

The Old Hickory Bulletin

Old Hickory Church of Christ

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ISAAC'S MARRIAGE

The subject of marriage is a very proper subject for study. Many of the mistakes that are made would not be made if there were more use of common sense and of the holy word of God. Those who are yet unmarried need to think carefully of this subject. Parents and teachers also need to study to improve their own homes and to train the young.

Abraham wanted Isaac to have a wife with the same racial background. Having more in common and fewer natural differences makes it easier to maintain the unity of the home. Children, also, are happier if they fit into one race group or another rather than being a misfit in either. There were, likely, some very capable home makers in the land of Canaan near Abraham, but they were not of Isaac's race. Later Isaac wanted a wife for Jacob from among his own people. When the nation of Israel arose the matter of foreign wives became a problem to the rulers. As to law, there is no demand in the New Testament that there be no crossing of race barriers in marriage, but observation, wisdom, and common understanding still remind us that there are problems of adjustment and difficulties when the two are of different racial backgrounds.

Isaac and Rebekah were of a similar economic background. The work, the financial and social background were very similar in their respective homes. Rebekah was leaving her parents and going a few hundred miles to be among strangers, but she would not be a stranger to her work, or to the common experiences in the work of Isaac and his people. The experiences of her childhood and youth fitted her for her place rather than disqualified her. The New Testament does not make a law that the extremely rich must not marry the extremely poor, but, as we said about race barriers, wisdom and experience still advise this similar background. The wife from a background of wealth may feel a bit of self-pity in her privations while her husband may feel that she is extravagant. Conflicts may arise that annoy because of such different training and experiences in youth.

Isaac and Rebekah respected Jehovah God and were aware of His providence. This oneness in religion is a most important point of unity in two people's effort to be one in all

the ways the Lord ordained. Abraham, no doubt, must have had this in mind when he sent back to his own people for a wife for his son. Religious beliefs are a matter of teaching. It is not something for a husband to force on his wife. No individual is in a position to take religious convictions off like a coat and lay them aside for a new. One can learn but it is through teaching and not by demands. When one's convictions can be laid aside as a garment there was not much conviction in the first place.

It seems that marriages in our area are arranged with little or no thought to religious background. Imagination is used in supposing that there will be no conflicts. If neither has any conviction their differences may be laughed off as trivials. One simple but unfair plan is often stated as law by some husbands who demand that their wives change doctrines, methods of worship, and religious practices as if they were lords in the place of Christ. Conscience is involved. Beyond this, the law of God is involved. The wife is taught to be subject to her husband but not if his law conflicts with the law of God concerning the name, the Lord's supper, church government, etc., which are fundamental teachings of our God.

Unhappiness that comes from different religious training comes not alone from the husband's trying to change his wife's faith by his own law rather than teaching, but there is the difficult and delicate problem of training children. Comparatively few couples sit down patiently with Bibles to study so that they can correct their errors of doctrine by the Bible and get together on truth. It is more common for the subject of religion to become a forbidden topic, when it should be discussed daily before the children. Isaac and Rebekah had a common faith. There is no way to overemphasize the significance of this wonderful point of unity.

Abraham's servant prayed for guidance when he got to the well in the community among Abraham's people. Abraham before had indicated his confidence that God would be with him. If we may pray in any matter, surely we can pray in regard to a decision as fundamental as this. One's daily happiness depends on the home situation. Young people, please pray over this matter. Abide by the laws of God in making your life's plans. Your whole future, even your eternal destiny, is involved in this decision about marriage. The Lord loves us and gives wonderful advice on this, very important subject. By all means you should take time to consider His will carefully.

In Isaac's day it was a common custom for parents to select the marriage companions for their children. Abraham sent his chief servant to get a wife for Isaac. She was there for the wedding before Isaac ever saw her. This effort was not intended to try to turn the custom back to their day. Parents could use very poor judgment, too. Social pride, worldly ambition and other such foolish standards could blind parents, just as lust might blind the

young. A very happy picture is the situation when the young, their parents, and the Lord are pleased by the plans. We have already suggested prayer and Bible study in preparation for the day of marriage. Surely it is not out of place to recommend respect for the judgment of parents.

Young people, your parents love you and want the best for you. They are older and have gone further down the road of life. Their advice should carry weight with you. Many young people rush headlong into unhappy situations which their parents and many other people who love them could have helped them avoid if they could have found hearts open to loving counsel. It is very foolish for some very young person to reject wisdom, the law of God, and the advice of parents to marry one who is unworthy or completely unsuited to make a suitable companion for life. Parents arranged for weddings in Isaac's day. They could and should give wise advice today. Isaac loved Rebekah, the text says. That was natural since they had so many things in common. The providence of God had a part in this selection.

