 40 years. Christian young people must in like manner exercise self-control and restraint in the area of sexual temptation.

II. ISAAC WAS <u>NOT</u> TO MARRY AN <u>UNBELIEVING CANAANITE</u> (V.3)

(No child of God should unequally yoke up with an unbeliever – 2 Corinthians 6:14-18)

Genesis 6:2
That the sons of God saw the daughters of men that they were fair; and they took them wives of all which they chose.

> As far back as the Mosaic Law, God forbade His people from intermarrying with ungodly pagans (Deut. 7:3-4 - Neither shalt thou make marriages with them; thy daughter thou shalt not give unto his son, nor his daughter shalt thou take unto thy son.

4 For they will turn away thy son from following me, that they may serve other gods: so will the anger of the LORD be kindled against you, and destroy thee suddenly.)

Intermarriage with foreigners led to the corruption of Israel after they entered Canaan land (Jud. 3:5-6 - And the children of Israel dwelt among the Canaanites, Hittites, and Amorites, and Perizzites, and Hivites, and Jebusites:
6 And they took their daughters to be their wives, and gave their daughters to their sons, and served their gods.

Solomon's intermarriage with foreign wives led to his ruin (Neh. 13:25b-26 - saying, Ye shall not give your daughters unto their sons, nor take their daughters unto your sons, or for yourselves.
26 Did not Solomon king of Israel sin by these things? yet among many nations was there no king like him, who was beloved of his God, and God made him king over all Israel: nevertheless even him did outlandish women cause to sin.

In Ezra's day, the same intermarriage occurred (Ez. 9:2 - For they have taken of their daughters for themselves, and for their sons: so that the holy seed have mingled themselves with the people of those lands: yea, the hand of the princes and rulers hath been chief in this trespass.

Unequal yokes (cp. Deut. 22:10) between a saved person and an unsaved are a direct violation of God's Word!

II Cor. 6:14 - Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness?

Unequal yokes make for bad marriages because . . .

1) The couple does not share a common relationship with God (He should be the center of every Christian marriage)

2) The couple has a different world view, different standards of ethics and morals

3) The couple is destined for problems due to different goals, different motives and methodologies, different basic understandings regarding the home. Such as:
   (1) Roles and responsibilities
   (2) Convictions regarding the permanence of marriage
   (3) Love and submission
   (4) Child rearing and discipline

III. ISAAC WAS TO TRUST THE DISCRETION AND INFLUENCE OF HIS FATHER IN THE SELECTION OF HIS SPOUSE. (V.4-61)

(Abraham via his trusted servant Eliezer would arrange for Isaac's marriage- v.4-11)

v. 10

Ten camels would perhaps be needed to carry all of the bride's possessions back to Canaan!

v. 11

Eliezer wisely goes first to where he would come in contact with the most young female prospects.

If you want to catch a fish, sometimes you have to go where the most "fish" are! (Many go off to Bible College and end up finding their life's partner there).

Dating is an American custom. "Dating as practiced in the United States is a social custom peculiar to this country. Observers from other countries and also American's of the older generation, whose social customs differed from those of today, view the current dating system with bewilderment and alarm" (Landis & Landis).

Why did dating develop in America? Because of a large variety of life styles, speech, dress, values, child-rearing methods, spiritual qualities, etc.

What is wrong with a dating arrangement which tends to avoid or neglect parental involvement or oversight?

1) Dating creates an awkward environment for many (especially those with shy personalities) to make contact and establish relationships with the opposite sex.

2) Unsupervised dating opens the door for sexual temptation (the plug of a hand grenade has been pulled)

3) Dating without parental involvement makes it difficult for many to break off a relationship that they think is not the one for them.

4) Dating misses out on the wisdom and insight that otherwise might be offered by parents who can look beyond looks and discern character more easily.

5) Dating creates an artificial environment for evaluating another person's character (we need to see each other in the real-life settings of family and friends) (Jeffrey Vasquez).

6) Dating often leads to premature, hurtful deepening relationships (don't date if you are not ready for the responsibility of caring for a mate.)

7) Dating often ties up so much time and attention that it isolates the couple from other important relationships.

8) Dating can actually pave the way and condition the couple for a future divorce

(When dating, a guy meets a girl, dates her, and then after some time he sees he doesn't like her, so he dumps her. Then he finds another one and does the same. This goes on and on until finally he marries. After a time in the marriage, he finds he doesn't like her, so what is his natural preconditioned impulse? To dump her.)

