

CORNERSTONE CONNECTIONS
MARCH 09 2019

**winsome . . .
 and then some**

Scripture Story: Genesis 24.
Commentary: *Patriarchs and Prophets* (or *Beginning of the End*), chapter 15.

PREPARING TO TEACH

I. SYNOPSIS

In the sunset years of his life Abraham wondered how God would fulfill His promise to make of him a great nation. After all, Isaac was still single. Sarah was dead. And he was 140 years old. Calling upon his trusted servant, Eliezer, Abraham says to him, “I want you to swear 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, but will go to my country and my own relatives and get a wife for my son Isaac” (Genesis 24:3, 4, NIV).

The future of God’s people hangs in the balance. So Eliezer assembles a caravan of 10 camels laden with gifts. He journeys to a city called Nahor, where he encounters an exquisite woman (see verses 16-18). Rebekah is very winsome. She is beautiful and hospitable. She offers Eliezer a drink. But notice, she is winsome, *and then some*. “After she had given him a drink, she said, ‘I’ll draw water for your camels too, until they have had enough to drink’” (verse 19, NIV).

Rebekah did everything that was expected of her, and then some. It’s the *and then some* that made all the difference. It changed her life, not to mention world history. She became the matriarch of God’s people. She enjoyed a great adventure with God. And no generation since has forgotten her name. Why? Because she did what was expected, and then some.

This lesson has much to teach us about going the extra mile. It is also a helpful story when one is thinking about desirable virtues in a future spouse. And

finally, it offers an encouraging reminder that God cares about the social component of our lives.

II. TARGET

The students will:

- Discover the matchmaking power of God as demonstrated by the union of Isaac and Rebekah. (*Know*)
- Sense the difference that excelling beyond expectations can make in relationships. (*Feel*)
- Have an opportunity to commit to always doing what is expected, and then some. (*Respond*)

III. EXPLORE

- Love is . . .
- Marriage
- Dating
- Service

TEACHING

I. GETTING STARTED

Activity

Refer the students to the What Do You Think? section of their lesson. After they have completed it, discuss their responses.

Illustration

Share this illustration in your own words:

Stories abound of the and-then-some mind-set that prevails at the clothing store Nordstrom. For example, an executive for a national retailer needed

a suit for a business trip. Since his wife constantly bubbled about Nordstrom, he ventured a trip to the upscale retailer.

He invested in a couple suits—one on sale, which meant he couldn't get same-day alterations. The tailored suit, however, was promised for the following day. On his way to the airport in Seattle, he stopped to pick up the suit. To the executive's dismay, it was still on the tailor's to-do list.

That evening, when checking into his Dallas hotel he received a package upon arrival. Yep, it was from Nordstrom. Three expensive silk ties (that he never ordered) draped his tailored suits—all compliments of one of America's greatest and-then-some stores. Tucked in the suit pocket was a hanky of apology from the salesperson who had called the executive's home to learn his travel itinerary from one of his daughters.

Stories such as this one abound in the Nordstrom world. The bottom line is that Nordstrom has scored a gold mine by empowering employees to not just do their job, but to do what is required . . . *and then some*. It is a corporate culture that challenges all employees to exceed expectations.

II. TEACHING THE STORY

Bridge to the Story

Share the following in your own words:

When God plays matchmaker, He gets it right! For a matriarch of His chosen nation, God selects a woman that models exemplary character. She not only serves Eliezer a drink—which would have been expected of her—but she offers to water his caravan of camels as well. In going the extra mile she was blessed by God. Now imagine what might happen if you lived with the same passion for exceeding expectations. What would that mean for your relationships? How would it affect you spiritually? academically? professionally?

Out of the Story for Teachers

After you read the Into the Story section with your students, use the following in your own words to process it with them.

- Why do you think that Abraham insisted that Isaac's wife come from "my country and my own relatives," and not from the Canaanites?
- How do you think Isaac felt as his father arranged this marriage?

- Is there any advice in this story that is helpful when one is choosing their future spouse? What is it?
- We catch a glimpse of Rebekah's character when she offers to get water for Eliezer's camels. What would this kind of character look like today? What hints of this and-then-some spirit have you seen in your friends?
- What does this story tell you about Abraham? Isaac? Eliezer? Rebekah?
- How does this story inform our understanding of modern romance?

Use the following as more teachable passages that relate to today's story: 1 Kings 3:7-15; Acts 21:1-6; Matthew 5:27-30, 39-41; 1 Corinthians 13; 2 Timothy 2:22.

Sharing Context and Background

Use the following information to shed more light on the story for your students. Share in your own words.

