

It's A Love Story, Reby Just Say "Yes"

Courtship & Marriage

Genesis 24

12 Principles That Somewhat Emerge From Genesis 24

(Extracted principles – not direct application of methods for today – unless you want your parents to arrange it for you)

1. _____: **Involve Your Parents In The Selection Process (1-2)**
2. _____: **Look For A Spouse Who Shares A Passion For Faith (3-4)**
3. _____: **Respect Each Other's Will – Don't Be Manipulative (5-9)**
4. _____: **Pray For The Lord's Guidance And Will (10-15)**
5. _____: **Appreciate God's Passion For Holiness (16; cf. 1 Thess 4:3-6)**
6. _____: **Look For Character To Be Revealed Through Actions (17-25)**
7. _____: **Finding A Spouse Is An Act Of Worship (26-27)**
8. _____: **Honor The Prospective In-Laws (28-49)**
9. _____: **Having Both Sets Of Parents Affirming God's Will Is Significant (50-54)**
10. _____: **Allow Tim To Affirm Willingness And Commitment (55-58)**
11. _____: **Marriage Is Both A Release And A Commitment (59-66)**
12. _____: **Be Ready To Love Your Spouse Like Christ Loves Us (67; Phil 2:3-4)**

Conclusion:

1. Trust the Lord to guide you to your major relationships and milestones in your life.
2. The Lord will lead us – we just need to walk with Him.
3. Marriage is a picture of Christ's love for us.

4. This story is also a picture of Pentecost. The Father sends an unnamed servant to bring a bride for His Son. The ministry of the Holy Spirit brings the Church to the Son of God as commissioned by the Heavenly Father.

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1. **Parents: Involve Your Parents In The Selection Process (1-2)**
2. **Partisanship: Look For A Spouse Who Shares A Passion For Faith (3-4)**
3. **Patience: Respect Each Other's Will – Don't Be Manipulative (5-9)**
4. **Prayer: Pray For The Lord's Guidance And Will (10-15)**
5. **Purity: Appreciate God's Passion For Holiness (16; cf. 1 Thess 4:3-6)**
6. **Perception: Look For Character To Be Revealed Through Actions (17-25)**
7. **Praise: Finding A Spouse Is An Act Of Worship (26-27)**
8. **Participate: Honor The Prospective In-Laws (28-49)**
9. **Permission: Having Both Sets Of Parents Affirming God's Will Is Significant (50-54)**
10. **Patience: Allow Tim To Affirm Willingness And Commitment (55-58)**
11. **Preparation: Marriage Is Both A Release And A Commitment (59-66)**
12. **Preference: Be Ready To Love Your Spouse Like Christ Loves Us (67; cf. Phil 2:3-4)**

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Introduction:

- A survey shows that 40% of respondents date more because they have a smart phone
 - <http://cmr.biola.edu/podcast/2017/jun/21/influence-technology-relationships-pt-2/>
- The terms "dating" and "courtship" are not found in the Bible
- We should not be legalistic or judgmental on a dating style
- The only biblical method we see is "arranged marriage" by parents
- There are a lot of people who knock "dating" as being unbiblical

A. Dating

- A man and woman familiarize themselves with each other in one-on-one settings
- Clarification of the relationship happens over time
- One might pull out of the relationship saying "I just want to be friends" or "I don't believe this relationship is God's will for marriage"
- Breaking up can cause great pain and dating critics are trying blame the process of dating for this hurt. Breaking up a courtship can be hurtful as well.
- But dating can be done with respect.
- Couples who don't respect each other can give a bad name to dating through:
 - "hooking up"
 - premarital sex
 - defrauding
 - leading others on by lying or flatter
- If honor, respect, purity and honesty are preeminent by those in a dating relationship, then there is no biblical argument to criticize this method.
- "Simply put, the 'courtship' concept is a reaction to the dating model that is thought by many to be unhealthy. Dating couples go through a series of short-term and often unsatisfying relationships over a period of five or 10 years or longer. They are being taught to flit from one relationship to another like a honeybee buzzing from flower to flower. Why would they not be inclined later to bail out on a marriage partner when bored or frustrated? Dating also encourages sexual familiarity and experimentation. It isn't difficult to understand why an increasing number of parents feel this traditional model undermines commitment, exclusivity, and permanence in marriage." (James Dobson, Focus on the Family magazine, www.family.org)

