



## Choosing the Right Marriage Partner for Life

### Genesis 24 & Selected Scriptures

**Introduction:** I was talking to a pastor about the number of struggling and failed marriages we are seeing today in our culture and in our churches. He said, statistically one out of every four marriages will end up in divorce with the average marriage lasting only about 7 years. He also said the number of divorces in America have quadrupled in the last 10 years and that there are as many Christians divorcing as non-Christians in our culture. Now I haven't checked to see if his statistics are accurate or not, but I do know a lot of marriages are in trouble. I asked why he thought there were so many unhappy marriages within the church. After a moment of thought he said, "I think many times it's because of poor choices in choosing our marriage partners. We have failed as a church to help people see what God's word says about the kind of person, we should look for in a life partner." A failure to understand what God says can often bring regret and heartache. This morning I want to give you some principles to help guide us when choosing a partner for life.

#### OUTLINE:

- I. \_\_\_\_\_ is absolutely essential if we are to know God's will and direction for our lives.
- II. It's vital to choose someone who shares your \_\_\_\_\_ and will \_\_\_\_\_ you in your spiritual growth.
- III. When considering a person to date or marry we need to consider their \_\_\_\_\_.
- IV. The greatest thing you can do while you wait is to \_\_\_\_\_ with the Lord.



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Go ahead and take your Bibles this morning and turn in them to Genesis Chapter 24 where we find the story of how Abraham sent his servant Eleazar to find a bride for his son Isaac. It's a wonderful story that has some great principles in it.

I'm continuing with part 3 of my series on **marriage and the home.**

**For the past several weeks we talked about Secrets to Having an Awesome Marriage.**

**In this mornings message I want to talk to those who are not married , those who are single whether you are a young person in High school or college or an older person, whether you are divorced or widowed. I want to talk to you about the importance of choosing the right marriage partner for your life.**

**Speaking of choosing the right marriage partner**

**I heard about a new store that opened up in New York City. Its called the husband store. A store where single women can go to shop for a husband. The store advertises...on its sign Choose the perfect husband. Our store has**

**everything you will ever want in a man. The store has 6 floors from which you can choose from.**

**So, Cheryl a single woman goes to the store to find her perfect husband. On the 1st floor the sign on the door reads: Floor 1 - These men Have Jobs.**

**Cheryl thought to herself. I do want a man who is financially independent, a man who will provide for me and the children later. But she tells herself she wants more in a husband and heads for the second floor.**

**The 2nd floor sign reads: Floor 2 - These men Have Jobs and Love Kids. Cheryl again thought to herself. That's want I want in a husband. A man who is not only financially independent but also a man who loves kids and is good to them. But she says to herself I wonder what's on the third floor. I want more in a husband.**

**The 3rd floor sign reads: Floor 3 - These men Have Jobs, Love Kids and are extremely Good Looking.**

**"Wow," she thinks, I've always wanted that in a man but again she feels compelled to keep looking for that perfect man.**

**She goes to the 4th floor and the sign reads:**

Floor 4 - These men Have Jobs, Love Kids, are Drop-dead Good Looking and Help With Housework. They will do the dishes, cook dinners, vacuum, wash clothes and make the bed.

“Oh, mercy me!” she exclaims. Why that would be wonderful “I can hardly stand it!” Still, she says to herself. I am curious I want more in a man. So she goes to the 5th floor and the sign reads:

Floor 5 - These men Have Jobs, Love Kids, are Drop-dead Gorgeous, help with Housework Chores and Have a Strong Romantic Streak.

She is so tempted to stay on the fifth floor, but again she is compelled to see what kind of man is on the 6<sup>th</sup> floor. So she goes to the 6th floor and the Sign reads:  
Floor 6 - You are visitor 71,456,012 to this floor. There are no men on this floor. This floor exists solely as proof that woman are impossible to please.

Thank you for shopping at the Husband Store.

**Well we laugh at that...**

The decision of who we marry is vital because we can either bring years of marital bliss or it can be one of the most painful and difficult experiences of life.

I was talking to another pastor about the breakdown of marriage and the home. We talked about failed marriages . I believe the statistics of a marriage ending up in divorce is about one out of every four marriages. Today the average marriage will last only about 7 years.

