

**Turning Home Into Something Better**  
**Life-Sharing Lesson 1 “Let’s Deal With Attitudes” Genesis 25:19-34**

**Commentary**

**Part Of Sunday’s Sermon Background**

In our Old Testament text, we ran into the family of Isaac and Rebekah. Just to give you a little bible background. Abraham was a very important man in the bible in that God had made a promise to him, that the whole world was going to be blessed through one of his children. God told Abraham this even though Abraham was 75 and had no kids and his wife was 65. They thought it would be tough having a kid right then and there, but God had them wait another 25 years so that Abraham was 100 and Sarah was 90 when she got pregnant. The child of the promise was Isaac. Isaac was going to be the son, who would have a lot of children to bless the world.

Now Isaac had to have a special wife. She was to come from Abraham’s clan back in a country God had called Abraham to leave. Not only that, Abraham sent his top aid, to find a wife for his son Isaac. God supernaturally led this top aid to find Rebekkah and bring her back to Isaac. The moment they saw each other, it was like love at first sight and they dated for 10 minutes, and got married before the day was over. And they stayed married for the rest of their lives being faithful to each other.

Expectations ran very high for this couple and the many children they would have. Isaac was 40 when he got married. No doubt there had been plenty of ladies who would have loved to have married this son of one of the richest men in the county years earlier. But Isaac had waited for God to provide him with a wife. Rebekkah was very beautiful had saved herself and kept her virginity for her husband. No doubt Abraham shared with them the vision and promise God had given him about the role God had chosen for them to play in fulfilling the plans of God. Everybody is on board.

But then after five years of marriage, they still do not have any children. Can you imagine how Rebekkah is feeling? There is a pressure on her to keep the plan of God alive. Can you imagine, the pressure Isaac must be feeling from his father, who wants to see the next child of the promise. Isaac and Rebekkah both want a child but they aren’t having one. Do you think it caused tension and attitude problems in their marriage? Is he thinking, maybe she wasn’t the one God had chosen.

Is Rebekah beginning to doubt herself. Rebekkah's last words she had heard from her family some six years ago when she left her country were "Our sister, may you increase to thousand upon thousands; may your offspring possess the cities of their enemies." But for five years, she has not had any news about a child to write home about. Was she embarrassed or ashamed?

But maybe the problem was not Rebekkah, maybe it was Isaac. After all, he came from a family that only produced children when they got to be very old. Maybe Isaac didn't have the sperm count he should have had. Their sex lives instead of it simply being a spontaneous act of love between a husband and a wife, it was turning into a tension builder of performance. Isaac and Rebekkah were both being called upon to display attitudes of acceptance, of forgiveness, of patience and forbearance with one another. Is that what God is asking of you at this time as some door does not seem to be opening fast enough or some door is closing in on you.

For Isaac and Rebekah, the five years of waiting, turned into 10 years, which turned into 15, which turned into 20. Can you wait on God for 20 years without getting an attitude problem with God? I know I have been pretty frustrated with God and it has led me to having an attitude with God, that led to sinful behavior on my part through having a negative attitude toward others.

We read a verse in the bible, and name it and claim it, without recognizing the rest of the verses that go with it. In chapter 25:20 it tells us that Isaac was 40 when he married Rebekah. In verse 21 it tells us that Isaac prayed for his wife because she was childless and the Lord answered his prayer and she became pregnant. But at the end of verse 26 it says that Isaac was 60 years old when she gave birth. How many times did he pray for his wife during those 20 years? Would you still be faithful to God if you knew in advance, you were praying a 20 year prayer request?

When Isaac and Rebekah did get the desire of their hearts, it still did not mean life became instantly wonderful. Rebekah had a terrible time in her pregnancy. She was having twins, and it felt as though the boys inside were fighting each other. God told her there were two nations in her womb that would be in battle against each other. When the boys were born, that took some pressure off Isaac and Rebekah to produce some offspring. Finally Abraham could breathe a sigh of relief. He had to live to be 160 in order to see his grandchildren from Isaac.

