

EXPOSITION OF GENESIS

Message #55

Genesis 24:10-27

How do you determine God's will in something like selecting a mate? Abraham's servant was given the seemingly impossible task of traveling hundreds of miles and picking out just the right woman to marry Isaac. How do you actually go about doing that?

THE SERVANT WHO WILL DISCOVER THE PERFECT WILL OF GOD MUST PRAY AND MOVE FORWARD BY FAITH IN ORDER TO DISCOVER THE PERFECT WILL OF GOD.

No one will ever understand God's perfect will by relying on their own understanding or by sitting around waiting for something to mystically or magically happen. Certain Biblical steps of faith must be taken.

STEP #1 - The servant who will discover God's will is faithful to fulfill the present assignment. 24:10

Abraham had given his servant an assignment - go to his homeland and get a wife for Isaac (24:4). We find that the trusted servant did exactly what his master requested - he took supplies and went to Mesopotamia, unto the city of Nahor. Nahor was the city located in Haran (27:43), the place where Abraham had once lived and where his father had died (Genesis 11:32). This trip was a long way from the Hebron area - over 500 miles. Josephus says a long trip like this would have meant the servant had to endure many hardships - soft clay in the rain, lack of water in the heat and always the danger of predator attacks, especially thieves (*The Complete Works of Josephus*, p. 38). There would be nothing easy about this trip. **The thing that is so important to see is - if a person is ever going to determine the will of God, he/she must be faithful to do the job God has presently given the person to do. If you want to determine God's future plan, be faithful in your present pursuits.**

STEP #2 - The servant who will discover God's will is faithful to go the proper place where it may be discovered. 24:11

When the servant got to Nahor, he made the camels kneel down outside the city because he knew that at evening, the women typically came to draw water. We don't find this servant sitting in a motel room, hoping some woman will magically appear. We don't find him in a bar or tavern looking for Isaac's future wife. He went to a very respectable place where he knew proper ladies regularly appear. I am convinced that until there is a high level of commitment to the local church, there will be a lack of really knowing God's will.

STEP #3 - The servant who will discover God's will is faithful to pray that he will discover it. 24:12-14

This servant did everything he could humanly do but he did not believe he had the wisdom to make the call himself, so in humility he prayed that God would enable him to discover His will.

Element #1 - The prayer was a selfless prayer. 24:12.

Notice the two proper nouns the servant uses for God - LORD and God; YHWH and Elohim. These two nouns inform us that this servant prayed with the view that God was the self-existing, sovereign, all-powerful God who was capable of answering this prayer. The servant is not praying for himself, but to fulfill the will of the master. This prayer is not about self-exaltation, but about successful service.

Element #2 - The prayer was a specific prayer. 24:13-14

The specific prayer is amazing - it asks God to reveal Isaac's bride by having her offer to give him and the camels a drink of water. He is asking God to do something very tangible. Now we know he had ten camels with him (24:10), who are each capable of drinking five gallons of water. In fact, Fred Wight says that a camel can drink up to nine gallons of water at a single drink (*Manners & Customs of Bible Lands*, p. 252). So this servant is asking God to send him a girl who will draw at least 50 gallons of water (John Phillips, *Exploring Genesis*, p. 191). Marcus Dods said that this was a remarkable prayer request because he knew of a Bible scholar, who visited this part of the world, who actually had a hard time getting someone to water one horse when he offered them money to do it (Marcus Dods, *Genesis*, p. 102). As Dr. Dods said, any woman who would do this would make Isaac a great wife .

It is interesting that the thing the servant was looking for, in his request, was her physical work ethic not her physical beauty. He does not pray that she would be unusually beautiful, which she turned out to be, but he prays that she will be willing to work hard, drawing 50 plus gallons of water. Biblically speaking there are two types of women - those who work hard and those who are lazy. The hard-working wife is best in God's sight - Titus 2:3-5; I Timothy 5:12-14.

One who never prays and asks God for His help and will, will not find it.

STEP #4 - The servant who will discover God's will is faithful to investigate all matters pertaining to God's will. 24:15-25

Before the servant had even finished his prayer (24:15), Rebekah came out with her pitcher on her shoulder. There have been those rare moments when God immediately answers the prayer (Daniel 9:23; Acts 12:5-19). Observe her ambition; she is the first woman to arrive to get her water chores done. Verse 15 informs us she was in the right family and became a real possibility. The Hebrew words "very beautiful" (v. 16) indicate that God made her beautiful at a very exceeding level. Dods observed, God is the One selecting this bride for Isaac and there is no prudery here, He picks a beautiful woman (Ibid., p. 102). **God will always give His best to those who leave the choice to Him.**

Verse 17 informs us that when the servant saw this gal - he ran to meet her. When he requested a drink, Rebekah offered not only him, but his camels a drink too (24:20). She was a woman who liked animals, she had a heart that cared if they had water. Verse 20 says, she hurried and dumped the rest of her water in the trough and ran to the well and drew water until all the camels

were watered. Dr. Kent Hughes observed that this would have taken her 1 to 2 “sweaty hours” to do this (Genesis, *Beginning & Blessing*, p. 318). She was a beautiful, slender, healthy, ambitious, strong woman, who would not only have a heart for animals, but also for Isaac, and she would have a beautiful heart for God. As Dr. Morris said, this must have sent a thrilling “shiver. . . up the servant’s spine” (*The Genesis Record*, p. 397).

According to verse 21 the servant isn’t quite absolutely sure whether this is the one; apparently he had some doubts. So he carefully investigated the matter further by asking her lineage (24:23). He learned that she was the great-granddaughter of Nahor, Abraham’s brother (24:24/11:27-29). He also learned she was a very hospitable woman who invited him to stay at her father’s house (24:25). **When Abraham’s servant saw this woman’s beauty, her work ethic, her lineage, and her hospitality, he knew God had answered his prayer and he had found the right woman. She would make Isaac a great life-partner.**

STEP #5 - The servant who will discover God’s will, worships God after discovering it.
24:26-27

The servant did not attempt to take credit for his discovery; he was quick to give the credit to God. First there was a focus on God, then Abraham and last the servant.

If you want to know God’s will about anything in your life - here is the formula:

- 1) Be faithful in what God has given you presently to do.
- 2) Be faithful to go to Church and good places to discover God’s will.
- 3) Be faithful to specifically pray and ask God for His will.
- 4) Be careful to analyze all details of every day life to see if it is God’s will.
- 5) Be remindful to worship when you discover God’s will.