The number of failed marriages in America has quadrupled in the last 10 years and this will surprise you that there are as many Christians divorcing as non Christians in our culture.

He said "Do you know why I believe there are so many divorces, why there are so many unhappy marriages even within the church?" " He said , I think many times it's because of poor choices in choosing their marriage partner. We have failed as a church to help people see what Gods word says about the kind of person we should look for in a life partner. And What kind of person we should avoid marrying. Failure to understand what God says can often bring regret and heartache. There are two key decisions in life that are more important than any other decisions you will ever make. One of the most

important decisions that towers over them all, is what you will do with Jesus Christ. That is THE question of all questions. The second most important decision you will ever make is who am I going to choose as my life partner? Who am I going to marry? As I said Failing to make the right choice can bring a great deal of heartache and regret. This morning I want to give you some principles to help guide you to the person God would have for you.

Lets read just a portion of the story.

Read verses 1-4

According to our story Abraham is up there in years. He is about 140 years of age.

And one of the priorities of his life before he dies is to secure a bride for his son Isaac. His son Isaac is 40 years of age. In that culture the parents were very involved in choosing a appropriate bride for their children. I think even though we don't choose a spouse for our children we need to be involved and help them.

Anyway Abraham goes to his oldest and most trusted servant Eliezer. Even though his name is not mentioned here he is mentioned back in chapter 15. Eliezer was the oldest of his household and was in charge of all that Abraham owned.

Anyway Abraham asks El-e-a zar. I want you to find a wife for my son Isaac. I want you to promise me to take a wife from my own people. Put your hand under my thigh.

That would be like our handshake

She is not to be from the Canaanites but from my own people. Back in Ur of the Chaldees.

So Eliezer promises him he will do the best he can in securing a bride for his son. And so he sets out and heads to Mesopotamia to the city of Nahor.

The first principle

I. Prayer is absolutely essential if we are to know God's will and direction for our lives.

**We must pray asking God to guide us .**

**In our story that is what Eliazer does.**

## **Genesis 24:11-14**

**<sup>11</sup> And he made his camels to kneel down without the city by a well of water at the time of the evening, even the time that women go out to draw water.**

**<sup>12</sup> And he said O LORD God of my master Abraham, I pray thee, send me good speed this day, and shew kindness unto my master Abraham.**

**<sup>13</sup> Behold, I stand here by the well of water; and the daughters of the men of the city come out to draw water:**

**<sup>14</sup> And let it come to pass, that the damsel to whom I shall say, Let down thy pitcher, I pray thee, that I may drink; and she shall say, Drink, and I will give thy camels drink also: let the same be she that thou hast appointed for thy servant Isaac; and thereby shall I know that thou hast shewed kindness unto my master.**

**Prayer is an absolute essential if you are going to know God's will. In this account Eliezer prayed 3 times**

**Genesis 24:12-14, 26-27, 52.**

**As a young person whether or not your thinking about dating or marriage... you should begin praying that the Lord would guide you in your decisions**

**This is also something that parents need to be involved in.**

**As parents you can pray for your children they will have wisdom in the choices they will make in their lives.**

**One of the greatest prayers we can pray for our children is they will make God the center of their lives. They will make decisions based upon the principles of God's word and God's direction and purpose and will for their lives. As parents we must not only pray for that but we must teach them the importance of following after God.**

**But as a parent pray they will have the**

**Wisdom to live a life of purity, wisdom in choosing the right circle of friends, wisdom in who they will date and possibly marry, wisdom in choosing their life's work. As parents we can pray that our children will remain abstinent even in a culture that promotes sexuality. We as parents can pray that God will protect them from making unwise decisions.**

**And we can pray that God would in His time provide marriage partners for you children who would be lifelong spiritually committed partners.**

**Dating and Marriage as I said is one of the most critical decisions in life, and it should be prayed over more than any other.**

**James 1:5 says if you lack wisdom let him ask of God.**

**As we talk about choosing the right marriage partner its important you recognize the type of men or women you should avoid marrying.**

**Were gong to talk about that.**

**An important principle in choosing a person to date or a potential partner for life is to**

**II. Its vital to choose someone who shares your faith and who will support you in your spiritual growth.**

**Marriage can be hard but sharing a deep spiritual connection with your partner can support you through the tough times you will inevitably face.**

