

“How to Prepare for Marriage and Family”

Genesis 24:63-67

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Looking back at your life, you discover how God has been faithful to prepare you for different seasons. God has a plan to prepare you for life, marriage, and family. Discover how God wants to prepare you.

Intro:

- 4 Week detour from Matthew to address the subject of marriage and family
- Celebrating 7 years of marriage in Sept
- Each season God has used to prepare for the next
- Would you like to know how God is preparing you?

Subject: How to Prepare for Marriage and Family

Object: Trust God and Be Prepared

Genesis 24:63-67

- briefly summarize the account leading up to these verses.
- Application: if we trust the Lord and allow Him to prepare us, He wants to write our love story.

I. Preparing as a Single Adult (v.63)

•A. Not all are called to be married

• i. Paul the Apostle was single (1 Corinthians 7:7-8)

• ii. Jesus was single (Isaiah 53:8)

• Statistically 10% never marry

• How to know if you are called to singleness? - desire to get married probably means you are called

•B. God wants to use this season to prepare

•i. Serving

• try something that makes you passionate

•ii. Being in Community

• find friends to have fun with and to grow spiritually with

• find a mentor or a team of mentors

• iii. Seek God for His Vision for Your Life

• Dream first and then wrestle with God

• It is good to know where you are going before you enter into a relationship

II. Preparing in a Relationship (v.64-66)

- Christians debate about dating vs. courting
- we won't get into all of the nuances, but they agree more than they disagree - labels cause trouble
- more important is the definition and to be biblical
- **A. The Two Pillars of Christian Dating**
- **i. Christian Dating's Main Purpose is to Pursue the Possibility of Marriage**
- **ii. Christian Dating Seeks to Honor God**
- **1. Put Jesus at the center of their relationship**
- This happens by reading the word together, praying together and serving together
- **2. Honor God by Seeking to be Pure**
- In Scripture there are no boyfriends or girlfriends, so you have no right to be physical with this person
- **Paul exhorts us that there shouldn't even be a hint of sexual immorality in our lives (Ephesians 5:3, 1 Thessalonians 4:3).**
- **B. Boundaries**
- There is no one size fits all boundary for a Christian Dating relationship
- God never says "Thou Shalt never be alone" or "Thou Shalt not hold hands"
- However, it is vital to have boundaries and to set them up early in the relationship
- **i. Seek God about Boundaries**
- The byproduct is changed heart and mind
- This also creates a deeper conviction of why
- **ii. Don't Ask "How Far Can I Go?"**
- Better question: how can you honor God and the person you are dating?
- **iii. Remember, You are with God's Son/Daughter**
- View them in this way - also as brother/sister
- In God's eyes, this is all you are until you say "I do"
- A good question to ask is: "If someone else was dating my future spouse, what kind of boundaries would I want them to have?"
- **iv. Guard Your Heart**
- **v. Stay Close to God**
- When we run to sinful actions, usually our hearts haven't been filled with enjoying Jesus
- It can be easy to turn the person you are dating into an idol and forget about Jesus
- Do not forsake your first love (Revelation 2:4), Our relationship with God is our source of strength to obey Him
- **vi. If You Fail, Remember that God is a God of Grace**
- Jesus died for us because we are sinners
- At the same time, don't settle for continual failure (Romans 6)
- Don't forget: God has given us His Spirit for victory (Romans 8:11)

III. Preparing for Marriage (v.67)

- **What advice would you give a couple preparing for marriage?**
- **A. How to Know if You are Ready to Start Dating and/or Engagement**
- The man's job is to pursue the woman and initiate the relationship, while it is the woman's job to respond.

• **i. Spy on Them**

- Act like an investigative reporter, ask friends and observe from a distance
- What kind of person are they? Are they a strong Christian? Do they have a pattern of dating many people? What is their past or present for that matter? Could they be the future mother or father of your children?
- better to protect yourself from getting in an unhealthy, ungodly relationship

• **ii. Seek God**

• **pray, fast and read God's word**

- your goal should be to walk in God's will for you

• **iii. Make a List, but don't Check it Twice**

- It is important to have standards for the kind of person you want to date and eventually marry
- First, they should be a Christian and around the same spiritual maturity as you
- Second, look for callings to line up
- beyond this, you need to navigate through what is non-negotiable
- Dating a Christian is non-negotiable
- Dating a green eyed 27 year old surfer is a preference
- It isn't bad to have preferences, but hold them loosely- Adam didn't tell God "I was hoping for a blonde"
- If you aren't careful, Jesus may be the only one who can fulfill your list

• **iv. Use Your Church Community of Friends, Mentors + Spiritual Leaders**

- Ask those in your church what they think of this person and you dating them
- They may have some valuable things to say to you
- Remember, ultimately you need to hear from God

• **"There is wisdom in multitude of counsel" - Proverbs 15:22**

- If 9 out of 10 people are saying he's a monkey, he probably is
- we see through rose colored glasses and friends in the church see soberly

• **v. For the Guys - Ask Her Dad and Maybe Even Her Pastor**

- most guys struggle with just the asking for marriage part
- this isn't gospel, but I recommend it for a few reasons
- 1. the woman is under authority of her dad and spiritual authority of her pastor
- 2. this is a good way to start off on the right foot with both
- most dads are surprised, but it shows humility and respect
- 3. it shows the woman that you are trying to treat her with honor before the relationship has even started
- 4. it is good to learn to trust that God will speak to her dad and pastor
- If they say no, ask why so you can work on those things

• **B. How to Thrive in your Relationship/Engagement**

• **i. Go on Dates (Spend time together)**

- Going on a date is a great way to get to know them better
- Guys, look nice, shave the unibrow, get a shirt with buttons and leave the sports jersey/sweatpants combo at home
- Guys, pay for the date: Jesus paid for your sins