The twins were Esau and Jacob. God had warned Rebekah that there was going to be trouble in the family, by letting her know, the older brother was going to serve the younger brother. That's not how things were suppose to work. With every blessing that comes into your life, some type of problem is going to come along with it.

That is why, our hope and our joy is to be found in our relationship to Jesus Christ. Jesus is what keeps our attitudes where they ought to be.

Esau growing up is the strong athletic type. He wants to get out into the woods and into the forests to hunt for game. His body is muscular and very hairy. He likes to walk around with his shirt open to impress the ladies. If you got into a fight, you would want him on your side.

Jacob is the more artistic type. He couldn't shoot a chicken, but in the kitchen when you tasted his cooked chicken you thought you were in heaven. He was a master chef. He knew how to say "thank you" and "please". He could clean a house and was eager to ask, if there was anything else he could help you with. The old people would say now that's a smart boy. He didn't mind working.

The presence of the boys produced tension in the home, because Isaac loved to eat wild meat so he greatly loved Esau. Rebekah loved having her son around the home who was always so helpful, that she greatly loved her son Jacob. No doubt there were attitude problems with them accusing each other of showing favoritism to the other son.

Don't you think Jacob knew his father loved Esau more than him. Don't you think Esau knew his mother loved Jacob more than him? As kids don't you think they used this to their advantage. Who did Jacob go to, to get permission for something? Who did Esau go to for permission?

Which parent did each of the boys try to use guilt on to manipulate him or her in getting his way. "If my brother would have asked for it, I bet you would have given it to him." Very slowly you have the attitudes of contempt sneaking in the home. You have the attitudes, of jealousy creeping in the home. You have the attitudes of anger and disrespect creeping into the home.

On a scale of 1 to 10, how would others in your home or family rate you on how often you have a positive attitude with 10 being 24/7, every day of the week.

1. When was a time your attitude got you in trouble in your home?

*I ran away from home because I was angry with my uncle and my grandmother would not allow me to him back. I ran for about 2 ½ miles before getting caught and getting the whipping of my life from my grandmother.*

**Genesis 25:19-34** Today's New International Version (TNIV)

**Jacob and Esau** <sup>19</sup> This is the account of the family line of Abraham's son Isaac. Abraham became the father of Isaac, <sup>20</sup> and Isaac was forty years old when he married Rebekah daughter of Bethuel the Aramean from Paddan Aram<sup>[a]</sup> and sister of Laban the Aramean.

<sup>21</sup> Isaac prayed to the LORD on behalf of his wife, because she was childless. The LORD answered his prayer, and his wife Rebekah became pregnant. <sup>22</sup> The babies jostled each other within her, and she said, "Why is this happening to me?" So she went to inquire of the LORD.

<sup>23</sup> The LORD said to her,

"Two nations are in your womb, and two peoples from within you will be separated; one people will be stronger than the other, and the older will serve the younger."

<sup>24</sup> When the time came for her to give birth, there were twin boys in her womb. <sup>25</sup> The first to come out was red, and his whole body was like a hairy garment; so they named him Esau.<sup>[b]</sup> <sup>26</sup> After this, his brother came out, with his hand grasping Esau's heel; so he was named Jacob.<sup>[c]</sup> Isaac was sixty years old when Rebekah gave birth to them.

<sup>27</sup> The boys grew up, and Esau became a skillful hunter, a man of the open country, while Jacob was content to stay at home among the tents. <sup>28</sup> Isaac, who had a taste for wild game, loved Esau, but Rebekah loved Jacob.

<sup>29</sup> Once when Jacob was cooking some stew, Esau came in from the open country, famished. <sup>30</sup> He said to Jacob, "Quick, let me have some of that red stew! I'm famished!" (That is why he was also called Edom.<sup>[d]</sup>) <sup>31</sup> Jacob replied, "First sell me your birthright."

<sup>32</sup> "Look, I am about to die," Esau said. "What good is the birthright to me?"

<sup>33</sup> But Jacob said, "Swear to me first." So he swore an oath to him, selling his birthright to Jacob.

