

SERMON TITLE: Portrait of a Godly Wife

Main idea: A successful wife-search locates a believer who is respectful, diligent, generous, strong, persevering, and trustworthy.

Introduction: Explosion of praise in vv26-27. Watching with the servant. “Signs” vs biblical principles. It is perhaps good for us to spend a little time thinking about the liberty of making choices based upon God’s revealed instruction, while trusting His providential decree. People use the phrase “God’s will” to talk about both of those things, and end up confusing them into a superstition in which they are on a puzzle-search for “the one.” We do well to listen to Deuteronomy 29:29 “The secret things belong to the LORD our God, but those things which are revealed belong to us and to our children forever, that we may do all the words of this law.”

So, believers are to trust Scriptures like Romans 8:28 and Romans 8:32 and Ephesians 1:11. This will help spare us from being hyper-romanticized about the search, or giving into anxiety over ending up alone. We can then, instead, proceed with joy, doing according to what God says is good for us to do, since we are sure that God *will do* whatever is good for us.

At the end of the day, a believer cannot miss out on the most important marriage of all—when Christ, by His Spirit, will have prepared us to be His own bride. In the end, no preparation to be a godly wife (or the kind of man who would suit well for a godly wife) is wasted—for even that marriage which we looked forward to, and may or may not ever have in this life, is ultimately most valuable as a preparation for the marriage of the Lamb!

1. A godly wife is **a believer**. She is from the right family. This is not a “class” thing in the context of Genesis so much as a faith thing and a survival thing. We already know that this is one of the main concerns of this narrative, but we see it again in vv23-24, and all of the other characteristics belong to this conclusion in v27, “Yahweh led me to the house of my master’s brethren.”
2. A godly wife is **respectful**. She address this stranger as “lord”—often the equivalent of “sir”—in v18. **Kindness**. In context, set against being attractive (being pretty not bad, just not what is truly pretty! a pretty maiden will yet a homely matron make). not just nice actions, but observing, anticipating, caring about, and acting upon the needs of others. Rebekah in vv16-18 (this is a heart-response that flows out of humility: think of possible thoughts, possible responses; outward acts of kindness are not enough!).
3. A godly wife is **diligent**—note the word “quickly” in v18 and “quickly” and “ran” in v20 (and again in v28). (this is a heart-attitude... outward obedience is not enough!). Disciple the heart condition, not the behavioral inconvenience.
4. A godly wife is **generous**. He had asked for just a little water. She offers to draw not just for him, but for his camels. All ten of his camels. Not just a little for each, but until they have finished drinking.
 - a. **Strong** that she might be generous. Gentle and quiet spirit, kindhearted, but not wimpy or flabby... the spring or well would be down at the bottom of a very deep hole; the jug would be about 3 gallons, jug and water together being 25-30lbs to carry up out of that deep hole. This was a woman who had strength to work! (inner strength and outer strength go together; neither can be gained without doing difficult things— 1 Timothy 4:7-8 Have nothing to do with irreverent, silly myths. Rather train yourself for godliness; ⁸ for while bodily training is of some value, godliness is of value in every way, as it holds promise for the present life and also for the life to come; “but mommy it’s too hard”; “that’s great! You can’t even *begin* to gain strength until something is hard!”).
 - b. **Persevering** that she might be generous. Each of these camels would drink around 25 gallons of water after a journey like this—that’s 80(!) trips up out of the well with the 25 pound pitcher, *running* in vv19-20 (“but mommy I’m tired”; “that’s great! You can’t even *begin* to learn endurance until you’re tired!”)
5. A godly wife is **trustworthy**. Rebekah is sure of Bethuel and Laban’s confidence in her judgment. She is able to invite a ten camel caravan to stay without checking. She is aware of the house operations and stores, such that she knows that they are capable of accommodating them.

Conclusion: The church is to be Christ’s godly bride! **Not just a random set of qualities, but the qualities that we see in those who belong to God through Christ in every age** (Galatians 5:22-24 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, ²³ gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law. ²⁴ And those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires). **The first step in all of this is evangelize your children**—continually (a) use God’s law; (b) tell God’s gospel. Disciple all day, every day, using Scripture *Deuteronomy 6:6-9 And these words that I command you today shall be on your heart. ⁷ You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise. ⁸ You shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. ⁹ You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates. ...* these are fruits of the Spirit, but we know that the Word of God is the sword of the Spirit (Eph 6:17), and Christ Jesus Himself identifies in John 17:17 the truth of the Word of God as the means by which our children (or anyone else) will be sanctified.