For this story it should be easy to get the students brainstorming about what it would be like if their parents were tasked with arranging the marriage for their kids as Abraham did for Isaac. Ask students to think about character qualities that would be important to their parents for a future son-in-law or daughter-in-law. From this opener, guide the discussion into the following areas:

1. Notice what was important to Abraham in selecting a wife for Isaac. She was not to come from the Canaanites. Moreover, Eliezer wanted someone who did not just cover the basics of hospitality; he had as a sign from God that the woman was to go beyond basic manners and offer to care for the camels as well.
2. Discuss Eliezer's approach to knowing God's will. Clearly he understood the high stakes involved in this decision. He was careful not to go against God's will. Thus he prayed fervently (Genesis 24:12-21) and outlined a plan as to how he would know the right woman. God's direct answer came immediately. Is such an approach still valid today? Can we know God's will by dictating to Him the circumstances that He should use to reveal His will?
3. Laban quickly accepted the ring and bracelets in exchange for his sister, Rebekah. The custom of giving gifts to family members of the bride

can be traced back to the time of Hammurabi (1728-1686 B.C.). It probably grew out of an era when men would purchase a bride. What does the snapshot of Laban in Genesis 24:29-33 tell you about the kind of man he was? Contrast what he reveals about his character to that of Rebekah's.

4. Consider another snapshot of Rebekah's character in Genesis 24:49-61. In the ancient culture it was customary for the family to keep the bride-to-be before the wedding. In some cases the woman would remain home for a month, but in this story the family requested a period of 10 days (verse 55). Rebekah, however, weighs in and states her preference—to begin the journey immediately. Like Abraham had done many years before, she was willing to step out in faith.
5. Two words are worth noting in the final scene of this story. In the final verse of chapter 24 it says: "He loved her; and Isaac was comforted" (NIV). What a heartwarming picture of God's goodness in bringing this woman so far from home into a marriage in which she could experience love. Moreover, she brought comfort into the union. Discuss this ancient marriage that God orchestrated in the light of what holds modern marriages together.



Tips for Top-notch Teaching

Role Playing

One effective way to help students learn is through role playing. After the students are familiar with the story of Isaac and Rebekah's getting together, have volunteers act out the role of the major players in the story. You may wish to have them role-play the story in a contemporary setting. For fun, you may specify that they must role-play in a specific genre, such as sci-fi or country and western.

Prepare the audience by assigning them questions to be discussed at the conclusion of the role play. Examples include: Would this work in real life? Why or why not? How would you have handled the situation? In what ways would a contemporary role play of this story differ from the original?

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III. CLOSING

Activity

Close with an activity and debrief it in your own words.

Read and discuss this final paragraph from chapter 15 in *Patriarchs and Prophets*, page 176:

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Teaching From . . .

Refer your students to the other sections of their lesson. Invite students to share the key text with the class if they have committed it to memory.

- **Key Text**

Invite the students to share the Key Text with the class if they have committed it to memory.

- **Flashlight**

*Read the Flashlight statement, pointing out that most of the time it is from the commentary on this week's story found in the book *Patriarchs and Prophets*. Ask what relationship they see between the statement and what they have just discussed from Out of the Story.*

- **Punch Lines**

Point out to your students the verses listed in their lesson that relate to this week's story. Have them share the verse that spoke most directly to them and allow them to explain why they chose it.

Or you might assign the passages to pairs of students to read aloud and then discuss, in order to choose the most relevant one to them.

“True love is a high and holy principle, altogether different in character from that love which is awakened by impulse and which suddenly dies when severely tested. It is by faithfulness to duty in the parental home that the youth are to prepare themselves for homes of their own. Let them here practice self-denial and manifest kindness, courtesy, and Christian sympathy. Thus love will be kept warm in the heart, and he who goes out from such a household to stand at the head of a family of his own will know how to promote the happiness of her whom he has chosen as a companion for life. Marriage, instead of being the end of love, will be only its beginning.”

Ask students to generate a list of specific things they can do during the week to practice “faithfulness to duty in the parental home.”

Summary

Share the following thoughts in your own words:

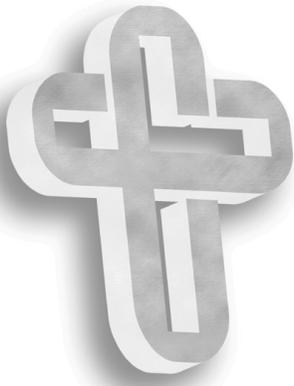
The story of Rebekah becoming Isaac’s wife is a powerful picture of God’s guidance in our social affairs. Moreover, it is a textbook case study on character. By going above and beyond expectations, Rebekah secured her place in history. She did the minimum, and then some.

So what is your and-then-some quotient? The apostle Paul said: “Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for human masters, since you know that you will receive an inheritance from the Lord as a reward. It is the Lord Christ you are serving” (Colossians 3:23, 24, NIV).

