

## Roots: When Deciding is Difficult

Genesis 24

### Growth Group Discussion Guide

*Begin with prayer. Invite the Holy Spirit to speak to you all through God's word, and to lead your discussion.*

#### Opening Questions (try to get everyone involved in discussion):

- What is one of the hardest decisions you have had to make—or are currently having to make? (*Leaders: discourage others from offering advice at this time, and simply allow people to convey what decision they may be wrestling with.*)

#### Read Genesis 24:1-9, then discuss the questions below.

- How does Abraham know that he needs to find a wife for Isaac?
- What are the qualifications that must be true of Isaac's wife, according to these verses? Why are they essential?
  - Why do you think that the servant initially proposes a compromise? (V. 5)
  - Do you feel that any of your past dilemmas—or current decisions—have required you to compromise on some important standard? Why or why not?
- On what basis does Abraham have confidence, in spite of the seeming impossibility of finding the right wife?
- On Sunday, Josh said that an important principle for making hard decisions is to **act on what God has already said.**
  - We've seen how Abraham did this in these verses. When has this principle helped you?
  - How might this principle help in your current decisions?
  - How have you cultivated a knowledge of God's word, such that specific aspects come to mind in decision-making? What practical tips can you share?

#### Read Genesis 24:10-27, then discuss the questions below.

- Is it mere coincidence that the servant lands at the well at this time, or is there some strategy involved? Is there any application for us to draw from this observation?
- Pay close attention to the servant's prayer (vv. 12-14).
  - In v. 12, what is the basis of his request? (Leaders: scholars note that "kindness" is the Hebrew word *hesed*—God's loyal, covenantal love. In other words, the servant is grounding his specific request in God's covenant to show kindness to Abraham. If you have time, note how many times "kindness" shows up in this chapter, and what meaning this observation might carry).
  - What do you make of the specific request in vv. 13-14? What can we learn from this prayer?
- What is the narrator showing us about God, in the description of vv. 15-16?
- In vv. 17-20, how does Rebekah pass the test? On how many different points is she qualified to be Isaac's wife? (See also v. 24)
- What is significant about the servant's actions in v. 21?
- What is the servant doing in vv. 26-27?
- Pastor Josh drew out this principle from the scene we've been considering: **Live in conversation with God, and put yourself in the place to receive answers!**
  - In what way does this principle challenge you or encourage you today?
  - How have you seen answers, akin to the servant in the story?

**Read Genesis 24:28-61, then discuss the questions below.**

- All of these different parties are faced with making an assertive decision, in spite of risk and unknown: the servant, Rebekah, and Rebekah's family members. What factors lead them to the decisive actions of v. 61?
- What do you notice about the servant's behavior and interactions at Rebekah's home?
- What else stands out to you as significant about this scene?
- The principle that emerged from this scene in the sermon was, **Take the risk to act on what God has shown you.**
  - Can anyone share about a time they made a decision in the face of risk? How did it turn out?
  - How might this principle have an impact on any of the current decisions that have been shared in this group?

**Read Genesis 24:62-67, then discuss the questions below.**

- Why do you think the servant is now addressing Isaac as his master, rather than Abraham?
- Isaac has to make a life-altering decision here. What information does he use to inform his decision?
- What is significant about Rebekah going into the tent of Sarah? (Leaders: the narrator is showing Rebekah as the new leading matriarch of the covenantal family).
- The author concludes this story with the necessary pieces in place for God to keep fulfilling his promises to Abraham. What do you think is the overarching message being conveyed by this story?
- Isaac made a risky decision based on the servant who went in his place. Pastor Josh suggested that you can confidently make such decisions when you **trust the servant who went in your place.** What journey did Jesus take "in your place?"
  - In what way does this knowledge of Jesus acting in your place inspire confidence in the face of risk today? How can you cultivate this type of confidence?
- **Concluding application:**
  - Do these four principles seem to have any bearing on any of your current or future decisions? How might you face them differently based on this discussion?
  - Does this study/discussion leave out any crucial pieces of godly decision-making, which you think we need to consider?
  - What questions remain about any current dilemmas, for which our group could provide support?

**Sharing/Prayer**

- As always, take some time to share areas where you need people to pray for you. Spend time praying for one another. Make sure you lift up the challenging decisions that have been shared.