

The Next Generation, Part 7: A Courtship to Marry Well? (Gen 29:1-20)

Preached by Pastor Phil Layton at GCBC on November 10, 2013

Please turn in your Bibles to Gen 29. The last 2 weeks in our study through this first book of the Bible we took a stop where Jacob took a stop in Bethel on his journey from the southern Promised Land to NE Haran, also called Paddan-aram in chapter 28 (Syria in the NKJV). Now his journey resumes.

SLIDE

Genesis 29:1 Then Jacob went on his journey, and came to the land of the sons of the east. 2 He looked, and saw a well in the field, and behold, three flocks of sheep were lying there beside it, for from that well they watered the flocks. Now the stone on the mouth of the well was large. 3 When all the flocks were gathered there, they would then roll the stone from the mouth of the well and water the sheep, and put the stone back in its place on the mouth of the well. 4 Jacob said to them, "My brothers, where are you from?" And they said, "We are from Haran." 5 He said to them, "Do you know Laban the son of Nahor?" And they said, "We know him." 6 And he said to them, "Is it well with him?" And they said, "It is well, and here is Rachel his daughter coming with the sheep." 7 He said, "Behold, it is still high day; it is not time for the livestock to be gathered. Water the sheep, and go, pasture them." 8 But they said, "We cannot, until all the flocks are gathered, and they roll the stone from the mouth of the well; then we water the sheep." 9 While he was still speaking with them, Rachel came with her father's sheep, for she was a shepherdess. 10 When Jacob saw Rachel the daughter of Laban his mother's brother, and the sheep of Laban his mother's brother, Jacob went up and rolled the stone from the mouth of the well and watered the flock of Laban his mother's brother [3x in 1 verse]. 11 Then Jacob kissed Rachel, and lifted his voice and wept. 12 Jacob told Rachel that he was a relative of her father and that he was Rebekah's son, and she ran and told her father. 13 So when Laban heard the news of Jacob his sister's son, he ran to meet him, and embraced him and kissed him and brought him to his house. Then he related to Laban all these things.

This kiss was the kiss on the cheek, or maybe both cheeks, side-to-side, to greet family members in their culture and others (kissing cousins?). Even in NT times, Christians greeted their spiritual family with holy kisses. This is a family thing, nothing sexual. Jacob greets Rachel as a family member much like we might hug a close family member in our culture. He weeps aloud as you might if you met a relative you'd never known, especially after a long journey with your life in danger, and now you know you made it and you're safe and home! Jacob didn't embrace Rachel but when Laban kissed Jacob in v. 13 it says the men embraced (more intimate and appropriate for them).

Moses does the same with his father-in-law Jethro as they're reunited after many years (Ex 18:7). It's how Aaron greets his brother after being apart for 40 years (Ex 4:27). Jacob kissed his father (Gen 27:27) and Jacob's own son Joseph later weeps and kisses him and his brothers (45:15, 50:1). David also did the same with Jonathan who he considered as his brother (1 Sam 20:41).

Jacob treats Rachel as his family in this way, his flesh and blood, and Laban like the father in the prodigal son story runs, embraces, kisses him as a son.

14 Laban said to him, "Surely you are my bone and my flesh." [maybe a hint of Gen 2:23, Adam and Eve, marriage?] And he stayed with him a month.

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My Study Bible says 'Tradition in that ancient area allowed a stranger to be cared for 3 days. On the fourth he was to tell his name and mission. After that he could remain if he worked in some agreed-upon way (v. 15).' - MSB

15 Then Laban said to Jacob, "Because you are my relative, should you therefore serve me for nothing? Tell me, what shall your wages be?" [Uncle may have known his desire] 16 Now Laban had two daughters; the name of the older was Leah, and the name of the younger was Rachel. 17 And Leah's eyes were weak, but Rachel was beautiful of form and face. 18 Now Jacob loved Rachel, so he said, "I will serve you seven years for your younger daughter Rachel." 19 Laban said, "It is better that I give her to you than to give her to another man; stay with me." 20 So Jacob served seven years for Rachel and they seemed to him but a few days because of his love for her.