**The bible is very clear when it comes to choosing a marriage partner you should not marry someone who is a unbeliever.**

**Mark it down it is Gods will if you are a Christian to chose someone who shares your faith and who will support you in your spiritual growth.**

**Bill Hybels, former Pastor at Willow Creek, was teaching in a seminar about leadership, teaching some pastors and some other church leaders and things. At the break a man came up to him, and said to him, "You know Bill. Can I talk to you for a minute?" And he said, "Yes." And he said, "Bill, I've got to tell you something." He said, "For the longest time I didn't like you." And Bill's like, "Oh, okay, well, I don't even know you. What's up?" He said, "I read your book that you and your wife wrote called "Fit to Be Tied" about marriage." And he said, "In that book you talked about a Christian should not marry a non-Christian. And if a Christian was**

engaged to a non-Christian and seriously dating a non-Christian, they needed to break that off." And he said, "At that time I was dating a girl and she wasn't a Christian. And I loved her so much. And I was so attracted to her." And he said, "I read your book and said, "Forget that. I'm not doing that." And he said, "But God wouldn't let it alone. He kept working on my heart. He kept convicting my heart." And he said, "I had to break up with her? As much as I didn't want to, I had to break up with her." And he said, "I blamed you for it. And for the longest time I just dislike you because it was you and your words that caused me to have to break up with the girl that I loved." He said, "But then, I met this Christian girl. She loved Jesus and loves Jesus." And he said, "We fell in love, and we got married." He said, "We have the greatest marriage. And we worship together, and we praise together, and we pray together." And he said, "I was just thinking about how I would have missed that had I blown past God's commands and had I done what I wanted to do." And he said, "Bill, I just wanted to thank you. Thank you for writing that book."

**You know God wants the best for His children... If you want to build a happy marriage and home choose a person who loves the Lord, Someone who is committed to Christ.**

**In our story there a principle I want you to see.**

**I want you to hear what Abraham told his servant El-lee-a-zer when looking for a suitable bride for his son Isaac...**

**Genesis 24:3-4**

**<sup>3</sup> I want you to swear (promise me) by the LORD, the God of heaven and the God of earth, that you will not get a wife for my son from the daughters of the Canaanites, among whom I am living, <sup>4</sup>but will go to my country and my own relatives and get a wife for my son Isaac."**

**Abraham could have chosen a bride for his son among the Canaanite women but he didn't do that.**

**He had his servant travel over 400 miles to find a spiritually compatible bride for his son.**

**Why was he so adamant She was not to be from the Canaanites but from my own people.**

**Why? Because He knew God had forbid intermarriage with the pagans of the surrounding nations.**

**Why**

**God told Moses in Deut. 7:3,4 against intermarrying with the pagans of the surrounding nations. Nor shall you make marriages with them.....**

**Why?**

**for they will turn your sons away from following Me to serve other gods.**

**You see the Canaanites were notorious idolaters of the basest kind.**

**God knew they would turn**

**In I Kings 11:4.. Even though Solomon knew better. He married all sorts of foreign wives. As a result when Solomon was old...his wives turned his heart after other gods and his heart was not loyal to the Lord His God.**

**Throughout Israel's history when the people married unbelieving pagans there was profound negative influence on the Israelites.**

**In 2 Corinthians 6:14, the Apostle Paul says that believers should not "be unequally yoked with non-believers." While it's true that this passage does not specifically mention marriage, it does refer to being bound in a relationship with another person—no relationship is more binding than marriage.**

**The picture of two oxen bound (or yoked) together is often used to explain this Scripture. The oxen must pull in the same direction. Otherwise, they will fight with one another and experience exhaustion.**

**The same is true of two people who marry but don't share a common faith. Like the oxen pulling in different directions, a couple who doesn't share a Godly foundation will clash and experience conflict.**



Perhaps you're not convinced yet, and you wonder, *Two people enjoy one another and are mutually attracted, so that's enough to sustain the relationship, right?*

**Absolutely not.**

If you're thinking about marrying a non-believer, here are some questions you may be faced with answering in the future:

- Who will then come first, Christ or your husband? And how will you explain—and help him understand—this?
- Will your spouse's indifference to God affect your own spiritual growth?
- How will you explain to your spouse how God guides your decisions if he/she does not know Him?
- What if you believe that God wants you to accomplish something together as a couple?
- What if God leads you to stop practicing a particular habit? Will your mate understand?
- If you have children, will your mate agree to let you raise them to know Christ? Will he object when you want to take the kids to church and/or Christian functions?
- Will your spouse's unbelief hinder your children and grandchildren from trusting in Christ and, ultimately, affect their eternal destiny?