<sup>34</sup> Then Jacob gave Esau some bread and some lentil stew. He ate and drank, and then got up and left. So Esau despised his birthright.

2. Do you think the going twenty years without a child in their marriage helped or hurt the attitudes of Rebekah and Isaac toward each other?

*No doubt it hurt their attitudes. Both of them were under a lot of pressure to produce a child. Neither of them knew what the problem was. It was easy to blame each other. Misplaced blame leads to hurt feelings which leads to attitude problems.*

3. What kind of attitudes did they need to keep their marriage on a positive level during those first twenty years?

*They needed attitudes of acceptance, forgiveness, patience, tolerance, and laughter.*

4. What kind of attitude problems do you think developed between Isaac and Rebekah as the boys grew up?

*There were probably attitudes of resentment from Rebekkah that Isaac spent a lot more time praising the skills of Esau and not saying much about Jacob. Isaac probably was angry the Rebekkah seemed to spend too much time pampering Jacob and not enough time encouraging him to go out and make a man of himself by hunting. Each accused the other of practicing favoritism with the kids.*

5. Do you think the attitude of jealousy was a problem for Esau and Jacob?

Yes. They were probably jealous over the love the each parent showed or did not show for the other. They probably felt they had to compete for their parent's affection. No matter what Jacob did, he could not win his father's heart. No matter what Esau did, he was not going to win over his mom. They had different talents and their talents affected their parents in different ways.

6. Was jealousy ever a problem in your household growing up?

*Yes. At times we were jealous of our brother Johnny because he was the obvious favorite of both parents. We always sent him in to ask our parents for deserts or special trips.*

7. Where do you see any instances of jealousy in your family today?

*Even though our kids are adults, there are still subtle instances of checking to do what we do for one and is it matched by doing the same for the other.*

8. Have you ever been accused of playing favoritism when in fact others just did not understand your real motives?

*Yes. I believe in treating kids based on who they are and what their circumstances are. I do not try to be equal, as much as trying to be fair. If a youth is working, that*

*youth should pay more to help buy his/her clothes than a sibling who is not working because he or she is involved in sports.*

9. What causes favoritism in families and how should it be handled?

*Favoritism in families is caused by a host of things. Whether you were born first or last. Whether you were born healthy or sick. Whether your mom or dad was loved or not? Whether a child was helpful or rebellious. Whether you resembled a parent or not. Whether your personality was outgoing or quiet. Favoritism sneaks into our lives in many ways and sometimes we are not conscious of them. The goal is to be loving to everyone in the family. But even then, love is going to manifest itself in different ways depending on the individual.*

10. Do you think God has favorite individuals or favorite churches today? Why or why not?

*Using the term favorite seems a little harsh. Yet God does choose specific people and specific churches to do certain tasks. We often define favorite as the one who gets all the special goodies or success. We may think a large growing church is God's favorite church, when in reality God's favorite church may be a small little persecuted church that is faithful even in the midst of its members being bombed and killed. We may think of God's favorite person is the individual who preaches to millions each year. God's favorite may be the person in the wheelchair who faithfully prays every day for the body of Christ. God has chosen individuals, but I don't think they are always favorites. God chose Saul to be King, but Saul certainly was not a favorite.*

11. When the bible speaks of having the same attitude as Christ Jesus in the above verse, what are we being challenged to do?

*We are being challenged to allow God to respond through us in a given situation. The Holy Spirit is being given permission to keep us in check, and to respond through us in a way that is glorifying to God.*

12. What attitude do you have at home, or in your family that God is most likely to challenge you on?

*God is continuously dealing with me on patience. My lack of patience leads to a poor attitude that robs me and others of joy.*

13. Do you think Jacob took advantage of his brother with the issue of the stew? Why or why not?

*Yes. Jacob knew that his brother was at a weak spot in his life and he took advantage of it. He should have been willing to help his brother to regain his strength. This is a negative turning point in his relationship to his brother.*

14. What are ways that we take advantage of each other in the home, that leads to resentment?

*We may not do our share of the chores in the home. We may not doing our part in taking care of elderly parents. We may have kids, and then force our young brothers or sisters to babysit them. We may have kids while in school and that forces the family to have less available income. We may steal from other family members. We may stay in trouble with the law, that takes time and resources from the family.*

15. What changes were needed in the attitudes of this family of four?

The first thing they needed to do was to admit their attitudes, then apologize to each other for them, and then commit to changing them.