Challenge students to attack every aspect of life with all of their heart, “as working for the Lord.” As we studied in the case of Rebekah, it is a worthwhile goal to pursue with regard to one’s social life. But it is also an ideal target to strive for at school, in the home, and at church.



Remind the students about the reading plan that will take them through the inspired commentary of the Bible, the Conflict of the Ages series. The reading that goes with this lesson is *Patriarchs and Prophets* (or *Beginning of the End*), chapter 15. A special adaptation of *Patriarchs and Prophets* has been created by the Ellen G. White Estate and the Pacific Press Publishing Association. Get more info about it at www.cornerstoneconnections.net.



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STUDENT LESSON

Scripture Story: Genesis 24.

Commentary: *Patriarchs and Prophets* (or *Beginning of the End*), chapter 15.

winsome . . . and then some



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41

flashlight

“It was a time of anxious thought with [Eliezer]. Important results, not only to his master’s household, but to future generations, might follow from the choice he made; and how was he to choose wisely among entire strangers? Remembering the words of Abraham, that God would send His angel with him, he prayed earnestly for positive guidance. In the family of his master he was accustomed to the constant exercise of kindness and hospitality, and he now asked that an act of courtesy might indicate the maiden whom God had chosen” (*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 172).

keytext

“After she had given him a drink, she said, ‘I’ll draw water for your camels too, until they have had enough to drink.’”

(Genesis 24:19, NIV)

what do you think?

Rank the following attributes from 1 (most important) to 10 (least important) in the order you hope to find them in your future spouse.

- Kindness
- Honesty
- Attractiveness
- Contentment
- Optimism
- Selflessness
- Courage
- Self-confidence
- Humility
- Creativity

Why is your first choice so important to you? Who do you know who best embodies that trait? What person in the Bible exhibited this attribute? Would you ever marry a person who did not have this quality? Why or why not?

did you know?

Approximately half of marriages today are still arranged by the parents. Such was the custom in Abraham's day. Abraham was 140 years old (Sarah had died three years earlier) when he arranged for the marriage of his son Isaac. Abraham entrusted the matchmaking to his chief servant, Eliezer. So solemn was this assignment, Eliezer placed his hand under Abraham's thigh to swear that Isaac's wife would not be found among the Canaanites. The thigh was considered the seat of generative power, so to put the hand under a person's thigh was to promise obedience to the one requiring the oath.

INTO THE STORY

“Abraham was now very old, and the Lord had blessed him in every way. He said to the senior servant in his household, the one in charge of all that he had, ‘Put your hand under my thigh. I want you to swear 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, but will go to my country and my own relatives and get a wife for my son Isaac.’”

“Then the servant left, taking with him ten of his master’s camels.”

“Then he prayed, ‘Lord . . . May it be that when I say to a young woman, ‘Please let down your jar that I may have a drink,’ and she says, ‘Drink, and I’ll water your camels too’—let her be the one you have chosen for your servant Isaac. By this I will know that you have shown kindness to my master.’”

“Before he had

finished praying, Rebekah came out with her jar on her shoulder. . . . The woman was very beautiful, a virgin; no man had ever slept with her. She went down to the spring, filled her jar and came up again.

“The servant hurried to meet her and said, ‘Please give me a little water from your jar.’”

“‘Drink, my lord,’ she said, and quickly lowered the jar to her hands and gave him a drink.

“After she had given him a drink, she said, ‘I’ll draw water for your camels too, until they have had enough to drink.’”

“Then the man bowed down and worshiped the Lord, saying, ‘Praise be to the Lord, the God of my master Abraham, who has not abandoned his kindness and faithfulness to my master.’”

“Then Rebekah and her attendants got ready and mounted the camels and went back with the man. So the servant took Rebekah and left.”

“Isaac brought her into the tent of his mother Sarah, and he married Rebekah. So she became his wife, and he loved her; and Isaac was comforted after his mother’s death.”

(Genesis 24:1-4, 10, 12-19, 26, 27, 61, 67, NIV)



OUT OF THE STORY

Read the story to note details that are new to you.

Circle the different people in the story.

Put a *rectangle* around the phrases that capture the main parts of the story.

Underline the verse that you think contains the most important part of the story. Why?

How does this story inform our understanding of modern romance?

What character qualities do you see in:

Abraham?

Eliezer?

Rebekah?

Isaac?

What are the advantages/disadvantages of an arranged marriage?