The title of today's message on Gen 29 is: A Courtship to Marry Well? By 'courtship' I don't mean weird or rigid rules, just seeking to marry well. Let's start with the biblical context of relationships and contrast it with ours. [This is not just for singles, but parents, grandparents to help grandkids]

SLIDE-biblical pre-marital paths typically or ideally had these key elements

1. A man takes initiative while honoring his father's guidance (27:46-28:5, 29:10)
2. The man speaks to the woman's father first about his interest/intentions (29:13)
3. If interested, the family spends time getting to know him among them (29:14)
4. The father may agree and approve the relationship and set its terms (29:15-20)
5. The man prepares to "leave" his father's house and prepare a new home (2:24a)
6. The couple wasn't to cleave together physically until after the marriage (2:24b)
7. When the dad is pleased the terms are fulfilled, a wedding is planned (29:20-21)
8. Invitations would go out, and many would be called to the wedding feast (29:22)
9. The bride would wait to be brought to meet her groom (29:23a; Psalm 45:9-15)
10. The bride would be covered by pure garments and a veiled face (24:65)
11. After the wedding was the marriage's consummation (29:23b, 24:66, 2:24c)

Contrast recreational dating, what I defined in the 4-part courtship series on our website, as a '20th century, Western cultural, casual, "going out,"' that:

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- often skips friendship stage to a boyfriend/girlfriend stage, relationships which can consume life, energies, focus, time (taking him or her away from family, serving, church), and often idolatrously. Col 3:5 mentions "inordinate affection ... and covetousness, which is idolatry" (KJV)
- even among Christians teen relationships may have inordinate affection, making their interest their idol, coveting what God created for marriage
- varying levels of emotional awakening and stirring of passions, youthful feelings and giving of hearts and sharing intimate expressions verbally, eventually often physically, starting to cleave, then they leave (break up)
- recreational dating often seeks and savors some degree of the privileges of marriage without its covenant commitment or agape love that dies to self rather than pleases self and that truly seeks the other's best interest
- Much dating is guided by self, youth culture's norms and expectations, and with little to no parental involvement, insight, oversight, approval or even advice sought early and during the relationship. The young man (if he's even a man yet, which isn't a given), he may meet and minimally interact with her family, but often after the two have already progressed romantically, emotionally, and perhaps even physically to some degree. At that point he may already have her heart and her dad can't get it back
- eventually when (if?) a young man settles down to commit to his serious girlfriend, and is at or near marriageable age and the next stage of life, he prepares to propose, and the girl's parents finally at this point may be informed of his intentions right before engagement, as he may ask for their blessing to marry before he asks her to marry him that weekend.
- It's too late to stop the train now, it's left the station and is already full-speed, and with little to no input from godly mentors or church leaders sought to this point, the couple now brings a pastor into the loop on their final plans, leaving him a little time for quick premarital counseling as a formality since some pastors require that before they perform a wedding

Those are often best-case scenarios with 2 true Christians who stay virgins; it can often go much worse with less godly people in worldly dating. Rick Phillips doesn't mind the word dating but says it's 'essentially a 20th-century invention ... Our challenge is to think biblically about an activity that isn't in the Bible and that may expose us to worldly attitudes and behaviors ...' Rom 12 goes deeper: our life and bodies must be "holy and pleasing to God ...Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world but be transformed by the renewing of your mind" (v. 1-2 NIV). That's how to know God's will.

SLIDE - Principles in studying or teaching OT stories

1. OT stories are for teaching, reproof, correcting, training (2 Tim 3:16)

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2. OT stories have both positive and negative examples (1 Cor 10:6, 11)
3. OT stories should give us encouragement and hope (Rom 15:4)
4. OT Stories should show us Jesus and His good news (Luke 24:27)

This is not just a book of morals, although there are morals in it and in Gen 29. But we want to end with Jesus, who's the main point of marriage and all

SLIDE - The Lord is honored in our relationships:

1. by putting Him first
2. by parents being honored and involved
3. by purposefully patiently seeking God's will
4. by principles of His Word being followed
5. by purity being guarded

The same principles apply in Gen 24, Ruth and Boaz, Joseph and Mary, etc. [You can apply these to any relationship, not just premarital ones] First, Jacob was putting the Lord first. Our goal isn't just learning God's truth, its loving God first, living His truth.