## Turning Home Into Something Better Life-Sharing Lesson 2 “Let’s Deal With Sharing The Load” Genesis 24:12---31

### Commentary

#### Proverbs On Laziness

If a person refuses to work he will be **poor** (a word used often in Prov.), whereas a hard worker eventually is rewarded. (Besides laziness other reasons for poverty are mentioned in Prov. See [comments](#) on [14:23](#).) One example of diligence and therefore of wisdom (**wise** is from the verb *śākal* meaning “to be prudent or to have sound judgment”; cf. [1:3](#); [16:20](#)) is harvesting **in the summer** while the **crops** are ripe. An example of laziness is a son **who sleeps** rather than works **during harvest** (in contrast with the ants, [6:6-11](#)). In fact such a person brings shame (the meaning of **disgraceful**), probably to his parents.

[14:23](#). **Hard work** pays off (cf. [10:4](#); [12:11](#), [24](#)) whereas people who merely **talk** about work become poor (cf. [6:10-11](#)). Other causes of poverty mentioned in Proverbs are stinginess ([11:24](#); [28:22](#)), haste ([21:5](#)), hedonism ([21:17](#)), oppression ([22:16](#)), favoritism ([22:16](#)).

[12:27](#). A **lazy** person (cf. [v. 24](#)) refuses to **roast his game**. “Roast” (*ḥārak*), used only here in the Old Testament, is difficult to translate precisely. It may mean the lazy man will not even go after food. Or (as in the NIV) it may mean that he hunts some game, but is too lazy to cook it. Diligence, however, leads a hunter to value what he has acquired. This suggests t

That a lazy person does not value what he owns.

[19:24](#). **The sluggard** (cf. [6:6](#), [9](#); [10:26](#); [13:4](#); [15:19](#); [20:4](#); [22:13](#); [24:30](#); [26:13-16](#)) is so lazy that, comically, he does not even have the strength to lift **his hand** from his **dish... to his mouth** to satisfy his hunger. This idea is repeated in almost the same words in [26:15](#)

[22:13](#). The extreme excuses made by a lazy person to avoid work are ridiculous. (On the word **sluggard**, see [comments](#) on [6:6](#).) Most probably a **lion** (cf. [26:13](#)) would not be roaming the streets of an Israelite town. And if a lazy person actually feared being **murdered** he would *never* go outside!

[26:14](#). The **sluggard**, though tossing in **bed**, seems anchored to it **as a door** is joined to the jamb. He will not even exert the energy needed to get up.



## Commentary On Genesis

It seems strange that the longest chapter in Genesis tells the story of how a man got his wife. While that is an important topic, and this is certainly a beautiful story, does it deserve that much space? Only thirty-one verses are devoted to the Creation account in [Genesis 1](#); sixty-seven verses are allowed to relate how Rebekah became Isaac's wife. Why?

For one thing, the chapter emphasizes *separation*. Abraham made it clear that his son was not to marry a Canaanite woman ([24:3](#)). The Law of Moses did not permit the Jewish men to marry heathen women ([Deut. 7:1-11](#)). Nor are believers today to marry unbelievers ([2 Cor. 6:14-18](#); [1 Cor. 7:39-40](#)). [Genesis 24](#) is a great encouragement for those who want God's will in the selection of a mate. Today, while we do not use the same manner as Abraham's servant, the principles still apply: We must want God's will, we must pray and seek His guidance, we must be willing to obey, and we must be alert to what God is doing.

Of course, when the husband in the story is Isaac, the beloved son of Abraham, then the narrative takes on greater significance. After all, Isaac was the next "living link" in the chain of blessing that culminated in the birth of the Savior, Jesus Christ; so whatever happens to Isaac is of utmost importance in God's great plan of salvation.