B. Courtship

- The young man will ask the father for permission to get to know the daughter
- The intention of wanting to get to know the young lady for the purpose of considering marriage is stated immediately
- The couple spends more time in family activities than going out on dates
- The relationship is developed in a family and group setting

- Marriage is the objective, not entertainment, ego-building or romance as end goals

12 Principles That Somewhat Emerge From Genesis 24

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1. Parents: Involve Your Parents In The Selection Process (1-2)

1 Abraham was now very old, and the Lord had blessed him in every way. **2** He said to the senior servant in his household, the one in charge of all that he had, "Put your hand under my thigh.

- Abraham is 140 years old at this point. He will live another 37 years.
- Sarah just passed away (ch. 23)
- Having Isaac marry and have children is the next step to God's Promise being fulfilled in the Abrahamic Covenant
- Abraham sent his servant (don't know who servant is)
- Not sure if this is Eliezer (15:2-3) – if it is, he'd be quite old by this point; but Abraham trusted him with the most important things of his life
- Abraham was distinguished enough to hire a dating service for his son (his servant)
- Called: "Water Meets Camel" (instead of Coffee Meets Bagels)
- **Seek Their Trust**
 - the more you involve them, the more they'll trust you
 - if sneaking around behind parents back, parents don't have a reason to trust you
 - if we don't have anything to hide, why sneak?
 - the more you obey them early, the more they'll trust you later
- **Seek Their Approval**
 - parents = authority – they seek to protect us
 - they may see something you don't that may not be healthy for you

2. Partisanship: Look For A Spouse Who Shares A Passion For Faith (3-4)

3 I want you to swear by the Lord, the God of heaven and the God of earth, that you will not get a wife for my son from the daughters of the Canaanites, among whom I am living, **4** but will go to my country and my own relatives and get a wife for my son Isaac."

- 3 requirements:
 - She is not to be from the Canaanites
 - She is to be from amongst Abraham's relatives
 - Isaac is to stay home – not move away (I like that one, though I can't use this verse over my kids)
 - This is because Abraham is keeping trusting in the land promise from God and keeping Isaac in the land
 -

- Moses was concerned about Israel mingling with the Canaanites in the Promised Land
 - Perhaps that's why he devoted 67 verses to this story of courtship (vs. 31 verses designated to the Creation story)
- Commentator John Phillips: "The old patriarch viewed with horror what he saw all about him in Canaan. The daughters of Canaan were a worldly, wicked, wanton crowd with no knowledge at all of the true and living God. They were snared in the most frightful forms of pagan idolatry. There could be no thought of Isaac marrying one of them." (*Exploring Genesis*, p. 190)

2 Corinthians 6

Unequal yoke = a diverse yoke, not practical

- Unequal yoke
 - from Deuteronomy 22:10 "Thou shalt not plow with an ox and a donkey together"
 - ox was clean animal to the Jews, but donkey was not (Deut 14:1-8)
 - wrong to yoke them together
 - also wrong because have two opposite natures
 - don't work well together
 - sexual emphasis - God prohibits the crossbreeding of certain animal species
- Olivia Langdon
- Swim Pool

3. Patience: Respect Each Other's Will – Don't Be Manipulative (5-9)

5The servant asked him, "What if the woman is unwilling to come back with me to this land? Shall I then take your son back to the country you came from?" **6**"Make sure that you do not take my son back there," Abraham said. **7**"The Lord, the God of heaven, who brought me out of my father's household and my native land and who spoke to me and promised me on oath, saying, 'To your offspring I will give this land'—he will send his angel before you so that you can get a wife for my son from there. **8**If the woman is unwilling to come back with you, then you will be released from this oath of mine. Only do not take my son back there." **9**So the servant put his hand under the thigh of his master Abraham and swore an oath to him concerning this matter.