The goal of our instruction is love (1 Tim 1:5), loving God first, then others. Earlier in Genesis Jacob was putting himself first, but in Gen 28:12-15 God favors Jacob, Jacob fears God (v. 17) and he's beginning to be transformed, affecting how he talks and even walks. Hosea 12 says Jacob "struggled with God ... he wept and begged for his favor. He found him at Bethel... (v. 3-4).

Look again at the end of Gen 28, where he vows in Bethel to put God first.

Gen 28:22 "This stone, which I have set up as a pillar, will be God's house, and of all that You give me I will surely give a tenth to You." 29:1 Then Jacob went on his journey, and came to the land of the sons of the east.

Literally the Hebrew is he lifted up his feet, there's a skip in his step now, like a yellow brick road, and he's off to see his people, wonderful people of Ur!

There's a joy Jacob finds in putting God first, in saying 'of all that You give me I will surely give a tenth to You.' This is the idea of giving first fruits from Genesis 4:4: "Abel ... brought of the firstlings of his flock and of their fat portions. And the LORD had regard [favor] for Abel and for his offering"

The world of Jacob's day paid respects to their god(s) by tithes or a tenth or 10% of the food their deity served them with. Our world today pays tips to those who serve us food, and for someone who has no

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idea what to give, it can be helpful to know what's respectful, and in that sense starting at 10% can be helpful, but when blessed by service you want to give more if able.

You don't want to disrespect or dishonor your server or the God who serves you, or give less than the world around you does because God is gracious.

As grace grows us, our perspective isn't 'let me find the minimum percent I can give or whatever's left, 90% or whatever for me to spend on whatever I want since it's mine.' Putting God first means I understand 'all of it is God's, not just a tenth or tiny percent, so how can I honor God in all He gives me?'

I do need to eat and drink, but must do all to the glory of God (1 Cor 10:31), so how can all my time, talent, or treasure honor and glorify Him, not 10%?

Putting God first means I give to Him the first-fruits, the first and best, and I trust that He will provide the rest. Jacob was not super-spiritual here in his pledge of 10% to God, but it's not a bad start for a brand-new convert, and if we understand it's not a limit or a legalistic command, but a grace-motivated giving we want to grow in beyond the law, exceeding scribes and Pharisees, learning from OT believers and the NT church can be like training wheels. I just want us to see Jacob's pledge is not the maximum measure of godliness.

Some can give more, others can't as much as others for a season, but a heart changed by the grace of a giving God will want to reflect and put Him first - not just in giving of our treasure, but giving our time and talents to the Lord.

And any of you people/young people can do that at the work day Saturday.

God is honored by young people in their relationships putting God first (#1) and a 2nd way God is honored is: by parents being honored and involved.

Sometimes Christians say Christ must be #1 in our life and our family must be #2 and our work is #3 ... but I would agree with Rick Holland, one of our past conference speakers here, that Christ needs to be #1 in everything, #1 in our family, #1 in our work, #1 in every aspect of our life. Christ is not the first check-box on a list, it's all of Him, through Him, to Him (or should be). Is the Lord central in my giving, in my worship, in my family, in my work?

Col 1:18 says Christ has the place of head "so that He Himself will come to have first place in everything" or other translations say Christ is to have the preeminence in all things, or in everything Christ must have the supremacy. These principles here are not just tips for better human relationships, these are about the supremacy of Christ, that He "may be all in all" (1 Cor 15:28).

"Children obey your parents in the Lord...honor your father and mother..."

Esau didn't in 26:34: When Esau was forty years old he married Judith the daughter of Beerli the Hittite, and Basemath the daughter of Elon the Hittite

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35 and they brought grief to [ESV "made life bitter for"] Isaac and Rebekah.