• **ii. Premarital Counseling**

- Premarital Counseling will help you to prepare for a godly marriage
- **1. Those who do have a significantly higher satisfaction rate, and lower divorce rate than those who don't.**
- **2. It's better to identify potential issues and work through them prior to marriage than to enter a covenant and be blindsided.**
- **Contact Pastor Roger if you are interested: roger@calvarynexus.org**
- **iii. Continue to Grow in the Lord Together**
- **iv. Love unconditionally (Genesis 24:67)**

Conclusion/Communion/Jesus is Our King:

- Are you allowing God to shape you in the season you are in right now?
- Make Jesus King of Family Realm by submitting to His plan of preparation? Where is He calling you to obedience? Where is He calling you to trust Him?
- We can be sure of God's future faithfulness when we look to the cross and see His past faithfulness

Discussion Questions:

1. How can a single use their season of singleness to prepare for a godly marriage and family?
2. What are some of the ways to have a God honoring dating relationship?
3. How do you know if you are ready for dating? For engagement?
4. How should a couple determine their boundaries? What boundaries do/did you have and why?

Pastor Bruce Zachary Lewis Rd. Campus

Intro. 4 week detour from Matthew to address the subject of marriage and family.

Celebrating 25 years marriage (6.1.91). Looking back, I've seen how God has been faithful to prepare us for marriage and family. It is Comforting to discover God's plan & preparation. Would you like to know how God wants to prepare you?

Subject: Preparation for marriage and family

Object: Trust God and be prepared

Context: Snapshot of the Patriarch Isaac receiving Rebekah as his wife

I. The Single Season:

A. Seek God and trust that He is preparing you for life [63]

And Isaac went out to meditate in the field in the evening

1. Seek God before you seek a spouse

- a. Isaac had already discovered that God is good and can be trusted [Gen.22]
- b. Trust God's timing: He not only needs to prepare you, but needs to prepare them

* **BZ** baking a cake as a boy. Moral: follow the directions and be patient

2. Seek God in His word, prayer, service, and community

- a. Find a mentor and friends and experience life and growth in Christ

B. Not all are called to be married:

1. Jesus was single, and Paul described the advantages of singleness and serving God [1 Cor. 7]

- 2. If you desire to be married, probably not called to singleness, so be prepared.

II. The Relationship Season: dating/courting

A. The Sense that God has brought your future spouse [63-64] Isaac lifted his eyes and looked, and there, the camels *were* coming. ⁶⁴ Then Rebekah lifted her eyes, and when she saw Isaac she dismounted from her camel:

1. Dating is to pursue the possibility of marriage

- a. If you are not in a meaningful position to consider possible marriage then just enjoy friendship without asserting any exclusive claim to the person's affections.

B. Discover who this person is [65] for she had said to the servant, "Who *is* this man walking in the field to meet us?"

1. Begin to learn who they are by spending time together

2. Ask others: his or her friends, your friends, parents, pastors

- a. If those that know them have caution flags there is probably a good reason why

What are some helpful boundaries and lessons for dating?

C. Decide to honor God by being pure [65] The servant said, "It *is* my master." So she took a veil and covered herself:

- 1. Modesty:** Rebekah is 1 of 5 women in the Bible referred to as very beautiful [16]. Yet she wants her character [18-21] to be displayed rather than her outward appearance. If you make the basis of your relationship physical attraction you will always be insecure about your changing outward appearance.

2. Purity: It is God's will that we remain sexually pure prior to marriage [1Th.4:3]

3. Boundaries: Create boundaries to help you respect God, and the person you are dating. A good rule, "if someone was dating my future spouse what kind of boundaries would I want them to have?"

a. Keep your love for Jesus as your first love [Rev. 2:4]

b. If you neglect a boundary repent, and receive and respect grace [Rom. 6:1]

D. Discern God's will [66] And the servant told Isaac all the things that he had done:

The events beginning at verse 10 are intended to show that it was clearly God orchestrating the events to bring Rebekah to be Isaac's wife.

1. The most important issue is whether God is bringing you together as husband and wife [Matt. 19:6]

2. You must share a common Christian faith (equally yoked) [2Cor. 6:14]

3. Seek godly counsel from spiritual mentors [Prov. 15:22]

III. The Marriage Season [67] Then Isaac brought her into his mother Sarah's tent; and he took Rebekah and she became his wife, and he loved her. So Isaac was comforted after his mother's death.

A. Comfort flows from your love for them not theirs for you

1. If you expect your spouse to make you whole by their love, you will resent them, and be miserable.

a. Don't get married unless you are prepared to find your comfort from your love for your spouse, rather than their love for you.

B. Christ has to be the foundation [Matt. 7:24-27]

1. Use your time of engagement to continue to grow in Christ together and ensure that Christ is the foundation of the relationship. Jesus is the only sure foundation

C. Commit to a meaningful pre-marital process

1. Those who do have a significantly higher satisfaction rate, and lower divorce rate than those who don't.

2. Better to identify potential issues and work through them prior to marriage than to enter a covenant and be blindsided

Conc/communion: Do you realize that this is a season of preparation for life? The best plan is to **trust God and His plan to prepare you for life, marriage, and family (make Jesus King in every realm)**. The reason you can trust God is proven at the cross.

Discussion Questions

1. What are some ways that you have looked back at life and discovered that God was preparing you for today (and tomorrow)?
2. What are some helpful boundaries and lessons for dating?
3. If you had to do it all over again would you have chosen to remain pure and why?
4. What advice would you give a couple preparing for marriage?