- The woman is free to choose
- And if she doesn't choose to go with the servant, the servant is released from his oath
- Problem of manipulation
- Use guilt – "you should ...", "you don't"

2 Samuel 13

- **Insincere guys lie – don't be duped or manipulated (6)**

⁶Then Amnon lay down and pretended to be ill

- **Insincere guys will take advantage of your sweetness – add discernment (8)**

⁸So Tamar went to her brother Amnon's house; and he was lying down. Then she took flour and kneaded it, made cakes in his sight, and baked the cakes.

- **Insincere guys will try to get you alone – don't get isolated (9-10)**

⁹And she took the pan and placed them out before him, but he refused to eat. Then Amnon said, "Have everyone go out from me." And they all went out from him. ¹⁰Then Amnon said to Tamar, "Bring the food into the bedroom, that I may eat from your hand." And Tamar took the cakes which she had made, and brought them to Amnon her brother in the bedroom.

- **Insincere guys will aggressively proposition – don't buy the line (11)**

¹¹Now when she had brought them to him to eat, he took hold of her and said to her, "Come, lie with me, my sister."

Proverbs 4:23 Above all else, guard your heart, for it is the wellspring of life

<http://cmr.biola.edu/blog/2016/aug/23/too-much-too-soon-setting-emotional-boundaries-dating/>

- Progress incrementally – don't reveal all of yourself and your deepest secrets right away. Learn to trust.
- Don't isolate yourself from interaction with other friends
- Grow individually but patiently progress to growing together as a couple – don't do deep prayers and accountability with each other right away, let that grow naturally – otherwise it could be used for manipulation
- Don't rush into commitment or discussions about marriage
- Set physical and intimacy boundaries early
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4. **Prayer: Pray For The Lord's Guidance And Will (10-15)**

10Then the servant left, taking with him ten of his master's camels loaded with all kinds of good things from his master. He set out for Aram Naharaim and made his way to the town of Nahor. **11**He had the camels kneel down near the well outside the town; it was toward evening, the time the women go out to draw water. **12**Then he prayed, "Lord, God of my master Abraham, make me successful today, and show kindness to my master Abraham. **13**See, I am standing beside this spring, and the daughters of the townspeople are coming out to draw water. **14**May it be that when I say to a young woman, 'Please let down your jar that I may have a drink,' and she says, 'Drink, and I'll water your camels too'—let her be the one you have chosen for your servant Isaac. By this I will know that you have shown kindness to my master." **15**Before he had finished praying, Rebekah came out with her jar on her shoulder. She was the daughter of Bethuel son of Milkah, who was the wife of Abraham's brother Nahor.

Proverbs 3:5-6 ⁵Trust in the Lord with all your heart, And lean not on your own understanding; ⁶In all your ways acknowledge Him, And He shall direct your paths.

- V. 15 before the servant finished praying, Rebekah came out
- This assures God is Provider – Jehovah Jireh

5. **Purity: Appreciate God's Passion For Holiness (16)**

16The woman was very beautiful, a virgin; no man had ever slept with her. She went down to the spring, filled her jar and came up again.

- Rebekah's beauty is noted – as it was with Sarah (Gen 12:11), Rachel (29:17), Tamar (38:13-19), Rahab (Josh 2:1) and Ruth (3:1-9)

1 Thessalonians 4:3-6 ³For this is the will of God, your sanctification: that you should abstain from sexual immorality; ⁴that each of you should know how to possess his own vessel in sanctification and honor, ⁵not in passion of lust, like the Gentiles who do not know God; ⁶that no one should take advantage of and defraud his brother in this matter, because the Lord is the avenger of all such, as we also forewarned you and testified.