If this story were to be made into a motion picture, what title would you give it?

punch lines

“Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for human masters, since you know that you will receive an inheritance from the Lord as a reward. It is the Lord Christ you are serving” **(Colossians 3:23, 24, NIV).**

“If anyone slaps you on the right cheek, turn to them the other cheek also. And if anyone wants to sue you and take your shirt, hand over your coat as well. If anyone forces you to go one mile, go with them two miles” **(Matthew 5:39-41, NIV).**

“If anyone is worried that he might not be acting honorably toward the virgin he is engaged to, and if his passions are too strong and he feels he ought to marry, he should do as he wants. He is not sinning. They should get married” **(1 Corinthians 7:36, NIV).**

“Honor marriage, and guard the sacredness of sexual intimacy between wife and husband. God draws a firm line against casual and illicit sex” **(Hebrews 13:4, *The Message*).**

“He who finds a wife finds what is good and receives favor from the Lord” **(Proverbs 18:22, NIV).**

“ ‘For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh.’ This is a profound mystery—but I am talking about Christ and the church. However, each one of you also must love his wife as he loves himself, and the wife must respect her husband” **(Ephesians 5:31-33, NIV).**

further insight

“Great care should be taken by Christian youth in the formation of friendships and in the choice of companions.”—Ellen G. White, *The Adventist*

Home, p. 443.

“Examine carefully to see if your married life would be happy. . . Let the questions be raised, Will this union help me heavenward? Will it increase my love for God?”—Ellen G. White, *The Adventist Home*, p. 45.

89

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Sabbath

Read Colossians 3:23, 24.

The *What Do You Think?* activity at the beginning of this lesson urged you to make choices about what attributes are most important to you in a future spouse. Why did you choose the top three you chose? What do you imagine will be the hardest quality to find in a spouse? Why?

When you think about how your life unites with someone else's, how much do you think it matters that the key qualities in your list are present?

Sunday

Read Ephesians 5:31-33.

As you read *Into the Story*, what three insights did you gain from observing some of the details brought out by the *Out of the Story* questions?

1. _____
2. _____

What do you think is the main reason this story is included in the Bible? What do you think God is trying to say to you in this story about love and marriage?

Monday

Read Genesis 24:19.

In this week's lesson Rebekah models the beautiful trait of offering a gesture of kindness and "then some." Read the *Key Text* again and notice how she goes beyond the expected response, as Eliezer had prayed someone would do. Do you believe Eliezer's prayer for someone who exhibited this quality was strange? When you look at the way Bible characters prayed specifically for certain events to occur, how do you feel about praying in a similar way? As you pray today, talk to God about a specific hope you have about your future spouse. Write out your prayer and keep

it in a safe place so you can find it when you are making decisions about marriage.

Tuesday

Read 1 Corinthians 13:4, 5.

In this week's *Flashlight* section Ellen White observes Eliezer's earnest desire to be guided by God in choosing a wife for Isaac. The decision was too pivotal for thoughtless choosing. Read the quote from *Patriarchs and Prophets* and notice that the qualities that governed the choice were "kindness" and "hospitality." Why do you think these attributes were so important to Abraham's family? What decisions do you face that might affect the direction of your future? Who do you know today who enjoys a joyful marriage because they made good relationship decisions when they were young? Ask them about the qualities they sought in a marriage partner.

Wednesday

Read the verses listed in the *Punch Lines* section of this week's lesson and make brief title headings for each verse. Which verse speaks especially to your life today? Why do you think this scripture stands out to you more than the others? As you reflect on how this passage pertains to you, think of a friend you have that might benefit from the same passage, and pray for an opportunity to encourage them this week.

Thursday

Read 2 Corinthians 6:14, 15.

If you read chapter 15 in *Patriarchs and Prophets*, you will discover wonderful insights into this week's lesson. Make note of the new insights you gain from reading this chapter and how they illuminate the story for you. Also, listen for advice! What timeless principles do you see in the reading that would help you in any age, whether it be in Abraham's time or today?

Insights: _____

Timeless principles: _____

Search the Bible for other Bible characters or stories and passages that give insight into the topic of marriage. List the texts in your Bible and read them before you go on a date.

Friday

Read Proverbs 18:22.

The experience of marriage and building a God-honoring relationship over the years is one of life's most noble adventures. In today's reading it says, "He who finds a wife finds what is good and receives favor from the Lord" (Proverbs 18:22, NIV). This is true also for a young woman who would find a good man to marry. God truly intended for our joy to be complete, and part of that joy is experienced in our relationships with others. What aspects of this week's lesson was particularly helpful to you today?

Write a thank-you note to a couple that you know who have had a positive influence on your concept of marriage.

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this week's reading*

Patriarchs and Prophets (or *Beginning of the End*), chapter 15.

**Beginning of the End* is a special adaptation of *Patriarchs and Prophets*, created for you by the Ellen G. White Estate and Pacific Press. Get more information about it at www.cornerstoneconnections.net/article/191/about-us/conflict-of-the-ages-companion-books#.URlhF1rB09s. By following the weekly reading plan, you will read at least one book of the Conflict of the Ages series each year.