But the chapter goes beyond history into theology. It gives us a picture of the Heavenly Father getting a bride for His Son ([Matt. 22:1-14](#)). The church is compared to a bride ([2 Cor. 11:2-3](#); [Eph. 5:22-33](#)); and during this present age, the Holy Spirit is calling people to trust Christ and be "married to... Him" ([Rom. 7:4](#)). The elements involved in the marriage of Isaac and Rebekah are also involved in the marriage of Christ and His church. There are four of them.

### **The witness of the servant (Gen. 24:10-49)**

**The servant.** Neither Abraham nor Isaac went to find the bride; the task was given to an anonymous servant, who was completely devoted to Abraham. His favorite name for Abraham was "my master," which he used nineteen times in this narrative. He lived and served only to please his master, and that is a good example for us to follow today.

The servant got his orders from his master and did not change them. When he made his vow of obedience, he meant it and kept it. Whether his mission succeeded or failed, the servant knew he would have to give an account to his master; and he wanted to be able to do so without embarrassment. (See [Rom. 14:10-12](#) and [1 John 2:28](#).)

But how would he go about finding the right woman for his master's son? *The servant acted by faith in the God of Abraham and Isaac* ([Gen. 24:12](#)). He believed the promise of God and trusted the providence of God to direct him ([v. 27](#)). He took time to pray and to ask God for help, and he kept his eyes open to see what God might do. In fact, while he was praying, God was sending the answer ([Isa. 65:24](#)). The servant was not impulsive but waited on the Lord to see what He might do ([Gen. 24:21](#)). "Whoever believes will not act hastily; ([Isa. 28:16](#), NKJV).

***The bride.*** In His providence, God brought Rebekah to the well just as the servant was praying; and she did exactly what the servant had been praying about. The servant did what Gideon would do years later, "put out a fleece" ([Judges 6:36-40](#)). This is not the best way for God's people to determine the will of God, because the conditions we lay down for God to meet might not be in His will. We are walking by sight and not by faith, and we may end up tempting God. However, God accommodated Himself to the needs of the servant (and Gideon) and guided them as they requested.

Little did Rebekah know that doing a humble task for a stranger would make her the bride of a wealthy man who was in a covenant relationship with God. She would become the mother of Jacob, and he would become the father of the twelve tribes of Israel! Years ago, I read a quotation from a writer identified only as "Marsden," and it has stuck with me: "Make every occasion a great occasion, for you can never tell when someone may be taking your measure for a larger place."

The servant was evaluating Rebekah to see if she would make a good wife for Isaac. He could see that she was kind, pleasant, humble, healthy, and a hard worker. Watering ten camels is no easy job! After a long trek, a thirsty camel might drink as much as forty gallons of water; and Rebekah had to draw all that water by hand.

"Whose daughter art thou?" ([Gen. 24:23](#)) is a key question for any suitor to ask. Of course, the servant was interested in her family, but the question has a wider application for Christian believers today, both men and women. "Are you a child of God? Have you been born again into the family of God?" What a tragedy when believers marry unbelievers and try to establish a home without the full blessing of God.

Bible Exposition Commentary - Bible Exposition Commentary – Be Obedient (Genesis 12-25).

## Commentary

Matthew 5 [5:45](#) **"So that you may be children of your Father in heaven; for he makes his sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the righteous and on the unrighteous."**<sup>NRSV</sup> The *Father in heaven* shows indiscriminating love to all people, allowing the sun to rise and rain to fall on both the evil and the good, the

righteous and the unrighteous. Therefore, his *children* (those who believe in him) must reflect his character and show indiscriminating love for both friends and enemies. This verse refers to physical blessings on earth, not spiritual blessings. Obviously God's children will receive far more in the future. In the meantime, God's love reaches out to all people. God's people must do the same.

Life Application Bible Commentary - Life Application Bible Commentary – Matthew.

On a scale of 1 to 10, how would others in your home or family rate you on the laziness scale with 10 being super duper lazy.

*I would be rated a 3. I have never been accused of being lazy when given a job to do. I have left my clothes lying around when I could have put them away.*

1. Was someone not doing their fair share of the chores in the house ever a problem in your house? If so, give an example.

