

Series - -

Date/s - 10 February 2019

Topic - Finding the Love of Your Life

Speaker/s - Pastor Dinah Lee

### Welcome [15 min]

You may want to look up the following websites for *icebreakers* suitable for your cell.

[www.thesource4ym.com/games/](http://www.thesource4ym.com/games/)

[www.christianitytoday.com/smallgroups/articles/icebreakersbeyond.html](http://www.christianitytoday.com/smallgroups/articles/icebreakersbeyond.html) < go to LEAD, click on ICEBREAKERS >

### Worship [15 min]

You may select songs like “Glorious One”, “Here In Your Presence”, “Servant King”, “Jesus At The Center” or “Am Yours (First Love)”.

### Spiritual Objectives

At the end of the cell discussion, cell members will:

1. Understand the biblical significance of a Christian marriage; and
2. For those who are in the midst of or will in future be making a romantic decision, to provide handles on how to trust God with finding the love of our lives.

### Word [45 min]

*“How do we navigate our search for love, in view of Netflix and Hollywood?”*

Pastor Dinah Lee opened her sermon with the illuminating question above. As Christians, we know that marriage is a beautiful thing- it is meant to reflect Christ’s relationship with the church (Eph 5:22-32) and magnify the beauty of the Godhead (1 Cor 11:3). Anything less changes the meaning of marriage, and dishonors God.

In answering the above question, Pastor Dinah shared several practical spiritual principles gleaned from the story of Isaac and Rebekah in Genesis 24:

#### **1. We should center our search around God.**

##### **a) Centering our search around God is to let God’s purpose guide you.**

Pastor Dinah highlighted that Abraham’s motivation to look for a wife for Isaac, was to fulfill God’s purpose (v7). Isaac’s marriage to Rebekah was crucial to the fulfillment of scriptural promise, as they birthed the lineage of Jesus. Pastor Dinah also brought up the tragic tale of King Solomon, whose heart was led astray by his pagan harem.

Who we marry will be the second most important decision in our lives, after our decision to follow Jesus. We must remember that a spouse will either encourage us to grow deeper in our spiritual walk, or distract us from fulfilling God’s purposes for our lives.

##### **b) God’s vision in marriage is to reflect His magnificent love and fulfill His purpose.**

Romantic love alone cannot sustain a marriage- only when our spouses share similar calling of fulfilling God's purposes, their marriage will be further strengthened (Amos 3:3). Therefore we should, as individuals, be diligent to discover God's purpose for our lives. We can be encouraged by Matthew 6:33 which teaches us that those who put God and His kingdom first, will be guided in our lives.

**c) Centering your search around God is to have God involved from the beginning of the search process.**

Abraham knew that God has called his offspring to inherit the land of Canaan, and it was crucial for his descendants to stay away from the godless influence of the Canaanites. Thus he sent his chief servant back to his homeland to search for Isaac's wife. In the same manner, if at the outset we do not establish what we are looking for in a potential spouse, it will be easy to lower our standards or "settle", once we are drawn to someone.

**d) Centering your search around God is to ensure spiritual compatibility (vv. 3-4)**

It will be wise only to date and marry a believer. It will be almost impossible for us to share spiritual oneness or enjoy the intimacy with our spouse which God has designed for marriage, if they reject God (see 2 Cor 6:14).

**2. Grow in godly character (vv. 15-21).**

Pastor Dinah also encouraged us to be the right person rather than find the right person. We see how Rebekah's servant heart and diligence were revealed as she was just going about her day-to-day duties.

Pastor Dinah suggested a few questions to help us reflect on whether we are growing in godly character:

- How are you cultivating your relationship with God?
- Are you willing to face your own flaws and grow out of them?
- How are you serving others?

Character is who you really are, when no one is watching. If Jesus is merely our Saviour but not our Lord, we will never grow in godly character as we will still remain in our carnality.

**3. Heed wise counsel before we find love (vv. 4,28,38)**

Throughout the account in Genesis 24, Isaac and Rebekah chose to submit fully to God, through their elders. We can get wise counsels through godly leaders and parents, who are mature in the faith and sensitive to the leading of the Holy Spirit. Spiritual leaders are God's representatives- if we bypass them, we may be removing God from the entire process.

**4. Be willing to submit to God's sovereignty throughout the process (v.8)**

Just like how Abraham recognized and provisioned for the possibility that the servant's search for Isaac's wife might not be successful (vv. 5 and 8), we must be willing to allow God to say no. Sometimes, God allows a broken relationship to hone our character, or to protect us from dangerous consequences. We have to still trust that He knows the best. Both singleness and marriage are gifts from God - we need to get rid of the wrong belief that only marriage will make us happy.

**Discussion Questions**

1. Pastor Dinah Lee shared that in today's day and age, many of us may see marriage as a cure to loneliness, a desirable change in social status, a means to carry on our family line or an outlet to fulfill our lustful desires.

