

Get Prequalified—Find A Mate

Genesis 24 & 29

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PATH

Dating can be exciting. It can also get weird and end poorly. I like the common sense of one who quipped, “Some people are unmarried for the same reason that some drivers run out of gas. They pass too many filling stations looking for their favorite brand!” Though dating was unknown in biblical times, let’s look at five principles in budding relationships to help you *prequalify* to build a solid, long-lasting, and satisfying *Smart Home*.

I. Separation (Genesis 24:5-7)

III. Selectivity (Genesis 29:9-12, 15-17)

V. Stamina (Genesis 29:21-28)

II. Supplication (Genesis 24:12-21)

IV. Sacrifice (Genesis 29:18-19)

POINTS

Separation

- Dating is a recent practice that developed within the past one hundred years.
- In biblical times, marriages were arranged. Abraham used a servant as a matchmaker for his son Isaac.
- Today’s believers must date fellow believers. “Do not be unequally yoked together with unbelievers” (2 Corinthians 6:14).
- Paul used a farming analogy: the field won’t get plowed if an ox is yoked with a donkey; they’ll pull in different directions and at different speeds.
- In marriage, two people are yoked together and must move in the same direction.
- Dating an unbeliever pairs people with two different masters and two different eternal destinies.
- Dating and marriage are not private affairs; they involve family and community.
- The first step in dating is toward God. You won’t love another person well if you don’t love Jesus more.
- The second step is toward others. Lean on those who know you best, love you the most, and can tell you the truth regarding a potential spouse.

Supplication

- Prayer took place throughout this text. Abraham brought his servant into the covenant, covering the search for Isaac’s bride in prayer.
- The servant’s prayer for Isaac’s wife was answered before he finished praying, and the servant offered praise and thanksgiving.
- Isaac meditated while he waited to be brought his bride. To meditate means to seek the Lord in solitude, a time of letting the Lord lead.

- Why should we let the Lord lead? Because He knows best. Marriage is a lifelong choice with lifelong effects. We must involve God.
- Beginning dates with prayer elevates it from the physical to the spiritual. The best way to get to know someone and his or her spiritual depth is to pray together.

Selectivity

- Isaac’s son Jacob met his wife at a well. He noticed and selected Rachel at first sight (which quickly became first kiss!).
- There is no perfect person, but there is a perfect person for you.
- What makes someone the right person to date or marry? Love.
 - According to neurologists, the brain circuitry causes a person to be attracted to certain features.
 - But infatuation decreases after four years, so don’t marry for beauty or brains only, but out of love for Christ and joy found in the Lord.
- Jacob had a choice. In our culture today, we choose mates so choose well.
- Consider advice from people you respect but don’t select a partner to please anyone else. You have to live with your choice.

Sacrifice

- Jacob knew exactly who he wanted and he was willing to wait for her.
- Knowing she was Laban’s younger daughter, he offered to work seven years for Rachel’s hand. He spent seven years getting to know her and her family. This ensured that hormones or pheromones didn’t drive his decision.
- Every relationship involves sacrifice—sacrifice of independence, self-will, freedoms, and activities.

- Part of the sacrifice you must make is to close the back door: never mention divorce. Divorce isn’t an option.

Stamina

- Jacob’s wedding day came, but Laban switched Rachel for his oldest daughter Leah, and Jacob had to serve an additional seven years for Rachel.
- It’s much easier to get into a relationship than it is to live through one.
- The risk of marital failure is reduced with a longer dating period. Couples who dated for more than two years scored consistently higher in marital satisfaction.¹
- In the Bible, the church is called the bride of Christ. Believers have a special, unique intimacy with Jesus. And Jesus wants a Christian marriage to reflect Him.
- James Dobson’s father wrote to his fiancée: “I have been taught from my mother’s knee, in harmony with the Word of God, that the marriage vows are inviolable, and that by entering into them I am binding myself absolutely and for life. I am not naive concerning this; on the contrary I am fully aware that mutual incompatibility or other unforeseen circumstances could result in extreme mental suffering. If such becomes the case, I am resolved, for my part, to accept it as a consequence of the commitment we are now making and to bear it, if need be, to the end of our lives together. I have loved you dearly as my sweetheart and I will love you as my wife. But above everything else, I love you with a Christian love that demands we never act in such a way as to hinder our prospects of entering heaven which is the supreme desire of both our lives.”²

PRACTICE

Connect Up: Discuss the idea that marriage reflects our relationship with the Lord. Read Ephesians 5:21-33. What are some of the similarities and differences between human and divine marriage?

Connect In: If you are comfortable—and are (or were) married—share how you dated or courted. What can people in your Connect Group learn from your dating

practice? If it was successful, why? If not, what could you improve upon?

Connect Out: When reaching out to someone considering dating, what advice would you give? Boundless Ministries suggests that biblical dating:

- Begins with the man approaching and going through the woman’s father or family

- Is conducted under the authority of the woman’s father, family or church
- Has marriage (or at least a determination regarding marriage to a specific person) as its direct goal³

Do you agree? Why or why not? Re-read the letter in the Stamina section. How should this man’s heart reflect all believers’ hearts?

¹ National Council on Family Relations, “Family Relations,” 1985, https://www.jstor.org/stable/583577?seq=1#page_scan_tab_contents, accessed 8/5/18.

² James Dobson, *Stories of the Heart and Home*, W Publishing Group, Nashville, TN, October 10, 2000.

³ Scott Croft, “Biblical Dating: How It’s Different from Modern Dating,” March 23, 2012, <http://www.boundless.org/relationships/2012/biblical-dating-how-its-different-from-modern-dating>, accessed 8/5/18.