*We tried to make it a problem that our younger cousins did not have to do as much housework as the rest of us, but my aunt would hear nothing of it. She simply said we were older and ought to do more. As an adult it has been frustrating having others come to live with you who could be at home all day, and yet not do any cleaning in the home while they were there without being specifically asked to do something.*

2. Is being lazy something a person is born being, a sin to be repented of, or something that is learned to avoid doing work.

*Some people are lazy because their personality is bent toward playing around and they never get to the job at hand. Some people simply choose to be lazy because they want to do something else. Some people intentionally avoid work because they feel it's not their job. Laziness becomes a choice. Paul puts it this way in **2 Thessalonians 3:9-10 (NIV)***

*<sup>9</sup> We did this, not because we do not have the right to such help, but in order to make ourselves a model for you to follow. <sup>10</sup> For even when we were with you, we gave you this rule: "If a man will not work, he shall not eat."*

### **Proverbs 10:4 Today's New International Version (TNIV)**

<sup>4</sup> Lazy hands make for poverty, but diligent hands bring wealth.

### **Proverbs 12:27**

<sup>27</sup> The lazy do not roast<sup>[a]</sup> any game, but the diligent feed on the riches of the hunt.

## **Proverbs 26:15**

<sup>15</sup> **Sluggards bury their hands in the dish and are too lazy to bring them back to their mouths.**

## **Proverbs 6:9 (NIV)**

<sup>9</sup> How long will you lie there, you sluggard? When will you get up from your sleep?

## **Proverbs 13:4 (NIV)**

<sup>4</sup> The sluggard craves and gets nothing, but the desires of the diligent are fully satisfied.

## **Proverbs 20:4 (NIV)**

<sup>4</sup> A sluggard does not plow in season; so at harvest time he looks but finds nothing.

## **Proverbs 22:13 (NIV)**

<sup>13</sup> The sluggard says, "There is a lion outside!" or, "I will be murdered in the streets!"

## **Proverbs 26:14 (NIV)**

<sup>14</sup> As a door turns on its hinges, so a sluggard turns on his bed.

3. What are images you get from a person being lazy (sluggards) from the above passages and can you identify one of them in your past or current family? Has anyone accused you of being lazy in the home?

*Somebody who is broke. Somebody who makes excuses for not working. Somebody who sleeps when they should be looking for a job. Somebody who thinks someone owes them a living. Someone who puts things off until it is too late.*

4. Is it okay for a person living by himself or herself to be lazy in his or her home when it comes to housework? Why or why not?

*Probably not, in that it makes it more difficult for the person to use the home to the glory of God by inviting in others. All that we do is suppose to represent our relationship to God. **Colossians 3:17 (NIV)** <sup>17</sup> And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.*

5. What should be the motivation for a Christian to do his or her part in the home or at the church?

We should never want to be a stumbling block that is going to keep somebody else from following Christ. We become very hypocritical to sing and shout at church, but to not do our part at home or in the church. Just as we are told to pay taxes as part of our Christian witness, we should pay what we owe at home and in the church which would include doing chores and fulfilling our responsibilities.

### **Genesis 24:12-31 (NIV)**

<sup>12</sup> Then he prayed, "O LORD, God of my master Abraham, give me success today, and show kindness to my master Abraham.

<sup>13</sup> See, I am standing beside this spring, and the daughters of the townspeople are coming out to draw water.

<sup>14</sup> May it be that when I say to a girl, 'Please let down your jar that I may have a drink,' and she says, 'Drink, and I'll water your camels too'--let her be the one you have chosen for your servant Isaac. By this I will know that you have shown kindness to my master."

<sup>15</sup> Before he had finished praying, Rebekah came out with her jar on her shoulder. She was the daughter of Bethuel son of Milcah, who was the wife of Abraham's brother Nahor.

<sup>16</sup> The girl was very beautiful, a virgin; no man had ever lain with her. She went down to the spring, filled her jar and came up again.

<sup>17</sup> The servant hurried to meet her and said, "Please give me a little water from your jar."