- **Pursue God's Will For Sanctified Relationships (3a)**

- sanctification" = *hagiosume* = set apart for, dedicated to
- ie/ term used of sacrifices to God and Christ being an atonement
- set apart from sexual immorality to be dedicated to God's work
- if you are involved in immorality – you violate God's will for you to be a pure vessel
- no longer dedicated to God's pleasure, but our pleasure

- **Safeguard The Relationship From Sexual Immorality (3b)**

- "abstain" = *apechesthai* (middle voice) = "to hold one's self off from, to keep away from, to abstain"
- "immorality" = *porneias* – broad term meaning any deviant sexual practice outside of marriage – homosexuality, premarital sex, adultery, and other perversions
 - climate of NT times, not very different from today
 - sex was rampant – pagan temples often practiced sexual rituals to excite fertility gods (Diana, etc.)
 - fornication and pre-marital sex was very common as well

ie/ Virginitly = God's wedding gift (open on wedding day)

- **Determine To Bring Honor In Your Relationship (4)**

- "each of you should know how to" = individual responsibility
- requires instruction and application of principles of purity
- "possess" or "control"
- *ktasthai* = to procure for oneself, acquire
 - Some believe that since it is unusual to procure your own body, that this must refer to a wife – but his is an unnatural reading – get a wife to be pure
 - This refers to one's own body
 - Vessel describes body, not a wife
 - People are still immoral even if married
 - gain control, harness, subdue

- Treat Body With Sanctification And Honor
 - body = temple of HS (1 Cor 6:19)
 - should be a temple of honor, not doom

- **Examine Your Motives (5)**
 - Uncontrolled Lust - "passion" *pathei*
 - world's standard - free sex, safe sex – little control
 - God's standard - ABSTINANCE - which makes more sense – self control
 - "Gentiles" = *ethne* – races, nationalities
 - like the Gentiles who do not know God or His standards
 - think they're like animals as products of evolution – so they act like one
 - ignorance because of pagan religions about true sanctification & sexuality

- **Guard Yourself From Taking Advantage Or Misleading The Other (6)**
 - "advantage" = *pleonektein* - to claim more, to have more than one is do
 - ie/ potluck – hoard all the good stuff
 - selfish, self-centered, self-seeking
 - "Defraud" = lit. "to go beyond"

Gothard: "arousing sensual desires in others which can not righteously be satisfied"

Barry Word: "it carries the idea of exciting sexual passion or turning on another person sexually"

Q: How far is too far? - when you get turned on

 - Can defraud by : clothes, petting, movies, books, flirting, the way we act

6. Perception: Look For Character To Be Revealed Through Actions (17-25)

- 17 The servant hurried to meet her and said, "Please give me a little water from your jar."
 18 "Drink, my lord," she said, and quickly lowered the jar to her hands and gave him a drink.
 19 After she had given him a drink, she said, "I'll draw water for your camels too, until they

have had enough to drink.” 20So she quickly emptied her jar into the trough, ran back to the well to draw more water, and drew enough for all his camels. 21Without saying a word, the man watched her closely to learn whether or not the Lord had made his journey successful. 22When the camels had finished drinking, the man took out a gold nose ring weighing a beka and two gold bracelets weighing ten shekels. 23Then he asked, “Whose daughter are you? Please tell me, is there room in your father’s house for us to spend the night?” 24She answered him, “I am the daughter of Bethuel, the son that Milkah bore to Nahor.” 25And she added, “We have plenty of straw and fodder, as well as room for you to spend the night.”

- Rebekah demonstrated hospitality and kindness
- She was willing to help a stranger
- This is a test of character
- V. 17 – servant asked for a little water (not trying to be too demanding in his first meeting)
- Yet she responds not just with giving him water, but giving water for the camels
- V. 25 – she also provided more provisions for the camels (straw and fodder) plus a room for the servant to stay
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- V. 22 – nose ring weighing a *beka* (1/5th of an ounce or 5.5 grams)
- 10 shekels = 4 ounces of gold (110 grams) – x \$1320/oz for price of gold

7. Praise: Finding A Spouse Is An Act Of Worship (26-27)

26Then the man bowed down and worshiped the Lord, 27saying, “Praise be to the Lord, the God of my master Abraham, who has not abandoned his kindness and faithfulness to my master. As for me, the Lord has led me on the journey to the house of my master’s relatives.”

