

FINDING GOD'S WILL **FOR MARRIAGE**

Introduction: Real life testimonies

1. A woman said to the counselor: It's been miserable. We've only been married for three years but it has been the worst three years of my life. My husband has just been awful. And what frustrates me so much is that God confirmed that I was supposed to marry him, ten times over.

2. A young handsome man was studying in a Bible school. He was handsome and a very caring man. He was good in counseling and helping people with their problems. When this young man was graduating, three Christian women approached him and said (unknown to the others): "God has spoken to me about you that we should spend the rest of our lives and ministries together."

3. Another woman said: Sadly, I was one of those people who believed with all my heart that God has only one person for me to marry. I also believed that God would do the choosing. I believed it was God's will for me to marry my husband. This has had disastrous consequences.

Note: There may be happy families too who believe God had told them to marry.

**BUT, DOES GOD TELL PEOPLE WHOM TO MARRY?
IS HE HAVING A PARTICULAR PERSON FOR YOU TO MARRY?**

THE TRADITIONAL VIEW

1. God has a plan for me to marry a specific person. [If I miss this person, I miss the best]
2. I need to get a special revelation to find that person.
3. I need to pray and look out for signs to get confirmation from God to marry the person.
 - a. *Inner peace*

- b. *Scripture*—“Arise, for the Lord has given the host of Midian into your hand.” Gideon’s words in **Judges 7:15** (making Bible a matchmaking book)
- c. *Situations*—Prays for the red dress
 - *Some get dreams*

Is this view Scriptural? What is the basis for such understanding?

Note: Every true and false view basically has a Scripture. A true view has a right interpretation of the Scripture and a false view has a wrong interpretation of the Scripture.

A) WHAT GOD HAS JOINED TOGETHER

❖ **MATTHEW 19:3-6**, “³ And Pharisees came up to him and tested him by asking, “Is it lawful to divorce one's wife for any cause?” ⁴ He answered, “Have you not read that he who created them from the beginning made them male and female, ⁵ and said, ‘Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh’? ⁶ So they are no longer two but one flesh. What therefore God has joined together, let not man separate.”

People assume “God has joined together” as:

- God has a *particular person* for you to marry
- God *confirms* who you should marry
- God *joins* you both together in marriage

Remember, the context here is about divorce. ³ “Is it lawful to divorce one's wife for any cause?”

- ⁴ He answered, “Have you not read that he who created them from the beginning made them male and female, [CREATION OF MALE AND FEMALE]
- ⁵ and said, ‘Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh’? [INSTITUTION OF MARRIAGE]

- 6 So they are no longer two but one flesh [UNION IN MARRIAGE].
- Therefore, what God has established (joining a male and female in marriage) man must not consider divorce. THIS DOES NOT SPEAK ABOUT GOD SPEAKING TO INDIVIDUALS TO MARRY EACH OTHER.

B) ISAAC AND REBEKAH

Note: When the issue comes about God choosing a particular person for marriage, people usually think about Isaac and Rebekah. BRIEFLY EXPLAIN THE STORY!

Point 1: One most significant factor to consider while interpreting narratives is that it is a description (what has happened) and not a prescription (what to do).

Remember:

- Abraham married two wives (if you don't have children, should you have children through another woman?)
- Jacob married four wives
- Isaac married Rebekah (Abraham's nephew's <Bethuel, Nahor's son> daughter) and Jacob married Leah and Rachel (Rebekah's brother's <Laban> daughter) from their bloodline and not outside of it
- Joseph married an Egyptian unbeliever (Gen. 41)

Should we take them as an example to follow?

Point 2: Why did God put Genesis 24? Is it to teach how to select a life-partner. It is a historical record in the big picture of God's redemptive work. After the fall of man, God's plan was to send Messiah as a Savior of the world. And God brought the Messiah through the family line of Abraham. Genesis 24 is about how Abraham had son, Isaac, and how Isaac was married and had a son, Jacob, and finally, how the Messiah came through their lineage.

Point 3: Abraham's wish was just to get a wife for his son Isaac from his own clan. There is no specific instruction about choosing a specific wife, chosen by God, for Isaac.

❖ **Genesis 24:2**, “And Abraham said to his servant, the oldest of his household, who had charge of all that he had, "Put your hand under my thigh, [3] that I may make you swear by the Lord, the God of heaven and God of the earth, that you will not take a wife for my son from the daughters of the Canaanites, among whom I dwell, [4] but will go to my country [Mesopotamia, modern Iraq] and to my kindred, and take a wife for my son Isaac."

Point 4: The angel of the Lord went before Abraham’s servant (perhaps Eliezer, 15:2-3) for his protection and success who travelled nearly 500 miles.