9) Dating will often result in baggage from previous deep relationships being carried into a future marriage (guilt, suspicions, jealousy, comparisons, disillusionment, etc.)

10) Due to dating, "once marriage does occur, the couple no longer feels the need to focus on winning each other's hearts. The relationship begins to cool off." (Gothard)

Excursis:

A case for Biblical Courtship and parental involvement in the selection of qualified partners for our children (as opposed to the common practice of Westernized "dating")

What the Bible says about…
Courtship & Marriage

1. Teach your children the basic virtuous characteristics that will <u>prepare</u> them for courtship and marriage.

Teach your teenagers about:

a. Genuine <u>love</u> (I Cor. 13)
b. Accepting God's <u>timing</u> and <u>will</u> (Gen. 29:20; Prov. 3:5-6; Ja. 4:15)
c. The importance of <u>good friendships</u> (I Cor. 15:33)
d. <u>Priorities</u> (Mt. 6:33)
   Parents must explain to their teen what to look for in a mate.
   --Godliness over glamour
   --Personal character is priority over personal appearance (Prov. 31:30)
e. Design for <u>sex</u> in <u>marriage</u> and standards of <u>moral purity</u> (I Thess. 4:1--8; Heb. 13:4; I Cor. 7:1-5; Prov. 5:18-21; Ps. 101:3)

2. Teach your children about <u>proper courtship</u>:

What procedure should Christian girls follow in a courtship relationship?

1) Remember you are under the authority of your father until you marry (I Cor. 7:36-38).

2) Before starting to court a young man, meet with your father (whether or not he is a Christian) and share with him your goals for marriage: that yours will be the kind of marriage God wants, and thus be the happiest possible.

3) Agree that any boy who wants to court you must first ask your father for permission.

a) It makes the boy appreciate you more because what is easily gotten is not usually appreciated.

b) It decreases the temptation of the boy to mistreat you. If he thinks you are completely on your own, it increases the risk that he will try something.

c) It proves to the boy that your father loves you.

d) It gives your father a chance to discern the boy's intentions. A woman is more affected by actions than by motives, but a man discerns first the motive.

e) It places the boy under your father's counsel, which is exactly where he should be if the relationship grows into marriage.

4) Agree that anytime a fellow starts talking to you about marriage you will say, *"If you are thinking about marriage, you had better talk to my father."* This is tremendously important because so often talk about marriage is just camouflaged lust.

3. Teach your children about discerning <u>God's will</u>.

How can your children know who is the right one for marriage?

Follow God's principles for courtship:

a. Be submitted and obedient to the advice and discretion of your parents (Eph. 6:1-2).

b. Determine that you will court only <u>Christians</u> (I Cor. 7:39; II Cor. 6:14-18).
God forbids the intermarriage of a believer with a non-believer (SEE: Gen. 24:3-4, 28:1-2; Ex. 34:12-16; Deut. 7:3-4; Ezra 9:10-12; Neb. 10:30).

c. Determine that you will strive to be the right one, rather than focusing on meeting the "right one" (Rom. 12:1-2).

d. Be busy doing the general will of God, and He will guide you in the specifics of His will (Phil. 2:12-13; Prov. 3:5-6).

e. Purpose in your heart that you will not defile yourself or defraud the one you court (I Cor. 7:1-2; I Th. 4:6).

f. Decide that the one you marry must enhance your ministry, not diminish or destroy it (Is she a "helpmeet" [Gen. 2:18] or a hindrance?).

g. Yield your plans to God's will in the vital area of courtship and marriage (desire His will above all else) (Mt. 6:33).

h. Wait for God's timing (Eccl. 3:1). Patience is a key virtue. It requires absolute trust in God and His timing.

4. Teach your children what to avoid in a courtship relationship.

a. Avoid the "steady" relationship until the time is right.
(Have several friends and let God bring the right one alone in His time)

b. Avoid situations and circumstances that might involve temptations and trouble (don't be alone in secluded places).

c. Avoid physical involvement (lust can't wait until marriage; but true love can).

How do you look for a spouse for your children?

A. Look to God in prayer; (Ask for His kind blessing) (v.12,15)

v. 12
Trusting God is the key to attaining all successes in life! (Prov. 3:5-6)

We must begin praying towards our children's future marriage partner.
Now is a good time to start!