At the end of chapter 26, Jacob's twin brother apparently didn't involve and didn't honor his father and mother in choosing his wives, and it was a bitter grief to them, so much so that at the very end of chapter 27 we read this:

Then Rebekah said to Isaac, "I loathe my life because of the Hittite women. If Jacob marries one of the Hittite women like these, one of the women of the land, what good will my life be to me?" (to Isaac, Gen 27:46 in ESV)

Much of Proverbs warns about wrong kinds of women and it closes with a mother speaking to her son about what to look for in a wife (Proverbs 31).

Charm is deceptive, beauty is fleeting, but a Proverbs 31 woman who fears God is to be praised and pursued by a man who fears God, a Job 31 man.

Job 31 (NIV) 1 "I made a covenant with my eyes not to look lustfully at a girl...[and the rest of the chapter talks about integrity and character, honesty (v. 5-6), fidelity to one woman (v. 9-12), equity to his workers (v. 13-15), generosity to the orphan or widow or poor or needy (v. 16-23), avoiding earthly securities and idolatries (v. 24-28), being a man of mercy (v. 29-40)]

That's the last time Job speaks. It's all about character in being a Job 31 man and it's all about character in being a Proverbs 31 woman. A girl may be hot - but so is hell - Job says lust is a fire continually burning like hell (31:12). Esau may have gotten himself a Hittite hottie but he wasn't satisfied and got another one and later he decides "three's company" is the way to go and he marries a third wife, this time an Ishmaelite joining his Hittite harem. Isaac, Esau's dad, had honored his father Abraham in not marrying a pretty pagan from Canaan but marrying Rebekah from their family of faith up north. But Esau dishonored his father and family and departed from covenant blessing.

Gen 28:1 So Isaac called Jacob and blessed him and charged him, and said to him, "You shall not take a wife from the daughters of Canaan. 2 "Arise, go to Paddan-aram, to the house of Bethuel your mother's father; and from there take to yourself a wife from the daughters of Laban your mother's brother. 3 May God Almighty bless you..." [v. 7 says he obeyed his parents]

Children obeying and honoring parents is the path of blessing (Eph 6:1-3).

And in Gen 29 Jacob honors the father of the lady he wants to court, even though we'll find out later Laban is not very honorable (2nd half of chapter). But godly or not, God is honored #2 by parents being honored and involved

#3. By purposefully patiently seeking God's will

We don't have to spend much time here because the Bible doesn't spend any time, as far as I can see, on premarital relationships that aren't purposefully patiently considering God's will for marriage, there's

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no recreational dating. But just notice again as Jacob lives a few weeks in Haran, 29:18 says: Jacob loved Rachel, so he said, "I will serve you seven years for your younger daughter Rachel." 19 Laban said, "It is better that I give her to you than to give her to another man; stay with me." 20 So Jacob served seven years for Rachel and they seemed to him but a few days because of his love for her.

That's a wonderful and beautiful statement of true love, tested by time, and it made the time go by fast. Time goes by fast when you're in love. If you can't wait to do things right, and rush into the cleaving, it's not biblical love, because 1 Corinthians 13 says, first and foremost on the list "love is patient"

James Boice: 'In today's instant-gratification society, seven days seems too long to some...seven years seemed like only a few days to Jacob because his was true love, while days seem like years to many of our contemporaries because they do not know the meaning of a real and deep affection ...'

Jacob was purposefully considering marriage and wanted to prove himself to the father of the bride, so he works for him for a much larger dowry than usual because no price was too high for his priceless bride. With Rebekah and Isaac this moved much quicker because Abraham sent 10 camels with gifts of gold and silver and precious things as a dowry (a gift for her hand in marriage to compensate for her no longer being able to serve her family). In Gen 29, though, Isaac sends Jacob to the same Laban empty-handed, and he must prove himself as a hard worker and show his faithfulness to her father.