- The servant worshipped God right then and there with Rebekah present
- She is also witnessing the spiritual conviction of the Suitor’s family
- The whole process is interacting with God to see Him lead
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- How committed is the person of interest to the things of God?
- Take things slow – make sure they have a spiritual conviction to worship and walk with God.

8. Participate: Honor The Prospective In-Laws (28-49)

28The young woman ran and told her mother’s household about these things. 29Now Rebekah had a brother named Laban, and he hurried out to the man at the spring. 30As soon as he had seen the nose ring, and the bracelets on his sister’s arms, and had heard Rebekah tell what the man said to her, he went out to the man and found him standing by the camels near the spring. 31“Come, you who are blessed by the Lord,” he said. “Why are you standing out here? I have prepared the house and a place for the camels.”

32So the man went to the house, and the camels were unloaded. Straw and fodder were brought for the camels, and water for him and his men to wash their feet. 33Then food was set before him, but he said, “I will not eat until I have told you what I have to say.” “Then tell us,” Laban said.

34 So he said, "I am Abraham's servant. 35 The Lord has blessed my master abundantly, and he has become wealthy. He has given him sheep and cattle, silver and gold, male and female servants, and camels and donkeys. 36 My master's wife Sarah has borne him a son in her old age, and he has given him everything he owns. 37 And my master made me swear an oath, and said, 'You must not get a wife for my son from the daughters of the Canaanites, in whose land I live, 38 but go to my father's family and to my own clan, and get a wife for my son.' 39 "Then I asked my master, 'What if the woman will not come back with me?' 40 "He replied, 'The Lord, before whom I have walked faithfully, will send his angel with you and make your journey a success, so that you can get a wife for my son from my own clan and from my father's family. 41 You will be released from my oath if, when you go to my clan, they refuse to give her to you—then you will be released from my oath.'

42 "When I came to the spring today, I said, 'Lord, God of my master Abraham, if you will, please grant success to the journey on which I have come. 43 See, I am standing beside this spring. If a young woman comes out to draw water and I say to her, "Please let me drink a little water from your jar," 44 and if she says to me, "Drink, and I'll draw water for your camels too," let her be the one the Lord has chosen for my master's son.'

45 "Before I finished praying in my heart, Rebekah came out, with her jar on her shoulder. She went down to the spring and drew water, and I said to her, 'Please give me a drink.' 46 "She quickly lowered her jar from her shoulder and said, 'Drink, and I'll water your camels too.' So I drank, and she watered the camels also. 47 "I asked her, 'Whose daughter are you?' "She said, 'The daughter of Bethuel son of Nahor, whom Milkah bore to him.' "Then I put the ring in her nose and the bracelets on her arms, 48 and I bowed down and worshiped the Lord. I praised the Lord, the God of my master Abraham, who had led me on the right road to get the granddaughter of my master's brother for his son. 49 Now if you will show kindness and faithfulness to my master, tell me; and if not, tell me, so I may know which way to turn."

- "kindness" = *chesed*
- the servant asks for a response
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- "camels" are a controversial mention – some critics think the Bible isn't reliable because camels weren't domesticated until the 13th century (Abe is in the 18th century BC)
- but there have been camel bones found in a home from 2400 BC (John J. Davis, *Paradise to Prison*, p. 228)
- Abraham had great wealth so to have a number of camels wouldn't be beyond his ability

- vv. 29-30 – Laban – was a greedy opportunist – really more interested in the gifts than his sister Rebekah
- There was some tension, because Laban could have thrown a monkey wrench in this arrangement
- But even a trickster doesn't thwart God's will or plan
- Laban will trick Jacob later on – but it still doesn't thwart God

9. Permission: Having Both Sets Of Parents Affirming God's Will Is Significant (50-54)

50 Laban and Bethuel answered, "This is from the Lord; we can say nothing to you one way or the other. 51 Here is Rebekah; take her and go, and let her become the wife of your master's son, as the Lord has directed."