B. Look for godly initiative and a servant's heart in the potential spouse (v.13-14)

v. 14
"I will give thy camels drink" –

To show kindness to an old man who requests water would be customary, but to willingly offer water for his ten camels would be extraordinary.

Do you realize how much water ten camels could drink??

Eliezer is not merely "throwing out a fleece" (as Gideon did) to determine God's will; he is looking for a girl with initiative and a servant's heart. This was a character test.

"The details of his test were not arbitrarily chosen; they would indicate a kind and industrious nature in the woman." (Ross, p. 419).

v. 15
God often answers prayers before we are done asking!

Abraham's great-niece would be the first female to appear after Eliezer opened his eyes from prayer!

C. Look for one who would be physically <u>attractive</u> and <u>morally pure</u> (v.16)

"Very fair to look upon" - When God calls someone beautiful, they surely must be beautiful!

Physical attractiveness is important, but it is not most important.

Before anyone marries, there should be a physical attraction, some "chemistry."

And truly, beauty is in the eyes of the beholder.

"A virgin" – It should be the goal of every Christian girl to remain sexually pure all the way to marriage, and parents must pray and oversee the child toward this end.

It is a shame for an unmarried Christian to engage in sexual activity apart from marriage! Fornication should not be named among us <u>even once</u>!

D. Look for one who shows the virtues of <u>kindness</u>, <u>respect</u>, and <u>diligence</u> (v.17-27)

v. 18
Rebekah's kindness and respect is evident by her words and actions.

Young men, the best way to see how that girl is going to treat you is to find out how she treats others (especially how she treats her parents or those in authority in her life).

v. 19-20
What toil! To fill waterpots to quench the thirst of **"all ten camels"** is no small task!

Beware of the lazy girl! Stay away from the dead head!

The female whose room is untidy, who does little toward household chores, is hardly ready for the responsibilities of marriage!

Marry a worker! Not one who will lie around the house all day eating chocolates!

v. 21
"Wondering at her" – Her diligent spirit <u>amazed</u> Eliezer. He couldn't believe what he saw!

v. 22
Rebekah never expected to be remunerated with such abundance for her kindness!

v. 26-27
Eliezer throughout this chapter is constantly seeing God's blessing in answer to his prayers!

E. Meet the <u>parents</u>, whose authority the young person is under until given away in marriage (v.28-61)

v. 33

Eliezer hadn't come for a banquet; he came for business! A man on a mission.

v. 36
Rebekah's financial security would be a concern to Bethuel, especially since she would travel so far that he might never see her again.

v. 42-48
Eliezer makes it known how God has been leading him, and that the circumstances involving Rebekah were too coincidental to be accidental.

1. Seek the <u>parental blessing</u> on the relationship (v.50-56; 60)

   v. 50
   Giving a daughter away in marriage is something that seems to the parents as **"neither bad or good."**

   When God is in the situation, it certainly is not bad; and if you are about to lose a daughter, it doesn't feel too good!

   v. 55
   We will see later that when it comes to money, Laban is never in a hurry to see the potential of it leaving him too quickly.

2. Allow the single person's <u>right to agree to the relationship</u> or not (v.57-59)

   v. 58
   Such a decision to go required <u>faith</u> on Rebekah's part.

   Like the believer's relationship to Jesus Christ, Rebekah would. . .

   1) Believe the testimony of a man she had never met.
   2) Go to a land from which she would never return.
   3) Marry a man she had never seen ("whom having not seen, ye love" – 1 Peter 1:8)

   Rebekah felt she was ready for marriage, the time was right, and this young man Isaac was evidently God's choice for her.

IV. ISAAC EVIDENTLY HAD A <u>PERSONAL</u>, <u>CLOSE</u>, <u>FELLOWSHIP WITH GOD</u> PRIOR TO MEETING GOD'S CHOICE FOR HIS LIFE (V.62-63)

(He spent time in quiet "meditation" with God)

v. 63

"Meditate" – The basic meaning of this verb seems to be "rehearse" "repent" or "go over a matter in one's mind" (T.W.O.T., p. 875).

1) It is used of <u>silent reflection</u> on God and His <u>works</u> (Psalm 104:34 My meditation of him shall be sweet: I will be glad in the Lord.)

2) And the word is used of one's musing or pondering over God's <u>Word</u> (Ps. 119:15, 23, 48, 78, 148) Psalm 119:148
Mine eyes prevent the night watches, that I might meditate in thy word.