#4: Principles of God's Word being followed

SLIDE - review first 5 principles or parts of courtship or premarital process

1. A man takes initiative while honoring his parent's guidance (27:46-28:5, 29:10)
2. The man speaks to the father of the woman he's interested in pursuing (29:13)
3. If interested, the family spends time getting to know him among them (29:14)
4. The father may agree and approve the relationship and set its terms (29:15-20)
5. The man prepares to "leave" his father's house and prepare a new home (2:24a)

Notice in those passages, the guy is a "man" (not a boy). He doesn't ask her if he can be her boyfriend, he's a man who knows her man and head is dad.

Until marriage, dad is her man till he gives her hand and headship to a man when he transfers that covering and covenant responsibility in the wedding. Rachel understands this and so she immediately runs home to tell her father about this guy, which is good advice to young ladies today: run home to tell dad about any guy who seems interested or who claims he's related to you or who can move big rocks. He's not the man, dad's the man he needs to see

Apparently in v. 8 these are shepherd boys who aren't strong or are maybe even lazy? Jacob asks why they're standing around in v. 7 doing nothing?

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7 He said, "Behold, it is still high day; it is not time for the livestock to be gathered. Water the sheep, and go, pasture them." 8 But they said, "We cannot, until all the flocks are gathered, and they [all the shepherd boys?] roll the stone from the mouth of the well; then we water the sheep."

9 While he was still speaking with them, Rachel came with her father's sheep, for she was a shepherdess. 10 When Jacob saw Rachel the daughter of Laban his mother's brother, and the sheep of Laban his mother's brother, Jacob went up and rolled the stone from the mouth of the well and watered the flock of Laban his mother's brother. [this is a man's job, boys!]

Kent Hughes comments 'There is no warrant for imagining as some do that Jacob's immediate enthusiasm means this was love at first sight. But...every ounce of manliness rose in Jacob ... (indeed he was from the same gene pool as Esau) ... Can you see the shepherds easing back in tense silence? Jacob then watered Laban's flocks..."Sorry, boys, but the lady goes first." It would have taken some time to water her sheep from this restricted source.'

SLIDES - woman working hard to draw water from well, a man helping

Jacob, who was close to his mom as we saw in Gen 25-27, is reflecting the same servant's heart of his mom that she showed at maybe this same well many years ago which helped Eliezer discern she might be a good spouse for Isaac. Rebekah's son Jacob shows himself a servant and a good spouse.

He may be a new believer and have a ways to go, but he knows how to treat a lady, and he shows he's willing to submit himself to her dad's authority. If a guy hasn't yet arrived in other areas, dads, don't write him off if he has the basic qualities here, submission to God, godly authority and accountability, a hard work ethic, someone who serves others. Don't set the bar so high that only an Olympian can high-jump it. Voddie Baucham says if you can't find a man like this, build one, disciple a guy to one (What He Must Be, chap 11)

Rick Phillip's book subtitled Recovering a Biblical View of Dating explains we also need to be careful about psychological emphasis on his needs or her needs as being the key to marriage. What the world defines as a "need" we must have can fit the biblical definition of idols. Desire is a better term than need, but he discusses the impact of sin on relational desires in light of Gen 3:16, where God says a woman will desire to control or dominate him and he'll want to rule over her. That book discusses how sin affects both desires: 'Different people have different idols as we saw in Genesis 3, the woman's idols will often be relationship-oriented; she desires to possess him as the key to her happiness ... Similarly, Genesis 3 tells us that men will often be motivated by idols eternal to the relationship: money, power, excitement. Whatever they are, the point is that idols must be served, and the dating or marriage partner must be coerced into contributing to that service. This, by the way, is often what the world means by 'compatibility'. The key to a happy relationship, the experts tell us, is to find a companion who worships the same idols as you do, or whose idols are at least not in conflict with your own. This is a fool's paradise, for sin and idolatry never truly produce harmony but always strife.'

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That's a profound insight that what the world defines as "compatibility" or "needs" may biblically be called "idols" and the key for our relationships is not to find one who meets and feeds my idols, I need to lay my idols down:

- our world says happiness is what marriage is for, God says it's for holiness
- our world says find someone who meets your needs (even Christian books focus on his and her psychological needs) but Scripture doesn't speak of our desires we feel we need and must have (except to call them idols), Scripture instead emphasizes our need for Christ alone and to serve others like Christ

The principle from Jesus is we're not to be served, but to serve and give our life, like Jesus the Son of Man for us (Mk 10:45). That's the key to true love

Principles of God's Word followed (that's #4), now #5: purity being guarded

'A couple wasn't to "cleave" together physically until after they're married (2:24).'