❖ **Genesis 24:7**, “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.”

- Will the angel of the Lord travel before you when you go for mate selection?

Point 5: Abraham’s servant wasn’t just asking for a sign. He was asking for a woman of excellent character.

❖ **Genesis 24:10**, “Then the servant took ten of his master's camels and departed, taking all sorts of choice gifts from his master; and he arose and went to Mesopotamia to the city of Nahor. [11] And he made the camels kneel down outside the city by the well of water at the time of evening, the time when women go out to draw water. [12] And he said, "O Lord, God of my master Abraham, please grant me success today and show steadfast love to my master Abraham. [13] Behold, I am standing by the spring of water, and the daughters of the men of the city are coming out to draw water. [14] Let the young woman to whom I shall say, 'Please let down your jar that I may drink,' and who shall say, 'Drink, and I will water your camels'—let her be the one whom you have appointed for your servant Isaac. By this I shall know that you have shown steadfast love to my master." [15] Before he had finished speaking, behold, Rebekah, who was born to Bethuel the son of Milcah, the wife of Nahor, Abraham's brother, came out with her water jar on her shoulder. [16] The young woman was very attractive in appearance, a maiden whom no man had known. She went down to the spring and filled her jar and came up. [17] Then the servant ran to meet her and said, “Please give me a little water to

drink from your jar.” [18] She said, “Drink, my lord.” And she quickly let down her jar upon her hand and gave him a drink. [19] When she had finished giving him a drink, she said, “I will draw water for your camels also, until they have finished drinking.” [20] So she quickly emptied her jar into the trough and ran again to the well to draw water, and she drew for all his camels. [21] The man gazed at her in silence to learn whether the Lord had prospered his journey or not.

- These ten camels have gone without water for a few days.
- Each camel can drink up to 25 gallons of water (95 liter—1 gallon is 3.8 liter).
- The capacity of ancient jars used for drawing water was no more than 3 gallons. (11.5 liter)
- The ancient well was a large, deep hole in the earth with steps leading down to the spring water. [v.16, “She went down to the spring and filled her jar and came up”]
- Rebekah had to draw water from the well about 80 to a 100 drawings.
- It might have taken about 2 sweaty hours for Rebekah to water the camels.

Bruce Waltke, Old Testament scholar: Since each camel could drink twenty-five gallons, the servant’s sign is sagacious; it is a test of the woman’s kindness, hospitality, industry, and willingness to help a stranger.

Gary Thomas: Abraham’s servant wasn’t just asking for a sign; he was asking for a woman of character who would be one in a thousand. He clearly wanted his master’s son to have a wife who would bless him with hospitality, so he wanted a woman who would go well above a simple request. The Bible praises Rebekah’s beauty and purity (v. 16), but the servant was seeking a woman who was uncommonly kind and generous.

Point 6: It was not Isaac who sought the Lord for the woman, but Abraham’s servant for Isaac. Does this mean you must not select your life-partner but someone else?

Point 7: When it came to Jacob’s marriage, Isaac didn’t tell Jacob to find the Lord’s chosen woman but just to get a wife from one of the daughters of Laban [Rebekah’s

brother]. **He didn't even tell him to follow his father's [Abraham] servant.**

- ❖ **Genesis 28:1**, Then Isaac called Jacob and blessed him and directed him, "You must not take a wife from the Canaanite women. [2] Arise, go to Paddan-aram to the house of Bethuel your mother's father, and take as your wife from there one of the daughters of Laban your mother's brother. [3] God Almighty bless you and make you fruitful and multiply you, that you may become a company of peoples. [Read how Jacob meets Rachel in Genesis 29:1-12]

Point 8: Observe that both Rebekah and Rachel were coming from a family of idolatry. They didn't know the living God at the time of their marriage. [See Joshua 24:2-3; Gen. 31:30-34; 35:2]

- ❖ **Joshua 24:2**, "And Joshua said to all the people, "Thus says the Lord, the God of Israel, 'Long ago, your fathers lived beyond the Euphrates, Terah, the father of Abraham and of Nahor; and they served other gods.'"
- ❖ **Genesis 35:2**, "So Jacob said to his household and to all who were with him, "Put away the foreign gods that are among you and purify yourselves and change your garments."

Point 9: Neither Jacob nor anyone in the Bible (Moses, Joshua, David, Solomon...etc) followed the pattern of Abraham's servant in choosing a wife.

Application: This shows that the experience of Abraham's servant is not a general example for others to follow, but an exception through which God fulfilled His covenant He made to Abraham and how He brought the Messiah through him.