

# GUIDANCE NEEDED

## GENESIS 24:1-27

(Prepared by Gene Thompson using LifeWay's ETB materials.)

1. True or False: God wants His people to be successful!
2. When do you think it is acceptable to pray for success? (We must have the right heart and attitude about success when asking for God's blessing. If we are asking for selfish reasons, it is wrong. Our requests for success must be to further God's eternal plan for our lives and for His glory!)

There are several passages of Scripture that speak about success. For instance: Genesis 24:12; 1 Samuel 18:14; Joshua 1:8; Psalm 118:25; and Proverbs 2:7. (Have members read these verses.)

3. Have you ever prayed for success and God granted your request just as you prayed He would?
4. How is there comfort in knowing God directs the steps of those who seek Him? (Prov. 16:9— "a man's heart plans his way, but the LORD determines his steps." God is constantly working behind the scenes to bring about His will even before we ask, as we will see in our passage today. He knows the outcome before we ask when we trust Him and earnestly seek His will and glory to be accomplished.)

During this study we'll see that both Abraham and Isaac were getting older, so Abraham developed a plan to find a wife for his son. Aware of God's covenant promise that all nations would be blessed by his offspring, Abraham wanted Isaac to marry someone from his own family rather than a woman from the surrounding area. Later through Moses, God told His people not to intermarry with the Canaanites—Ex. 34:15-16.

### CONTEXT! Genesis 24:1-11

Placing one's hand under the thigh was a sign of an especially solemn oath.

1. What were the stipulations that Abraham decreed for his servant to follow in finding a wife for Isaac? (Not be a Canaanite; not be forced; from Abraham's extended family.)
2. What if the woman is unwilling to follow him back to Canaan?

Under no circumstances are you to take Isaac to her, he might be tempted to stay and settle there.

3. What assurances did Abraham give his servant? (The Lord, the God of heaven, will send His angel before you. The Lord will provide.)
4. What did Eliezer of Damascus, Abraham's servant, do when he arrived at his destination? (He stopped at the well or spring on the edge of town where the women would be coming to draw water in the evening.)

### A REQUEST! Read Genesis 24:12-14

1. What do you think prompted Abraham's servant to pray? (Perhaps he has seen Abraham pray; he knew the task would be difficult without guidance from God; There would be numerous young women; etc.)

2. For what did he specifically pray? (For success in finding the right girl for Isaac.)

He did not find Rebekah and ask for her to be the wife. Instead, before he met her, he sought God's complete direction.

3. For whom was he asking? (He was interceding on behalf of his master, Abraham.)

The servant wanted his master to be blessed by the results.

4. What indicators for success did he request? (That she not only give him a drink but water the camels also.)

It would not be unusual for anyone to offer to give a drink to a thirsty traveler, but to offer to draw water for his animals also would be the distinguishing factor.

5. What characteristics would the girl have who met the requirements listed in the servant's prayer? (Kind; considerate; unselfish; a servant; etc.)
6. What lessons concerning prayer can be learned from this prayer? (Intentional; specific; and heartfelt for others.)

Our primary desire in our prayers should be for God's will to be accomplished. Our close walk with the Lord will help us know exactly how we are to pray.

7. Do you think asking God for a sign is wrong? Why or why not?

### **THE ANSWER! Read Genesis 24:15-20**

1. How soon did God answer the servant's prayer? (Actually, the answer was set into motion before he prayed the prayer. God answered immediately. Before he had even finished praying, God sent the answer to his prayer. Rebekah was part of Abraham's family and met the patriarch's criterion for a wife for Isaac!)

Rebekah's beauty was significant, but her virginity was imperative. As Isaac's wife, she would be an essential part of God's covenant promises passed down to Isaac and his offspring. This marriage concerned God's promise to make Abraham a blessing to every nation, culminating in the birth of Jesus.

2. Why do you think Abraham's servant watched Rebekah so closely? (Seeing her work was a good indication of her character. She was quick to show kindness and offered without being asked to water the camels—no small task.)
3. What was he hoping to learn about her? (Would she stick to the task? Was she the right girl for Isaac?) So, the bottom line is, God heard Abraham's servant's prayer, and He showed him the woman he had asked for Isaac's wife—and not just "an" answer, but a woman who was everything he could have asked for: hard-working, and very, very gracious. This is a good reminder that God hears and answers prayers!

### **PRAISE OFFERED! Read Genesis 24:21-27**

1. What qualifications made her a good prospect for Isaac's wife? (Granddaughter of Abraham's brother, Nahor, and thus met the biological and ethnic criterion specified by Abraham; very beautiful which was not necessary but might be an extra blessing for Isaac; and she was sexually pure, a virgin.)

Of course, Eliezer did not know all of these things until later when he engaged her in conversation and was invited by her brother, Laban, to their home.

2. How did Eliezer respond to the news about her family? (Worship, which is always appropriate.)
3. How do you usually respond to good news?

Eliezer's most notable actions were his first and his last. He prayed. The first prayer was for God's kindness and success. The second prayer was an act of worship and gratitude for God's faithfulness.

**There is no greater indicator of our dependence on God than our prayer lives. And when we pray, God demonstrates that He is truly dependable to answer our prayers.**

4. When we become aware of God providing for our needs, how do we typically respond? (It should be worship and thankfulness to our Heavenly Father.)

Some of God's answers to our prayers may take a long time but others are almost instantaneous. In God's sovereignty He determines when the answers will come. How often do we miss answered prayers because we fail to receive what the Lord has provided?

When prayers are answered we should celebrate the Lord's provision and give Him thanks!

### **CHALLENGE!**

1. What are some reasons we should approach God when we have difficult decisions to make? (His wisdom can provide the right answers and directions at the right time.)
2. What obstacles keep us from seeking God first? (Pride. Lack of faith. Don't want God's answer.)

3. Why don't we go to God for directions? (Not ready to hear God. Sometimes delayed answers give glory to God.)
4. What are some tangible ways you can praise God for His faithful provision and direction? (Eliezer's response should be our response.)

Thank God for His guidance and ask Him to lead us to be more sensitive to His work in our lives.