Many young people years away from leaving father and mother are cleaving to others prematurely before they're joined as man to wife (like Gen 2:24). Back in Gen 26 we see an example of cleaving that's reserved for marriage.

In 26:8 Isaac thought he was in private but Abimelech sees Isaac caressing Rebekah as only appropriate in marriage (KJV "sporting with his wife," i.e., play in sense of foreplay or "fondling," NKJV "showing endearment"). It's more than just "laughing with" (ESV note suggests "intimate relationship").

Later in Genesis 37 Potiphar's wife lied about Isaac's grandson Joseph "this Hebrew has made sport of us! He came in here to sleep with me..." (NIV).

Intimate affection and enjoyment of each other is only for married couples. It's inappropriate for unmarried couples to "play" in this way, as even pagan people recognized in years past. If people from history could see Christian unmarried young people today kissing passionately, caressing like they're married, they'd say like in v. 9 "She must certainly be your wife!" (NAB).

Paul told Timothy to treat "younger women as sisters, with absolute purity" (1 Tim 5:2 NIV). Our world should see a teen guy and girl and wonder is she your sister (flip of Gen 26)? A young man is commanded to treat a young woman as a sister in Christ with absolute purity, not asking how far we can go as a couple, but how pure can we be? The right question isn't how far can I go and not fall into sin, how close can I get to the pit of destruction? The question is how far away can I stay from the edge to be pure, safe (Prov 5)? Purity is to be guarded, and her dad shares that responsibility (Dt 22:13-21).

Back to our text in Gen 29, so far so good as we get to v. 20 where we left off in our reading earlier. Jacob is putting God first, parent honoring, he's patiently seeking God's will, principles of God's Word being followed, and purity has been guarded by them and Laban for his daughter's wedding day.

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But there's more to the story and more than we can unpack today, but Jacob gets more than he bargained for or was working for, and he's in for a rude awakening literally in more ways than one in v. 25! He thinks he's marrying one person and he wakes up with someone different! Verse 25 says 'behold' which is Hebrew for 'whoa'! This isn't the Hallmark ending expected and it reminds us we're in a sinful world since the first marriage in Gen 3 messed things up. This mess in Gen 29 we'll see in several chapters and messages. But it reminds us of a final element in all human marriage to add to our list:

- The bride would be covered by pure garments and a veiled face (24:65)
- After the wedding was the marriage's consummation (29:23b, 24:66, 2:24c)
- Marriage in a sinful world isn't instantly happily ever after (29:23-25)

But I want to end on a more encouraging note and not miss the big picture of redemptive history. Gen 2:24 is quoted by Paul in Eph 5:32 to show that marriage has always been a mystery, a picture pointing forward to Christ and His church. It wasn't fully understood by Adam or Jacob or anyone in OT times, but marriage in a sinful world is to remind us we need Christ and His love, and I hope this helps us love Him and reflect it in our relationships

1. The man takes initiative while honoring his father's guidance

Jesus came from a farther place to seek a bride under the direction of His Father, as the hymn says 'from heaven He came and sought her to be His holy bride.' Jesus took the initiative in calling people to be His beloved, He came to seek and to save (Lk 19:10), and He said of His life "I lay it down of my own initiative" (Jn 10:18). But He submitted His initiative to His Father as Jesus explained "I ... have come from God, for I have not even come on My own initiative, but He sent Me." (8:42)

2. The man speaks to the woman's father first about His interest/intentions

Before the foundation of the world there was a conversation in heaven between the Trinity, some call it the covenant of redemption. The Father of the bride-to-be, the elect or chosen church, He says to the groom-to-be in Ps 2 "Ask of me and I will give you...of nations" (speaking of the church) and He says to them "kiss the Son."

