

FROM THE CREATORS OF FACING THE GIANTS

FIREPROOF



SHOULD I WAIT OR DATE?

By Julie Ferwerda

On the one hand, you don't want to get ahead of God.

You've done that plenty of times before... going out on dates with people you barely know, then spending every waking moment talking, texting, and planning a future together before you even know each other's middle names. And always with the same results—disappointment, regret, and dashed hopes.

Should you just keep to yourself, hoping God will mysteriously drop Mr./Ms. Right next to you by the banana bin at the grocery store, your eyes catching as you reach for the same bunch? It seems to work for those folks over in Hollywood. But this time, you've decided you want to do it God's way because you've made too many mistakes rushing ahead of Him before.

On the other hand, what if you miss the boat?

In this heroic decision to wait completely on God, the days, months, and maybe years go by while you've done everything short of checking yourself in to a monastery (or the equivalent). But the doorbell never rings, and the produce section never produces. What if there was more you should have done? How do you know for sure?

BUT ... wait! Before you cruise down the produce aisle, check out some reasons why dating is not the move for you right now.

1. God has impressed upon you not to get involved with anyone for a (specified or unspecified) reason or length of time
2. God has instructed you to allow the opportunity for your unmarried ex-spouse to reconcile with you (this is normally the rule, not the exception)
3. You're not completely healed emotionally from past relationships (angry, depressed, needy, or bitter)
4. You're insecure or hoping another person will complete you (emotionally, financially, or spiritually) or make you happy
5. You're not "technically" divorced
6. You're rebounding from another relationship
7. You have a history of choosing "losers" and haven't figured out why or how to stop the cycle

For the few who are left, we can now safely answer the question ... to date or not to date?

Isaac & Becky's Radical B.C. Dating (Genesis 24)

Here's the basic storyline: Isaac was ready to get married (hint) but his dad, Abe, just didn't jive with the local divas. So, applying his deft computer skills, Abe posted Isaac's dating profile on QualityChristianBabes.com to find a wife for his son. Okay, it wasn't exactly like that, but he did do the next best thing—he sent one of his trusted employees back to his home country in search of the future bride.



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Key Point 1: Isaac and Rebecca didn't use the "try before you buy" mentality. Do you really have to kiss a lot of frogs to find your prince/princess? If you believe that God has one specific person picked for you to spend your life with (and hopefully you will before this article is over), what's the point of wasting time, money, energy, emotions, and lip action on the wrong person? Why complicate your life with the wrong thing at the wrong time? Trying out as many romantic options as possible to make sure you land on the right one doesn't make you more ready or more sure—it makes you more used up.

Key Point 2: The future wife (and husband)-to-be had to be a believer (verse 4). No ifs, ands, or buts ... Abe wasn't going to even give his son the temptation of settling for an unbelieving mate. It was all or nothing because, just like others found out along the way, unbelieving spouses lead their families away from God. Aside from all the problems of marrying an unbeliever (or uncommitted believer), the biggest future problem to overcome is this: A spouse who hasn't fully surrendered his or her life to God can't truly love his or her mate with God's love. The person God selects for you will work to love you with God's unfailing, unconditional love. That's a great security!

Key Point 3: The servant went looking (verse 10). The believers of that time were spread out—it was necessary to search for the right one. It's not much different today. Truly committed single believers are hard to locate and need to be creative in seeking each other out. Fortunately, we live in some pretty high-tech times with options.

If this hangs you up, think of it this way. If you need a job, do you pray about it and then sit home hoping some mega job opportunity will fall in your lap? Not going to happen. God has a part, and we have a part. The problem of getting ahead of God in relationships isn't looking around or making ourselves available, it's when we force things that aren't meant to be because we get impatient. Choosing a life mate has to be done very prayerfully and cautiously, ideally with the help of godly counsel in your life, not willfully going ahead with attitudes like, "This one can cook and she doesn't look too bad either ... good enough. I don't want to be alone ... it's a go!"

Key Point 4: The servant prayed specifically for God to reveal the one right woman (verses 12-14). Pray specifically, and recognize there is one particular person God made/intended for you to be with. Does it make any sense that God wouldn't have a specific opinion about whom you share the rest of your life with? If He has a specific plan for your life (and He does), why wouldn't He have an opinion on who could best help you fulfill that plan? Note that Rebecca was the answer to both Abe's and his servant's requests. She was one of Abraham's relatives (as he prayed for) and she specifically met the requests of the servant to a T (verses 15-27).

Key Point 5: The woman had character consistent with God's best: pure (v. 16), modest (v.65), caring/selfless/respectful (vs. 18-20), willing to submit to God's leading (vs. 57-58), considerate (v. 25) Before you can expect God to give you the best, you have to be God's best for someone else. Eagles aren't attracted to turkeys ... become what you're looking for.



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 **Key Point 6:** The servant sought the counsel of the woman's family (vs. 33-49). Bringing godly counsel into a relationship is one of the best ways to safeguard against impulsive mistakes. Wise, godly people can hold you accountable with objective counsel. This also gives you a chance to look for one of the most important traits in a marriage partner—teachability. The person you marry isn't going to be perfect, but if they are teachable, God can reach them. That means they will respond when issues need to be addressed without becoming overly defensive or resentful. A teachable person will likely be willing to work at being the best spouse possible, which will make for a great marriage!

 **Key Point 7:** They didn't get emotionally or physically involved with anyone but the one they married (vs. 67). We need a new (or maybe old) dating mentality. The current typical one doesn't work unless you like getting your body and heart used up and spit out before you even figure out whom you're supposed to be with. This kind of dating we have today is relatively new and some of the results don't fit with the way God intended two people to get together. Where Do We Go from Here?

So dating can be fine, but let's rethink the method. Instead of doing the typical dating thing, try this instead. Get involved with Christian singles through your church, missions, travel, or any other ways. Spend time around them as friends. Do social things, talk on the phone, do things in groups, become friends. In short—keep it friendly unless God indicates He has plans for you to be together. God doesn't play games. If you are truly waiting on Him, He'll be very specific and direct when He feels you need to know. And remember, what was good for Isaac and Becky is still good today.



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