- When you and your spouse have a disagreement, will your mate have the capacity to forgive? (After all, forgiveness is often a choice that many people find difficult even with God in their lives.)

Even well-meaning Christians can fall into the trap of marrying non-believers. The most important piece of advice is that saying he knows Christ doesn't mean he has a relationship with Him.

Marriage based on a common faith is for our benefit, blessing and protection. God wants what is absolutely best for you. Make the decision to follow Him and allow Him to help you find the right mate for you.

**What are the benefits if a Christian dates or marries another Christian?**

- **You share the same value systems and you believe in the same God.**
- **You can encourage and pray for each other and grow spiritually together.**
- **You are likely to fight less than if you were dating an unbeliever.**

- **As Christians you will be able to put God at the center of your relationship and marriage. A marriage with God at the center will better succeed even in the face of challenges**

Lets go on...

Now this story takes a unusual turn.

Again were just drawing principles from this story.

So Eliezer takes ten of Abraham's camels (hes gong in faith here...the camels will carry some of Abrahams wealth to give a a dowery to the family that he chooses the bride from.) Abraham and Ell a zar wants the prospective bride and her family to know she will well provided for. and heads off to the city of Nahor in Mesoptamia in verse 10.and is looking for searching a wife for his masters son,

When he arrives in Nahor. He knows where to look for a bride.

Were told in Geneis 24: 11 he stops by

And he made his camels to kneel down without the city by a well of water at the time of the evingin even the time that women go out to draw water.

Look wht Eliezer does

He has arrived in the city of Nahor.

Now he knows where to look.

Verse 11...

His camels are thirsty. And so he made hiscamels to kneel down just out side the city by a well of water at the time of the evening when the women go out to draw water.

The chief source of water for the entire village was outside the town along the main road. Many of the people had to walk a mile or so for their water. The well was a good place to meent new friends or chat wih ole ones. . Isaacs future bride rebekah would have visited the well twice daily to draw water for her family.

So he knew where to look.

I think when making friends and dating it would be hard to find someone who loves the Lord in a place where believers should not be spending their time.

Your not going to find the person your looking for in the bars or in the clubs . A good place to find those who love the Lord is in church college bible studies youth groups college groups.

I remember when going to a Christian college I fell in love with my wife Kathy who decided to go to a Christian college to be a Christian school teacher.

MRS degree.

Now notice his prayer.

Read verses 14...-21.

Lord let it come to pass that the woman whom I shall say Let down thy pitcher that I may have a drink that she will say Drink and I will give thy camels drink also. ...let the same be she that you have appointed for Isaac.

And it came to pass before he finished his prayer that Rebekah came out with her pitcher.

Eliezer sees that she is very beautiful and a virgin neither had made known her. .

Eliezer asked the Lord to bring to him a young woman whose actions would display a submissive humble servant attitude. Those characteristics would be revealed by her willingness to give a drink to Eliezer and his camels.

She had a humble servant's attitude. She had a willingness to serve.

This was not easy.

A camel can drink at one time over 100 liters of water. There's ten camels...

So there's quite a bit of work for her to do.

Now I just want to draw out a principle.

Was it right for Eleazar to ask God for such a specific sign.

I don't know Eliezar was simply asking God to show him a woman with an attitude of service someone who would go beyond what was expected.

Anyway here's the principle.

Elieazar was examining and evaluating Rebekah's character and attitudes.

That's all I'm trying to bring out.

### **III. When considering a person to date or marry we need to consider their character.**

We need to look at someone who exhibits godly character traits.

For Elieazar it was obvious he was looking for someone who had an attitude to serve.