But long before the wedding, the giving, the kissing, Father and Son planned this. Eph 1:4 says God "chose us in Him before the foundation of the world [and then it uses the same language used of the bride in Eph 5:26-27 and Paul adds] ... In love He predestined us to adoption [i.e., God becomes the Father of the bride/church] ... through Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the kind intention of His will..."

The will and intention of Jesus and the Father of the Bride were working together

3. If interested, the family spends time getting to know him among them

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Jesus spent time with those interested in Him, God's family-to-come, the church. He lived among them (John 1:14), and His character and nature was manifested.

4. The father may agree and approve the relationship and set its terms

The terms of the Father, the bride-price or payment required would be Christ's life for His wife, so Christ "loved the church and gave Himself up for her" (Eph 5:25)

5. The man prepares to "leave" his father's house and prepare a new home

Jesus spoke of His Father's house He came from in John 14 and He told His bride-to-be at that covenant meal we call communion, similar to Jewish betrothal meals: "I go to prepare a place for you. If I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself, that where I am, there you may be also." (14:2-3).

6. The couple won't "cleave" together physically until they're married

2 Cor 11:2 says the church is betrothed to be presented as a pure virgin to Christ

7. When the dad is pleased the terms are fulfilled, a wedding is planned

In John 17 Jesus talks about how He fulfilled everything the Father asked Him to (v. 3) and then Jesus speaks to the Father of those who "were Yours and You gave them to Me" (v. 7). Jesus fulfilled everything the Father required for His daughter.

8. Invitations would go out, and many would be called to the wedding feast

Mt 22:2 "The kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who gave a wedding feast for his son. And he sent out his slaves to call those who had been invited to the wedding feast ... he sent out other slaves saying, 'Tell those who have been invited, "Behold, I have prepared my dinner; my oxen and my fattened livestock are all butchered and everything is ready; come to the wedding feast ... as many as you find there, invite to the wedding feast... For many are called..." (v. 2-4, 9, 14)

9. The bride would wait to be brought to meet her groom

Mt 25 "Then the kingdom of heaven will be comparable to ten virgins, who took their lamps and went out to meet the bridegroom ... there was a shout, 'Behold, the bridegroom! Come out to meet him.' ... the bridegroom came, and those who were ready went in with him to the wedding feast ..." (25:1, 6, 10). Now listen to

1 Thess 4:16 "For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout ... 17 Then we who are alive and remain will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we shall always be with the Lord."

The Next Generation, Part 7: A Courtship to Marry Well? (Gen 29:1-20)

Preached by Pastor Phil Layton at GCBC on November 10, 2013

10. The bride would be covered by pure garments and a thick veil

Rev 19:7 Let us rejoice and be glad and give the glory to Him, for the marriage of the Lamb has come and His bride has made herself ready. 8 It was given to her to clothe herself in fine linen, bright and clean [in context, clothed in righteousness]. Till then Christ's bride sees Him through a veil, then we'll see Christ face to face!

11. After the wedding was the marriage's consummation

Daniel calls the end times 'the consummation' in the KJV (9:27), and Rev 20-22 is the consummation after the wedding supper, a thousand-year honeymoon and then the inexpressible ecstasy and intimacy of eternity with Christ forever (read Rev 21)

12. Marriage to Christ will be happily ever after

Rev. 22 says we'll see His face forever and ever (v. 3-4). v. 17 has 'the bride say, "Come." And let the one who hears say, "Come." And let the one who is thirsty come; let the one who wishes take the water of life without cost.' [That's the gospel]

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<http://www.sermonaudio.com/search.asp?sourceonly=true&currSection=sermonsource&keyword=gcbc&keywordDesc=&subsetcat=series&subsetitem=Ruth%2FCourtship+Series>

¹ Rick Phillips, *Holding Hands, Holding Hearts: Recovering a Christian View of Dating* (Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing, 2006), p. 12.

² James M. Boice, *Genesis*, 2:782.

³ Kent Hughes, *Genesis*, p. 367.

⁴ Phillips, 61-62.

⁵ Samuel John Stone, "The Church's One Foundation."