

Week 6

Isaac & Rebekah: The Evaluation Process

(Genesis 24:10-21)

In our sermon series called **Chasing Love** we're learning how to navigate singleness, dating, love and sex in a confused culture.

And for the past three weeks we've been learning how to do this by focusing on the story of a young couple (Isaac & Rebekah) who did things right when it comes to relationships. So, we're taking their story a few verses at a time and tonight, we finally meet Rebekah.

Remember the context: Abraham has enlisted his oldest and most trusted servant/friend to help him find (with God's help) a potential wife for his son Isaac, back in Abraham's home country...

Genesis 24:10–21 “Then the servant took ten of his master’s camels and departed, taking all sorts of choice gifts from his master; and he arose and went to Mesopotamia to the city of Nahor. ¹¹ And he made the camels kneel down outside the city by the well of water at the time of evening, the time when women go out to draw water. ¹² And he said, “O Lord, God of my master Abraham, please grant me success today and show steadfast love to my master Abraham. ¹³ Behold, I am standing by the spring of water, and the daughters of the men of the city are coming out to draw water. ¹⁴ Let the young woman to whom I shall say, ‘Please let down your jar that I may drink,’ and who shall say, ‘Drink, and I will water your camels’—let her be the one whom you have appointed for your servant Isaac. By this I shall know that you have shown steadfast love to my master.” ¹⁵ Before he had finished speaking, behold, Rebekah, who was born to Bethuel the son of Milcah, the wife of Nahor, Abraham’s brother, came out with her water jar on her shoulder. ¹⁶ The young woman was very attractive in appearance, a maiden whom no man had known. She went down to the spring and filled her jar and came up. ¹⁷ Then the servant ran to meet her and said, “Please give me a little water to drink from your jar.” ¹⁸ She said, “Drink, my lord.” And she quickly let down her jar upon her hand and gave him a drink. ¹⁹ When she had finished giving him a drink, she said, “I will draw water for your camels also, until they have finished drinking.” ²⁰ So she quickly emptied her jar into the trough and ran again to the well to

draw water, and she drew for all his camels. ²¹ The man gazed at her in silence to learn whether the Lord had prospered his journey or not."

I don't know if you caught it, but this passage is loaded with wisdom on evaluating a person before potentially entering a relationship with them. First, it shows that you need to...

1. Surrender the search.

Before Abraham's servant ever sees or meets anyone, he gets on his knees and asks God for guidance and wisdom. He didn't find a woman of his own choosing first and then ask God to bless the relationship, which is what we often do. He asked God to guide him to the right person. Why? Because lots of people look good from a distance, but only God knows their heart. Only God knows their true character.

Surrender the search to the God who knows *more* than you, and *better* than you! This is WAY too big to decide on your own and the stakes are far too high. Trust in the Lord and *do not* lean on your own understanding...

Proverbs 3:5-6 "Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding. ⁶ In all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make straight your paths."

Don't be like the people in the Bible who are known for their BAD relationship decisions. Like...

- Samson who chose women based solely on their appearance.
- David who pursued Bathsheba based solely on lust.
- The foolish young man in Proverbs 7 who pursued anyone that would show him some attention.

They were led by their own sinful eyes, heart, and cravings rather than being led by God. Instead, you should get on your knees daily and ask God to guide you to the right person at the right time. Surrender the search to the God who knows *more* than you, and *better* than you!

2. Evaluate them from a distance.

Verse 21 says he watched Rebekah "in silence to learn whether the Lord had prospered his journey or not." In other words, he wanted to see how she acted when she didn't know anyone was watching.

He wanted to see how she talked, acted and responded to others in her everyday environment. Why? Because we change when we know someone is interested in us.

Illustration: When you really like someone, and they're close by, you don't think, act, and talk like your normal self. You suddenly become very self-conscious about the way you: look, stand, talk, laugh, walk. You say weird stuff and immediately think, "Why did I just say that? Did my voice just crack? Is my stomach sticking out? My hair is a mess!" You're not only trying to impress the person you like, but you're also trying not to look like a total idiot in front of your friends!

The hardest thing to do in a situation like that is to just be yourself. That's why Abraham's servant watched her "in silence." He wanted to see how Rebekah acted in her everyday environment when she didn't realize someone was evaluating what really matters... *her character*.



What exactly did he see in Rebekah?

- **Someone who values purity** (vs.16)

Right after it mentions Rebekah's *beauty*, it quickly points out her *purity*. It says she was "a maiden whom no man had known." The Bible is celebrating the fact that she had saved herself for her future husband.

In our culture, if you're still a virgin when you graduate high school, most teenagers will look at you like you're weird. But when verse 16 says she had never "known" a man, it's meant to be a compliment because God values sexual purity in our lives. In fact, God commands the Christian to pursue sexual purity and avoid sexual immorality...

1 Corinthians 6:18–20 "Flee from sexual immorality. Every other sin a person commits is outside the body, but the sexually immoral person sins against his own body. ¹⁹ Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, whom you have from God? You are not your own, ²⁰ for you were bought with a price. So glorify God in your body."