It was also important to him concerning her sexual purity.

Of course he also wanted to make sure she was fair.

These things were important to Elieazar when looking for a bride for Isaac Abraham's son.

In our own lives I think this is important also...When we make new friends we evaluate what kind of person they are. Do they love the Lord.

The Bible teaches us to recognize godly traits .

It teaches us what the fruit of the spirit is...

Proverbs 31 woman..

It also teaches us the kind of persons we are to avoid...

All the way through Proverbs especially in Proverbs 567 we are given characteristics of the ungodly person.

So what kind of women or men should we never marry or avoid dating lest we fall in love with them...

Often in the quest towards marriage and finding “the one,” something happens. It’s easy to overlook things that may not seem that big of a deal while dating, but these things could be destructive patterns once married. But love doesn’t have to be blind. There’s no reason to settle for unhealthy or harmful relationships, simply to pursue being married.

We all have sin issues that we deal with on a daily basis. We’ve all made mistakes that we often wish we could do-over. We all need the grace and freedom that only Christ Himself can offer. But our marriages are healthier when we recognize red flags in our dating relationships, instead of choosing not to see problems at all.

God cares about the decisions we make. He cares about who we marry. And we can trust He will give guidance, and help us see some red flags to be aware of along the way.

## 1. The Unbeliever

Marriage can be hard enough at times, add to that the pressure of deeper spiritual disconnect, and you may be in big trouble when the normal stressors of life occur. Missionary dating and marriage will be a road of extra struggle. If you hold vastly different spiritual beliefs now, don’t falsely assume you’ll get him to “turn around,” or change his ways later. It may happen, but it may not. Be careful not to settle for less than what God would want for the spiritual health and care of your marriage.

*Do not be yoked together with unbelievers. For what do righteousness and wickedness have in common? Or what fellowship can light have with darkness? - [2 Cor. 6:14](#)*

## 2. The Abuser

You are worth far too much to be abused by anyone. Ever. Move quickly away from anyone who brings you physical, verbal, or deep emotional harm. It’s not worth it to attach yourself to one who desperately needs help and freedom himself. You are not his saving grace. That is God’s work. Marriage is built on deep love and respect and this is most certainly no way to begin. See the warning signs for what they are. Believe you are valuable and precious to God. Say “no more” and move on.



### 3. The Addict

This man needs freedom that can only come by admitting there's a problem and seeking counseling, professional help, and the strength that God can bring. Addiction to alcohol, drugs, or pornography will lead to destruction. And though your relationship may seem to challenge him in the right direction, don't be fooled that he'll so quickly "give it all up for you," without the aid and accountability of professional help. You are not the one to set him free and your role is not to try to change him. Only God can.

### 4. The Narcissist

If he or she cares more about what they look like in the mirror on any given day, than what you do, or can't seem to get enough of their "greatness," you

may have trouble ahead. No matter how handsome, beautiful talented, and charming one may seem, marriage is built on the word "together." If the relationship before marriage seems a bit one-sided, emphasis on "his side," it may be destined for struggle. Your life should be greatly cherished by the man who calls you his wife. Humility, compassion, love, and respect towards others are much more admirable characteristics than simply the externals. *People will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boastful, proud, abusive, disobedient to their parents, ungrateful, unholy, without love, unforgiving, slanderous, without self-control, brutal, not lovers of the good, treacherous, rash, conceited, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God— having a form of godliness but denying its power. Have nothing to do with such people. - [2 Tim. 3:2-](#)*

### 5. The Controller

What seems to be disguised early on as "I'm only trying to help," can really be a deep need for control and a heart of jealousy. This man will dominate and strive to make every decision for you, decide who you should spend time or who you should no longer see. The one driven by control needs will have continual issues with whether he can "trust you." Often, under the grasp of the controller, you may start to feel like

you can hardly breath. It's suffocating. It's supposed to be, that's how he holds you in his grasp. Be free. This is not your problem to fix. It's God's.

## 6. The Angry, Hot-tempered Man

A man who cannot control his temper before you're married, will most certainly be a man who cannot control his temper after you're married. In most cases, it will worsen. No matter what our personality type, it still doesn't give us room to plow over anyone in our pathway with harsh words and rants. Take time in different scenarios to see how he responds, especially under pressure. How does he act on the ball field? In traffic? When the waiter gets the order messed up? When the pressures mount at work? When you're running late? The key is – does he realize it's an area of weakness that he desires for God to help him change? If the answer is "no," steer clear.

