



SESSION **4**

# A wife for Isaac



**MEETING AIM**

To discuss wise relationship choices.



**BIBLE PASSAGE**

Genesis 24



**BACKGROUND**

Times have changed over the last 4,000 years, and so have prevailing attitudes towards women. Having your dad send a servant to find a woman for you to marry would be an unusual courtship technique these days and, fortunately, women tend to get more say in the matter now! But choosing wisely when it comes to romantic relationships is just as important for us as it was for Isaac.

**+** GATHERING TIME



**You will need: box; paper; pens; refreshments**

Serve drinks and snacks while you catch up with your young people. Ask everyone what they look for in a potential boyfriend or girlfriend. Encourage them to write down their answers and put them in the box (anonymously). Spend a few minutes reading out some of the answers. At this stage, it doesn't matter if some of the responses are a little flippant, but you probably want to remove anything that might be offensive.

**+** IDEAL PARTNER



**You will need: magazines; glue sticks; scissors; paper**

Make the materials available to the group. Invite the young people to create a picture of their ideal boyfriend or girlfriend, using photos and text from the magazines and sticking them to a sheet of paper. They can work in pairs or on their own to do this. Encourage them to think beyond physical appearance. What elements of someone's personality or character make them attractive? How might the young people convey these answers in their pictures?

**+** BIBLE EXPLORATION



**You will need: laptop; projector; mobile phones; Bibles; large sheet of paper; marker pen**

If you have a large group, divide them into groups of four or five for this

activity. Give each group one or two Bibles and ask them to look up Genesis 24. Challenge each group to create a photo story of the events in the chapter. They should work together to agree what moments from the story they want to capture, then use their phone cameras to do that. (It usually works best if the group has a designated photographer and everyone else acts out the scenes.)

If possible, connect each group's phone (in turn) to a laptop and show their photos, using a projector.

Next, ask if anyone has any thoughts about how this story compares with modern dating. Is there anything we can learn from this about making wise choices in relationships? Look for general principles, rather than: "Get your mate to find someone nice and stick her on his camel."

Give the discussion a little more focus now. Ask the group to suggest five 'dos' and five 'don'ts' for relationships, based on Genesis 24. Record their answers on a large sheet of paper. If the young people come up with more than five answers for either side, ask them to choose the five answers they think are most helpful.

If the group seems to be short on answers, suggest one or two yourself. For example: listen to the people who know you best (Isaac's dad has his say in verses 1-9); ask God what he thinks (verses 12-14); character is important (remember how willing Rebekah is to help in verses 17-20).

**+** CHATTING TOGETHER



Use these questions to guide a discussion:

- Why does it matter that we choose wisely when we decide to start a relationship with someone?
- Do you believe in 'the one': one single person you're meant to be with? Why or why not?
- What do you think God might say about it? Does he have a plan for your love life?
- What if you end up being single? How might that have advantages?

Bear in mind that reading a biblical story that appears to include a woman being coerced into marriage might raise some very difficult questions. If the young people ask questions about why the Bible endorses women being treated as property (or something along those lines), be willing to take these questions seriously. It might help to mention

that Isaac's culture was very different from ours. There's still godly wisdom in Genesis 24, but it is *not* OK to objectify women. (Or men, for that matter.)

**+** CREATIVE RESPONSE



Ask if anyone has ever heard the advice: "Become the person the person you're looking for is looking for." (The provenance of this line is unclear, but it's often attributed to Andy Stanley.)

Give the young people back the pictures they created earlier, which illustrated what they look for in a boyfriend / girlfriend. Encourage them to apply these ideas to themselves. What if, instead of just looking for someone else who's wise, kind and patient, we focused on becoming wiser, kinder and more patient ourselves? That way, we'll all become more mature, godlier, more attractive people, regardless of who we end up dating. (Or if we end up single, which can be an extremely rich and fulfilling life.)

Allow a few minutes for the young people to reflect on the characteristics they highlighted as desirable in a partner, and how they might apply these characteristics to themselves.

**+** PRAYER



Finish with a simple, response-based prayer. After each line the leader reads, the whole group should join in with the response: "God of love, help us."

Lord God, you show us what real love means. Help us to learn.

*God of love, help us.*

To always treat other people with respect, regardless of their gender...

*God of love, help us.*

To see a person's character before their appearance...

*God of love, help us.*

To listen to the people who know us best, even if we don't like what they're saying...

*God of love, help us.*

To understand that we are loved completely, whether we're in a relationship or not...

*God of love, help us.*

To follow your leading in everything...

*God of love, help us.*

Amen

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