You can't glorify God with your body if you're doing things that He specifically tells you not to do.

1 Thessalonians 4:3 "For this is the will of God, your sanctification: that you abstain from sexual immorality."

Rebekah had done this. She had made a conscious decision to keep herself sexually pure and the Bible is celebrating this fact!

However, if you have past regrets in this area, there is good news! Our God is a forgiving and merciful God who loves to restore. We see this with the woman who was caught in the act of adultery and brought before Jesus...

John 8:3–11 *“The scribes and the Pharisees brought a woman who had been caught in adultery, and placing her in the midst ⁴ they said to him, “Teacher, this woman has been caught in the act of adultery. ⁵ Now in the Law, Moses commanded us to stone such women. So what do you say?” ⁶ This they said to test him, that they might have some charge to bring against him. Jesus bent down and wrote with his finger on the ground. ⁷ And as they continued to ask him, he stood up and said to them, “Let him who is without sin among you be the first to throw a stone at her.” ⁸ And once more he bent down and wrote on the ground. ⁹ But when they heard it, they went away one by one, beginning with the older ones, and Jesus was left alone with the woman standing before him. ¹⁰ Jesus stood up and said to her, “Woman, where are they? Has no one condemned you?” ¹¹ She said, “No one, Lord.” And Jesus said, “Neither do I condemn you; go, and from now on sin no more.”*

Notice: she didn't try to deny or excuse her sin. She owned the fact that she was wrong, and Jesus forgave her. But notice what He said after He forgave her: *From now on, sin no more.* In other words, Jesus fully expected her to stop being sexually active until she was married.



Does the person you're interested in value sexual purity? Or do they pressure you to give in to temptation? If they are not willing to repent and change as well, then they are not the right person for you.

- **Someone who is kind** (vs.17-18)

When the servant met Rebekah, he said, “Please give me a little water to drink from your jar.” And she quickly let down her jar and gave him a drink.”

Think about it: Rebekah had never met this guy. It was hot and I'm sure she had other things she needed to be doing but she took the time to graciously help this man. Most people today would have said, “Get your own water, I've got my own problems to worry about.”

But Rebekah is gracious and kind. She addresses him as “my lord” – a title of honor like saying “yes sir” and “no sir” and she quickly gives him a drink.

So, if you’re attracted to someone, you really need to watch them in different settings and seasons of life to see how they treat people they’re not trying to impress.



How do they treat people who are older, younger, poorer, and a different ethnic background than them?



How do they treat people in authority: parents, teachers, coaches, law enforcement, etc. Are they consistently kind and gracious?

- **Someone who is selfless** (vs.19-20)

When Rebekah had given the servant a drink, she didn’t stop there. She said, “I will also draw water for your camels, until they have finished drinking.’ So, she quickly emptied her jar into the trough and ran again to the well to draw water, and she drew for all his camels.”

Keep in mind: single camel can drink up to 25 gallons of water at a time, and he had 10 camels! ¹ *That’s 250 gallons of water* that she drew out of a well by hand and carried it back and forth to his camels! And he didn’t even ask her to do this. She went FAR beyond what she was asked to do. In fact, verse 20 says she “ran” to serve this stranger and his animals. Why? Because she was selfless. Rebekah had a servant’s heart.

One commentator described Rebekah as if she were living today...

“Rebekah was everything that a modern teenage girl is so often encouraged not to be. Instead of locking herself in her room, she was out getting water for her entire family. Instead of being glued to her cellphone, she was on the lookout for someone to serve. Instead of showing off her body, Rebekah “covered herself” (vs.65). And, as we’ll see later, all of these characteristics made Isaac even more attracted to her!”²

3. Evaluate them over an extended period of time.

¹MacArthur, John: *The MacArthur Study Bible: New American Standard Bible*. Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 2006, S. Ge 24:14-20
²Strassner, K. (2009). *Opening up Genesis* (110). Leominster: Day One Publications.

There's no way you can learn all of this quickly. The Bible says it's wise to evaluate someone's character over an extended period of time...

1 Timothy 5:24–25 (NLT) “Remember, the sins of some people are obvious, leading them to certain judgment. But there are others whose sins will not be revealed until later. ²⁵ In the same way, the good deeds of some people are obvious. And the good deeds done in secret will someday come to light.”

You see, some people are trouble and it's "obvious." Others, you need to watch for a while to see what kind of character rises to the surface. It's just a matter of time before their true character – good or bad – will come to the surface.

- Surrender the search to the God who knows *more* than you, and *better* than you! Get on your knees daily and ask Him to lead you to the right person at the right time.
- Evaluate the person from a distance and watch how they act, talk, and treat others when they don't know anyone is watching.
- Evaluate them over an extended period of time. AND REMEMBER what we learned last week: your emotional attachment can blind you to character flaws in a person. That's why you need to invite trusted friends and mentors to help you evaluate a person's character!

Small Groups