

Week 5

Isaac & Rebekah: More Than Just a Believer (Genesis 24:5-8)

We're moving along in this series called "Chasing Love" and we're focusing on the story of a young couple who did things right when it comes to relationships. They're teaching us how to navigate singleness, dating, sex and purity in a confused culture. So, we're taking their story a few verses at a time and learning from their success.

Over the past two weeks we've looked at verses 1-4 and we learned two big takeaways...

- 1) Focus on running hard after Jesus rather than finding a relationship.
- 2) A believer should *only* date and marry another believer.

You see, over the years, I've seen hundreds of Christian teenagers get into relationships with people who *claimed* to be believers, only to later prove that they really were not. These Christians ignored the fact that the person they liked showed no real desire for God's house, God's Word, God's people, or doing things God's way.



So, why did those Christians ignore the red flags? Because they were blinded by their emotional attachment. Even if they saw the red flags, they rationalized them away.

But if we step back and honestly/prayerfully evaluate the person *biblically*, it's usually pretty obvious whether or not the person is genuinely saved. But let me give you some practical ways to begin your evaluation. Begin by asking them...

- **When exactly were you saved?** (They don't have to know an exact date, but they should be able to quickly give you pretty specific details of when they received Christ).
- **Where were you when it happened?**
- **Describe yourself before you met Jesus and how your life has changed since you became a Christian?** (Here is: who I was, when I was saved, and how I've changed)

You may be thinking, "It's going to be awkward to ask those types of questions."



If you can't discuss spiritual things with them, then why are you considering them as an option? And if you don't think their salvation is important enough to discuss then what does that say about YOU and your own walk with God?





After all, if this is potentially the person that you'll spend the rest of your life with; you'd *better* ask the tough questions NOW! And their lifestyle (the way they think, talk, act, and treat other people) should prove that they really have been saved.

And just to make sure you're not being blinded by your emotional attachment; you should ask several trusted believers to evaluate the person and give you their honest feedback. You're probably wondering, "Well, how do I do that?"

Illustration: Let me give you an example of a young man in our church who is trying his best to do everything we've talked about so far in this series...

- For years, he's been chasing *God* rather than a person to date.
- Non-believers were never an option for him.
- When he eventually met someone, he asked specific questions about her salvation and walk with God (and she asked him the same questions!)
- Then – before the relationship went too far – he took time to schedule dinner with several different trusted adult couples (starting with his parents) so he could introduce this girl and allow them to evaluate her for themselves.

This wasn't anything weird, awkward, or formal – just lots of casual conversation about her life, walk with the Lord, and involvement in her church (because it's not enough to *just* be a believer). He told these adults beforehand, "I really like this girl but before this goes any further, I want your honest opinions in case my emotional attachment is blinding me to concerns that you may see." Later, he followed up with each adult couple and asked their honest opinions.

-  **Are you willing to invite that kind of honest feedback from trusted adults: Parents, Pastors, Connection Class teachers, and other spiritually mature adults?**
-  **Are you willing to act on their feedback even if it's NOT what you want to hear?**
-  **If you're not willing to invite that kind of unbiased accountability, then can you *really* say that you're serious about God's involvement in your love life?**
-  **If the person you like refuses to meet with your trusted mentors, what does that say about them?**

You see, most teenagers won't ask pointed questions about the person's salvation because they either don't want to know (because they're already emotionally attached) or they feel like the other person will think they're judging them. And most teenagers won't invite that kind of feedback from trusted adults.

But, when their relationship or marriage fails, guess who they go to for advice... those same adult mentors! Wouldn't it be better to invite their feedback on the *front end* of the relationship rather than later, after it has *failed*?

You may be thinking, "Well Pastor Gene, the person I'm dating doesn't show much interest in Christ but at least they're not *against* Him." Notice how Jesus responded to that mentality...

Matthew 12:30 "He who is not with Me is against Me; and he who does not gather with Me scatters."

Jesus says you're either *with* Him or you're *against* Him! The bottom line is: a believer should only date and marry another believer. And that was the big takeaway from last week. But tonight, we're going to see that it's not enough for the person to *just* be a Christian – that's the bare minimum. That's non-negotiable.

You see, Isaac had far greater aspirations for the person he was going to run with for the rest of his life and so should you!



So, how do you know what to look for in this person?