**Share how these concepts of marriage are encouraged by society and the influences around us. How are these views ingrained in our culture, and how do they manifest?** [10 min]

**Leader's Notes:** *This is a recap and ice-breaking question. Cell members can share ways how contemporary western culture or traditional Asian societies are inclined to make family, or an individual's experience of romantic fulfillment, as the ultimate "good" in life. Some ways in which these erroneous beliefs are presented and propagated could be through the lenses of movies (e.g. chickflick, rom-com), books and songs, or through nosy and unwelcomed questions singles have to fend off at Chinese New Year gatherings. This question allows members to identify the common realities of how steeped we are in a culture which paints a very poor (and very wrong) picture of what marriage is supposed to be, setting us up for failure when we marry another imperfect human. We as Christians need a counter-cultural, right view of marriage.*

2. Read through once again the biblical account of the betrothal and marriage of Isaac and Rebekah in Genesis 24. What are some ways in which the characters of the story exercised faith on their part, to acknowledge God as the matchmaker?

**If you are married, can you think of a time in your courtship journey when you took a similar step of faith? What was the outcome?** [10 min]

**Leader's Notes:** *A relate question. Through the passage in Genesis 24, we see how the different characters (Isaac, Abraham, Eliezer and Rebekah), in their own ways, exercised faith and trusted God in their decision-making process. It took the faith of several people for this story to become a story of true love. For e.g, Isaac exercised faith by choosing to submit to the leading of God through his father Abraham, instead of taking matters into his own hands by looking for a wife among the local Canannites. Rebekah too exercised great faith; when the servant appears from nowhere, and presents before her the choice of her life—whether she will go with him to be a wife for Abraham's son—she was willing to leave home to go on a journey to marry Isaac (v. 58).*

*We also see a loving God in action, a God who keeps His promises and who is interested in the details of our lives, labouring behind the scene to bring Isaac and Rebekah together. The invisible reality of God's presence and guidance even became visible and obvious to the unbelievers in the story- Rebekah's father and brother marveled at the hand of God, after listening to the servant's testimony (v 50). Isaac's search for a wife in itself was a testimony of God's power and faithfulness.*

*Married couples can encourage the singles in the cell group by sharing their courtship journeys, and how their faith was rewarded and God was glorified when they centered their search around God. God can be trusted to lead us to the right person.*

*If time permits, read the separate account of Jacob and Leah in Genesis 29, and compare this story against Genesis 24. In Genesis 29, we see that instead of centering his search for his spouse around God, Jacob's obsessive love for Rachel caused him to make foolish and destructive choices one after another (e.g. to fall prey to Laben's deception and work for free for fourteen years). Jacob's idolizing love for Rachel eventually brought misery upon his future family, as he favored Rachel's sons over Leah's, creating a dysfunctional family environment.*

3. Pastor Dinah highlighted the important role that godly leaders and parents play, in an unmarried couple's courtship process. What are some benefits in being led by godly counsel while courting?

If you are a married couple, what are some ways you can journey with unmarried couples or singles? If you are a single or in a courtship, how can you be more intentional in seeking the wisdom and spiritual covering of godly elders? [10 min]

**Leader's Notes:** A reflect question. Proverbs 15:22 reminds us that plans fail for lack of counsel, but with many advisers they succeed. Pastor Dinah gave the analogy that modern dating is equivalent to window shopping, while courting is shopping with cash in hand and with intent to buy, under the direction of an experienced buyer. It is crucial for godly leaders and parents to be available as "experienced buyers"-providing wisdom, insights, accountability and spiritual covering, to prevent unnecessary heartache. Note that it took the faith of several people for the story of Isaac and Rebekah to become a story of true love. As a RiverLife church family and as guided by 1 Timothy 5:1-2, we can grow towards being a community which lends it faith, and offers guidance and godly counsel to courting couples.

4. Ps Dinah shared the quote that "The grass is not always greener on the other side of the fence. The grass is greenest where it is watered." Are there dried up pastures in your relationships, especially the ones that you hold dear? What practical steps can you take in the next week to "water" these? [10 min]

**Leader's Notes:** This is a response question. This applies to married couples, singles in search of a life partner and those who are content with singlehood. The most important goal in life is to learn to love – love God and love others. Do we put achievements, material comforts or other priorities over the forming and building up of loving relationships? See Ecclesiastes 4:8 and 1 Corinthians 13:13. Leaders can encourage members to speak about the practical steps they can take immediately to build awesome relationships. Examples would be commitment to spend more time and be really present when together, drawing inspiration from Ephesians 5:2.

#### Works [10 min]

Let's pray:

1. For Single: Be willing to submit fully to God, trust Him to provide a suitable life partner.
2. Deepening our relationship with God, facing our flaws courageously and overcoming one by one.

#### Announcements

1. 2019 Equipping Weekends (Season 1)  
Register online via [bit.ly/rlcequipping](http://bit.ly/rlcequipping)
2. Marriage Preparation Course  
Starts Sun, 31 Mar  
Register at the information Counter by Sun, 24 Mar

#### Church Vision Statement:

"A vibrant family where sons and daughters mature and reveal the Father's glory from generation to generation."