

Week 7

Isaac & Rebekah: Character Traits to Look For

(Genesis 24:26-67)

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 few weeks we've been focusing on a young couple in the Bible named Isaac and Rebekah. They're showing us how to pursue relationships the right way.

Last week we looked at verses 10-21 which gave us some great insight on evaluating a person before dating or marrying them. We learned that we should...

- 1) Surrender the search.** Before Abraham's servant ever saw or met Rebekah, he got on his knees and asked God for guidance and wisdom. He didn't find someone of his own choosing and then ask God to bless the relationship. He surrendered the search to God – asking God to guide him to the right person at the right time.
- 2) Evaluate the person from a distance.** The servant wanted to see how Rebekah 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 people change when they know someone is interested and watching.
- 3) Evaluate the person over an extended period of time.** The Bible doesn't give us a specific time-frame on doing this, but as we'll see tonight, he patiently watched her life, met her family, and prayed for wisdom and guidance from the Lord – however long that takes.

And there were certain character traits that he noticed in Rebekah when he met her...

- She valued sexual purity.
- She was kind & gracious.
- She was selfless (had a servant's heart).

And tonight, we're going to pick up in verse 26. At this point, Rebekah has taken the servant to meet her parents and the rest of her family. He

spends some time with them as they get to know each other, and her interaction continues to show us some character traits that we should look for in a person. First, you should look for...

1. **Someone who causes you to worship God.**

When the servant finds out that Rebekah is a member of the *family* of God, and she has the character of a *woman* of God, he does the most natural thing – he falls to his knees and worships the Lord...

Genesis 24:26–27 “The man bowed his head and worshiped the Lord²⁷ and said, “Blessed be the Lord, the God of my master Abraham, who has not forsaken his steadfast love and his faithfulness toward my master. As for me, the Lord has led me in the way to the house of my master’s kinsmen.”

Don’t ever enter (or continue) a relationship if the other person doesn’t encourage and inspire you to worship God. Rebekah was the kind of person who inspired others to worship and walk with God. Her character caused the servant to say, “Thank You Lord that You have led me to the right person!” Ask the Lord to lead you to that kind of person AND ask Him to make *you* that kind of person.

And think about it: We still haven’t even met Isaac in the story, which means he is doing what we learned earlier in the series – he’s allowing several trusted people to speak into his decision in finding a wife. For example, he welcomed...

- **Input from his parents** – Isaac had grown up watching his mom and dad trust God through impossible circumstances, so he welcomed his parent’s guidance and wisdom in this process because he knew they walked with God.
- **Input from Abraham’s wisest and most trusted servant** – As verse 27 says, Isaac fully trusted that God would lead the servant to the woman that God had for him.
- **Input from Rebekah’s parents and family** (vs.50) When the servant met her family and asked for their blessing on the relationship, they said, “This is from the Lord!”
- **Input from Rebekah herself** (vs.58; 61) Her family asked Rebekah, “Will you go with this man?” She said, “I will go.” Then Rebekah...followed the man [servant].” In other words, no one was

forcing Rebekah to marry Isaac. She sought God's will for her own life and she welcomed input from trusted friends & family.

- **Input from God** – Every one of these people in the story recognized that God was sovereignly bringing Isaac and Rebekah together. They could see God's hand in it all.

So, first of all, you should look for someone who causes you to worship God and say, "Thank You Lord for leading me to the right person!" But also, you should look for...

2. Someone with a companion mentality not a consumer mentality.

A physical attraction is obviously important but looks alone cannot be the determining factor. Why? Because that mindset feeds into a *consumer* mentality rather than a *companion* mentality.

Typically, when you ask someone what kind of person they'd like to date and marry, they start listing a set of physical characteristics.

Girls will often say...

- I want him to be tall, but not too tall.
- Good looking, but not so good looking that he makes *me* look bad.
- Funny, but also able to be serious.
- Sensitive but still strong.
- And, of course, he needs to have a six-pack.

And guys will often say...

- I want her to be shorter than me.
- She needs to have a certain body type.
- And she needs to be into sports, cars, hiking, and of course... ME!

But, do you hear what is happening when you do this? You're trying to customize your order to get what you think is best for you.

This is a great way to order a hamburger or make a playlist, but this is NOT how you choose a person to date and marry! Why? Because you're looking for a *person to love*, not a *product to consume*. You're not building a robot out of human parts.

A consumer mentality will only set you up for disappointment. And it will disappoint you in at least two ways...

- 1) **You'll have unrealistic expectations** – A consumer mentality creates expectations that no real person can live up to. Think about it: when you mentally create the person you want to be with, you never select the flaws that you want them to have. But every person has them (including you).

If you take all the attributes that you like from a variety of different people (body type, athletic ability, intellect, personality, wealth, etc.) and try to put them all into your ideal date, it will never be an actual person. And if you compare real people to this imaginary standard, *everyone* will disappoint you. Why? Because you've created a standard that no human being can live up to – even the ones you drew inspiration from.

- 2) **You'll base the permanent on the temporary** – Most people choose a date based on two characteristics – looks and charm. But these are two of the most *unreliable* characteristics.

Proverbs 31:30 "Charm is deceitful, and beauty is vain, but a woman who fears the Lord is to be praised."

Beauty is temporary. It will either fade with time, or it may vanish suddenly with a tragic wreck or health crisis (stroke, etc.). And charm can be faked while they're trying to impress you. However, *character* cannot be faked over time. So, if your relationship and marriage is *only* built on surface characteristics, you won't have a lasting and meaningful marriage.

So, as we wrap up, let's see what happens when Isaac and Rebekah finally meet face to face...

Genesis 24:63–67 "And Isaac went out to meditate in the field toward evening. And he lifted up his eyes and saw, and behold, there were camels coming. ⁶⁴ And Rebekah lifted up her eyes, and when she saw Isaac, she dismounted from the camel ⁶⁵ and said to the servant, "Who is that man, walking in the field to meet us?" The servant said, "It is my master." So she took her veil and covered herself. ⁶⁶ And the servant told Isaac all the things that he had done. ⁶⁷ Then Isaac brought her into the tent of Sarah his mother and took Rebekah, and she became his

wife, and he loved her. So Isaac was comforted after his mother's death."

Did you see what happened?

- When the servant told Isaac about Rebekah's character, her walk with God, and how God had orchestrated this entire thing, Isaac trusted God even though Rebekah's face was covered.
- The first thing Isaac did was take Rebekah to meet his mother. Why? Because he was welcoming the input of his parents and other trusted mentors just as Rebekah had.

Isaac and Rebekah were two young people who navigated singleness, love, relationships, and sex according to God's design! And it paid off in the end – verse 67 says, *"She became his wife and he loved her."*

By the way, if you approach relationships the way Isaac and Rebekah did, your future marriage will be a picture of the gospel. Notice what was happening in their relationship...

- **The father (Abraham) sends a servant to find a chosen bride.** And in the gospel, Jesus is the ultimate Servant who is sent to find His chosen bride, the church.
- **Rebekah must decide *by faith* if she will follow the servant back to be with the son (Isaac) forever.** And in the gospel, you and I must decide *by faith* if we (the bride of Christ) will follow the Son and be with Him forever.
- **Rebekah enters a life-long relationship with the son and she becomes a co-heir to all that Isaac's father had given him.** And, in the gospel, you and I enter a life-long relationship with the Son, becoming co-heirs to all that the Father has given Christ.

Your future marriage is meant to be SO MUCH MORE than you probably realize. It's meant to be a billboard showing the gospel to a dying world. And that begins by prayerfully choosing the right kind of person in the dating relationship!

Invitation (No Small Groups)