Verses 5-8 show us some questions we need to be asking...

1. Will they cause me to go backwards in my walk with God?

Genesis 24:5–6 *“The servant said to [Abraham], “Perhaps the woman may not be willing to follow me to this land. Must I then take your son back to the land from which you came?”⁶ Abraham said to him, “See to it that you do not take my son back there.”*

When Abraham’s servant asked, “What if the woman is a follower of God but she’s unwilling to leave everything and follow God’s call to be with Isaac? Should I just take Isaac back to your old country to be with her?” But Abraham was emphatic in verse 6 when he answered: *Do NOT take my son back there!*

You see, Abraham understood that God will never call one of His followers to go *backwards* in their relationship with Him. He only calls us to move *forward* in our relationship with Him. Paul said, “Forgetting what lies behind, I press *forward!*”

Luke 9:62 *“Jesus said to him, “No one who puts his hand to the plow and looks back is fit for the kingdom of God.”*

So, any woman (even a believer) who would cause Isaac to go back to the place that God had called them out of – she simply wasn’t an option.

Never enter a relationship with someone if they’re going to cause you to go backwards in your faith. This is not the time to take on a “project” and use a love relationship to *hopefully* bring them along in their faith. After all, you don’t know that they will ever be willing to move forward with you. You are not God; you cannot see the future and know what they will or will not do!

And this leads us to the second question you need to ask yourself...

2. Are they willing to walk by faith and not by sight?

Genesis 24:7 *[Abraham continued] “The Lord, the God of heaven, who took me from my father’s house and from the land of my kindred, and*

who spoke to me and swore to me, 'To your offspring I will give this land,' he will send his angel before you, and you shall take a wife for my son from there."

You see, when God called Abraham out of his home country to a land that He would give him (the Promised Land), God didn't give Abraham any specific details. Abraham simply followed God by faith and trusted the Lord to keep His promise. And God *did* keep His promise. And Isaac also walked by faith (Recap Genesis 22 – Isaac willingly laid on the altar because he trusted God and his father).

And this is exactly how Abraham was approaching the issue of finding a wife for Isaac. In verse 7 he said, "The Lord...will send His angel before you, and He will provide a wife for my son from there." In other words, "The same God who faithfully kept His promise to lead *me* is the same God who will lead *Isaac* to the right woman."

So, Abraham and Isaac not only knew God; they also trusted God to guide them in *every* area of their life – including their love life! And any woman who wasn't willing to trust/follow God the same way, then she simply wasn't an option.



Are you willing to trust God like this with your love life?

So, first of all, the person must be a believer. But they also must be someone who moves forward with you and not cause you to go backwards in your walk with God. And they must be willing to walk by faith and not by sight. And this doesn't even consider other BIG questions like...

- What if you're called to ministry/missions and they're not?
- What if you're willing to go wherever/whenever God leads and they're not?

You had better consider these things BEFORE you get emotionally attached! But let me give you a third question that you need to be asking yourself...

3. Are they willing to wait on God's timing and not rush into a relationship?

Genesis 24:8 "But if the woman is not willing to follow you, then you

will be free from this oath of mine; only you must not take my son back there."

Notice Abraham's perspective: Don't force it. If she doesn't feel God's clear calling into this kind of relationship, just walk away. Abraham and Isaac were willing to walk away and trust God's timing.

Bottom Line: *Isaac would rather be single than marry second-best!*

And remember, Isaac and Rebekah are still not even in the picture in these first 8 verses. Why? Because they're busy pursuing God rather than pursuing a love relationship – they're not trying to rush it or force it. And you need to follow their lead and do the same. Trust God's timing rather than trying to make something happen just because you feel like you're missing out.

You see, many of us trust God with a lot of stuff, but when it comes to our love life, we're scared that God is going to...

- Forget about us
- Wait too long and all the "good ones" will be taken
- Cause you to miss out on something special

So, we get in a rush and take things into our own hands. But instead, you need to trust that the God who saved you *can* and *will* provide the right person at the right time!



If you've trusted God with your eternal destiny, why do you feel like you can't trust Him with your love life?

So, let's recap...

1. If they're not a believer, they're not an option.
2. If they pull you backwards in your faith, they're not an option.
3. If they try to rush or force a relationship, they're not an option.

One last question: If they are asking these questions about YOU, what is the honest answer?

Small Groups