- Irven Lee, via Searching The Scriptures, October, 1965

NEW CREATURES IN CHRIST!

The Apostle Paul wrote, in 2 Corinthians 5:17, "Therefore if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creature; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come." Why is the one who is in Christ called "a new creature?" How does the change from the "old" to the "new" occur? What are some results of this change?

Why a new creature? The mind is renewed. Paul admonished the Ephesian Christians "So this I say, and affirm together with the Lord, that you walk no longer just as the Gentiles also walk, in the futility of their mind," (Ephesians 4:17). As Christians, they were carefully instructed "that, in reference to your former manner of life, you lay aside the old self, which is being corrupted in accordance with the lusts of deceit, and that you be renewed in the spirit of your mind, and put on the new self, which in the likeness of God has been created in righteousness and holiness of the truth." (Ephesians 4:22-24). One becomes a new creature because of changes that have been made on the inside, in the heart of man. He is a new creature because he does not live as he once did, but now walks "in newness of life" (Romans 6:4).

Old to new: how? There is no miraculous process involved here, but rather a process of hearing Christ, being taught in Him, and accordingly learning Him. Paul affirms, "But you did not learn Christ in this way, if indeed you have heard Him and have been taught in Him, just as truth is in Jesus," (Ephesians 4:20-21). Thus, the inner man, the mind is

changed and made different, the old is cast off and the new is put on. Paul described it to the Roman Christians this way: "And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind," (Romans 12:2a). How a person goes from old to new is by hearing, by learning the message of Christ, thus being "taught of God," he "comes to" Christ (John 6:45). This gospel message "is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes" (Romans 1:16). The powerful gospel transforms us in the inside, and thus God is able to bring about the changes He desires in us.

The results: The creature is "new" because his understanding has been changed by what he has learned from God, and it has affected what he is on the inside. He thinks differently as a Christian than before his conversion. Now there are new desires and new standards. There is a new Master of his life (Romans 6:16-18). Growing out of the renewed mind, there is new conduct, new actions, new fruits that testify to the genuineness of the inner change (John 15:8). The new creatures are "imitators of God" (Ephesians 5:1). The new creatures "walk in love" (Ephesians 5:2). The new creatures give thanks (Ephesians 5:4), and they "walk as children of Light." (Ephesians 5:8). They do not live as the old man any longer, in "immorality...impurity...greed...filthiness...silly talk...course jesting" or covetousness because "the wrath of God comes upon the sons of disobedience;" these old-man things are "unfruitful deeds of darkness" (Ephesians 5:3-6, 11).

Are you an old man or a new man? Friend, you need to be a new creature! May we help you "put on the new self who is being renewed to a true knowledge according to the image of the One who created him," (Colossians 3:10)?

- Gary Smalley

How Can We Help The Gospel Meeting?

Before the Meeting:

1. Invite everyone: friends, family, neighbors, co-workers, strangers, etc.
2. Advertise on your Social Media.
3. Be positive. Your excitement and enthusiasm can be contagious.
4. Pray.

During the Meeting:

1. Attend every service you can.
2. Be prompt and ahead of time.
3. Greet and welcome all guests.
4. Come prepared to study and worship.

5. Continue to invite others to the meeting.
6. Pray.

After the Meeting:

1. Contact those who visited and thank them for their interest.
2. Reflect on what you learned and share with others. This will reinforce your learning.
3. Look for additional opportunities to spread the gospel.
4. Let others know about resources that are available for Bible study.
5. Invite people to your regularly scheduled worship services.
6. Pray.

- Keith Hamilton

* "Never give the devil a ride – he will always want to drive!"

* "We don't change God's message, His message changes us!"

* "Jesus is the only fountain who can satisfy the thirsty soul!"

* "If a sermon pricks the conscience, it has some good points!"

* "Give God what's right – not what's left!"

What Must I Do To Be Saved?

HEAR THE GOSPEL

(Romans 10:14-17; John 20:30-31; Romans 1:15-17)

BELIEVE IN JESUS CHRIST

(Acts 8:37; John 8:24; Hebrews 11:6)

REPENT OF PAST SINS

(Luke 13:3; Acts 2:38; Acts 17:30)

CONFESS CHRIST

(Romans 10:9-10; Acts 8:37)

BE BAPTIZED

(Romans 6:3-4; Mark 16:15-16; Acts 2:38; Acts 8:36-39; 1 Peter 3:21)

LIVE A FAITHFUL LIFE

(Revelation 2:10; 2 Peter 1:5-11; John 15:1-8; Hebrews 10:23-25)