*Do not make friends with a hot-tempered person, do not associate with one easily angered - [Prov. 22:24](#)*



## 7. The Man Still Tied to Mama

We all love a man who loves his Mom. There is deep respect for those who care for and show love to their parents. Yet sometimes the lines get blurred. When the guy you're dating still has every bill paid by his parents, they control every decision he makes, and he cares more about what Mama thinks than what you think - newsflash – struggle is ahead. One of the number one causes of divorce is relationship difficulty with in-laws. No family is perfect, but be sure you're both on the same page when it comes to leaving, cleaving, and uniting as one. If there is trouble with drawing healthy boundaries before you're married, there most definitely will be trouble later.

*'For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh'?* - *Matt. 19:5*

## 8. The Flirt, Cheat, Tempter

### Slide 8 of 11

Behaviors established before marriage are not going to magically go away once you say "I do." Sexual sin can be a deep trap of the enemy and once ensnared in these destructive patterns, they are difficult to break. The mistakes of the past should hold no control over our present and future. Watch for behaviors that signal trouble. Is he respectful to women? Does he flirt with your best friend or the waitress at dinner? Is he begging you to sleep with him? Red flag. Be careful that you have wisdom to see the true heart before you enter covenant relationship with one entrenched in sexual sin. You are worthy of respect, the one who loves you, will wait for you. Sex is designed for marriage. You should be saving yourself from someone who has been saving himself or herself for you.

If the person you are interested in was sexually active in the past but is not now. You will have to deal with the emotional scars of the previous sexual activities but by God's grace and mercy any person can be completely forgiven and purified by Christ.

If you have already engaged in sexual activity repent of that now.

But if the person you are involved with has sinful sexual behavior problems they can threaten your future if they are not dealt with.

And what you expect in others should also be evident in your life.

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*Flee from sexual immorality. All other sins a person commits are outside the body, but whoever sins sexually, sins against their own body. - [1 Cor. 6:18](#)*

## 9. The Liar

Every marriage must be built on trust. Without this as a firm foundation, you're in for trouble from the beginning. So what about those "little white lies" you started noticing along the way? In reality, there's no such thing as little white lies. Any lie is meant to hide, deceive, or manipulate truth. There is no room for dishonesty in a healthy, loving relationship. It's a dangerous trap and you will always be left wondering what he's hiding.

*A false witness will not go unpunished, and whoever pours*

## 10. The One with Destructive Money or Work Habits

If you're supporting your boyfriend and paying for everything now - this may not change much later. Is he a hard worker? Does he have a job? Is he a workaholic? Does he have secretive spending habits? Addiction to gambling? Insurmountable debt? Once

married, these patterns can worsen when the stressors of family life and responsibilities mount high. Money problems and financial struggles are one of the main causes of divorce. Have the discussions before you're married. Decide upfront if the two of you can agree on the big issues.

*Walk with the wise and become wise, for a companion of fools suffers harm. - [Prov. 13:20](#)*

## While You Are Waiting

The greatest thing you can do in your life right now is to simply walk with the Lord.

Principle.

Let me show you one more principle in this story.

Its found in verse 26-27

I being in the way , the Lord led me..

IV. The greatest thing you can do is walk with the Lord.

If you will walk in Gods will right now and not deviate from that path you cannot help but vbe in the Irods will alter. As He is leading you.

How did things turn out.

Eleazar met the family.

They all loved the Lord

Gen 24:50

63-67

Pray that God will guide and give you wisdom. Ask for His protection and help in making the best choices about any relationship.

-Believe the best about yourself. You are valuable, you are treasured by God. Do not believe the lies that you need to settle for one you can't fully trust, or may not treat you respectfully or lovingly.

-Trust Him with your future. We may not have it all figured out or be able to see what, or who, is ahead. But He knows. His timing is perfect. His ways are good. He's often at work behind the scenes where we can't see. Don't think for a minute He's forgotten you. He cares. And He has the power to do great things.