The New Testament servant of God is also exhorted to practice such meditation.

Be busy walking with God and living for God and He will provide you with His choice for a spouse!

God's will is found in the path of devotion and service!

God steers you as you are moving for Him! He doesn't "steer parked cars!"

V. REBEKAH WAS IMMEDIATELY <u>ATTRACTED</u> TO ISAAC, YET PRACTICED <u>MODESTY</u> IN HIS PRESENCE (V.64-65)

v. 64
So as not to be what they would consider immodestly exposed, Rebekah gets up off the camel and prepares to meet (for the first time) the man she would marry.

v. 65
Isaac evidently immediately caught her eye. Her heart no doubt beat a faster paced pitter-patter!

"She took a veil and covered herself" – This was done as a sign of modesty and respect. The veil would be large enough to wrap around both face and body (Ryrie note).

1Ti 2:9 - In like manner also, that women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with <u>shamefacedness and sobriety</u>; not with broided hair, or gold, or pearls, or costly array;

"Shamefacedness" - not revealing, suggestive, sensual or sexual orientated clothing; Wear the modest clothing of a godly woman, who would not blush in shame, because she does not wear that of a harlot.

"sobriety" - sensible; clothing that reflects self-control & self-discipline.

Immodesty is associated with ***<u>shame</u>***:

Re 16:15 Behold, I come as a thief. Blessed is he that watcheth, and keepeth his garments, lest he walk naked, and they see his shame.

Immodesty is associated with ***whoredom***:
Eze 16:36,38 Thus saith the Lord GOD; Because thy filthiness was poured out, and thy nakedness discovered through thy whoredoms with thy lovers…I will judge thee.
Pr 7:10 And, behold, there met him a woman *with* the attire of an harlot, and subtil of heart.

Immodesty is associated with ***drunkenness***:
Hab 2:15¶ Woe unto him that giveth his neighbour drink, that puttest thy bottle to him, and makest him drunken also, that thou mayest look on their nakedness!

Immodesty is associated with ***demon possession***:
*Luke 8:27 And when he went forth to land, there met him out of the city a certain man, which had devils long time, and **ware no clothes**, neither abode in any house, but in the tombs.*
After Salvation the man was clothed:
*35 Then they went out to see what was done; and came to Jesus, and found the man, out of whom the devils were departed, sitting at the feet of Jesus, **clothed**, and in his right mind:*

No one's nakedness should be exposed to anyone other than one's spouse:
See Lev.18. Note: Le 18:6- *None of you shall approach to any that is near of kin to him, to uncover their nakedness: I am the LORD.*

You should not dress so as to provoke the sexual interest and desire of others:
Mt 5:28 But I say unto you, That whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart.

Clothing on a woman should not be **tight**
Clothing on a woman should not be **above the knees** (exposing the thighs) (Isa.47:2,3)
Clothing on a woman should not be **low cut** (exposing the back or breasts)

VI. ISAAC LOVED THE ONE HE MARRIED AND FOUND COMFORT IN HER COMPANIONSHIP (V.66-67)

V. 66

Isaac gets to hear how God led this woman to him via Eliezer.

v. 67

Besides the marriage arrangement, the consummation actually established the marriage.

Sex is only for marriage! Never should it occur before!

"He loved her" – The Bible never says to marry the one you love, but rather to love the one you married!

We have it all backwards in our pagan society.

"Was comforted" – Consoled and encouraged.

A good wife will not be a grief to be borne, but a blessing to be enjoyed!
Rebekah would meet emotional needs in Isaac's life that only a godly female could do, especially in light of the loss of his mother.

Conclusion: The clear emphasis of Gen.24 centers on God. Trust Him to sovereignly work in the selection of your life's mate! *He gives the best to those who leave the choice with Him!*

Many commentators see parallels between Eliezer's acquiring a bride for Isaac and the Holy Spirit's ministry in acquiring a Bride for Jesus Christ.

It is clearly evident that Isaac typifies Christ in many respects (from his miraculous birth to his being the only begotten (heb. 11:17) and dearly beloved son of his father (Gen. 2:2; Lk. 3:22) to his being offered up on Mt. Moriah, and now to the acquisition of his bride.

Don't Date – Wait!

Don't Date Alone – Take a Chaperone

Don't Act Wed 'til the "Do's" Are Said