52 When Abraham's servant heard what they said, he bowed down to the ground before the Lord. 53 Then the servant brought out gold and silver jewelry and articles of clothing and gave them to Rebekah; he also gave costly gifts to her brother and to her mother. 54 Then he and the men who were with him ate and drank and spent the night there. When they got up the next morning, he said, "Send me on my way to my master."

10. **Patience: Allow Tim To Affirm Willingness And Commitment (55-58)**

55 But her brother and her mother replied, "Let the young woman remain with us ten days or so; then you may go." 56 But he said to them, "Do not detain me, now that the Lord has granted success to my journey. Send me on my way so I may go to my master." 57 Then they said, "Let's call the young woman and ask her about it." 58 So they called Rebekah and asked her, "Will you go with this man?" "I will go," she said.

- Bruce Waltke points out that "10 days" in Heb. is literally "days or ten" = an ambiguous amount of time which could mean a year or 10 minutes (Waltke, p. 331)

11. **Preparation: Marriage Is Both A Release And A Commitment (59-66)**

59 So they sent their sister Rebekah on her way, along with her nurse and Abraham's servant and his men. 60 And they blessed Rebekah and said to her, "Our sister, may you increase to thousands upon thousands; may your offspring possess the cities of their enemies." 61 Then Rebekah and her attendants got ready and mounted the camels and went back with the man. So the servant took Rebekah and left.

62 Now Isaac had come from Beer Lahai Roi, for he was living in the Negev. 63 He went out to the field one evening to meditate, and as he looked up, he saw camels approaching. 64 Rebekah also looked up and saw Isaac. She got down from her camel 65 and asked the servant, "Who is that man in the field coming to meet us?" "He is my master," the servant answered. So she took her veil and covered herself. 66 Then the servant told Isaac all he had done.

- What a commitment for Rebekah
- The travel was 900 miles
- With 10 camels and attendance walking 20 miles a day – this is a 2 month journey
- That's commitment to a guy she hasn't yet met
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- Vv. 64-65 – this is great to see Rebekah's anticipation of meeting her husband "looked up", "who is this man?"
- V. 65 – veil – the bride customarily wore a veil at the marriage ceremony
- Isaac waited – because his father headed this arrangement
- It was Isaac's responsibility to wait with his father

12. **Preference: Be Ready To Love Your Spouse Like Christ Loves Us (67)**

67 Isaac brought her into the tent of his mother Sarah, and he married Rebekah. So she became his wife, and he loved her; and Isaac was comforted after his mother's death.

- Allen P. Ross: "It is important to note that Rebekah actually replaced Sarah by entering the tent of Sarah. She would be the new matriarch of the clan, as Isaac would be the new patriarch (see v. 36)." (*Creation & Blessing*, p. 422)
- Abraham lived another 35 years

- How would Isaac love a person he just met and had no history with?
 - We put the needs of the other above our own
- Arranged marriages can develop into a deeply loving relationship
- Love isn't developed solely through a Hollywood romance

- **Put His/Her Needs Before Your Own Then You Will Be Christlike In Your Ability To Love (Phil 2:3-4)**

Are you ready to rise above Hollywood's selfish romanticism and pursue Biblical sacrificial love?

Philippians 2:3-4 ³Let nothing be done through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself. ⁴Let each of you look out not only for his own interests, but also for the interests of others.

Conclusion:

1. Trust the Lord to guide you to your major relationships and milestones in your life.
2. The Lord will lead us – we just need to walk with Him.
3. Marriage is a picture of Christ's love for us.
4. This story is also a picture of Pentecost. The Father sends an unnamed servant to bring a bride for His Son. The ministry of the Holy Spirit brings the Church to the Son of God as commissioned by the Heavenly Father.