<sup>18</sup> "Drink, my lord," she said, and quickly lowered the jar to her hands and gave him a drink.

<sup>19</sup> After she had given him a drink, she said, "I'll draw water for your camels too, until they have finished drinking."

<sup>20</sup> So she quickly emptied her jar into the trough, ran back to the well to draw more water, and drew enough for all his camels.

<sup>21</sup> Without saying a word, the man watched her closely to learn whether or not the LORD had made his journey successful.

<sup>22</sup> When the camels had finished drinking, the man took out a gold nose ring weighing a beka and two gold bracelets weighing ten shekels.

<sup>23</sup> Then he asked, "Whose daughter are you? Please tell me, is there room in your father's house for us to spend the night?"

<sup>24</sup> She answered him, "I am the daughter of Bethuel, the son that Milcah bore to Nahor."

<sup>25</sup> And she added, "We have plenty of straw and fodder, as well as room for you to spend the night."

<sup>26</sup> Then the man bowed down and worshiped the LORD,

<sup>27</sup> saying, "Praise be to the LORD, the God of my master Abraham, who has not abandoned his kindness and faithfulness to my master. As for me, the LORD has led me on the journey to the house of my master's relatives."

<sup>28</sup> The girl ran and told her mother's household about these things.

<sup>29</sup> Now Rebekah had a brother named Laban, and he hurried out to the man at the spring.

<sup>30</sup> As soon as he had seen the nose ring, and the bracelets on his sister's arms, and had heard Rebekah tell what the man said to her, he went out to the man and found him standing by the camels near the spring.

<sup>31</sup> "Come, you who are blessed by the LORD," he said. "Why are you standing out here? I have prepared the house and a place for the camels."

6. Why do you think Rebekah responded in the way that she did in agreeing to water the man's camels as well as giving him a drink?

*Rebekah was a person who did not mind doing more than what was asked of her. She went out of her way to do the best job she could possibly do. One thing she was not is that she was not lazy. She would have needed 40 to 50 gallons of water for those camels. The man was capable of drawing the water himself.*

7. Has there ever been a time when you went above and beyond in doing something at home or for the family that was unexpected? Describe it.

*Once I spent part of my vacation wall papering for my grandparents in their home in Canton. None of us expected me to get as much done as I did. I was grateful to be able to do it.*

8. How was Rebekkah's extra efforts a blessing to her entire family?

*Abraham's servant ended up giving all of them expensive gifts in addition to bringing them great news about their family members whom they had not seen in years.*

**Genesis 24:51-54 (NIV)** <sup>51</sup> Here is Rebekah; take her and go, and let her become the wife of your master's son, as the LORD has directed." <sup>52</sup> When Abraham's servant heard what they said, he bowed down to the ground before the LORD.

<sup>53</sup> Then the servant brought out gold and silver jewelry and articles of clothing and gave them to Rebekah; he also gave costly gifts to her brother and to her mother.

<sup>54</sup> Then he and the men who were with him ate and drank and spent the night there. When they got up the next morning, he said, "Send me on my way to my master."

9. Where is God asking you to either do more with a positive attitude, or being more willing to help someone else out with a positive attitude in your home or in your family?

*I could do more in the dining room keeping the area neater than I have in the past.*

**Matthew 5:44-45 (NIV)**

<sup>44</sup> But I tell you: Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, <sup>45</sup> that you may be sons and daughters of your Father in heaven. He causes his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous.

10. Do you think we are eager to adopt God's method of showering blessings upon the just and the unjust alike? Why or why not.

*No. I think we want our blessing to fall more upon those we think are deserving of them or at least have a true need.*

11. What are some of the more subtle ways we may have of forcing people to earn our love in our homes or families before we freely give it out?

*We may be reluctant to give our verbal praise until a person does something or act in a way we want them to act.*

12. What should you do with family members who are unwilling to do their part in the home?

*We should pray for them. We should remember that we are Christians. We should show them how their actions hurt the family. We should do what we can to make up the slack so that the home does not suffer. If they are adults, we may have to put them out.*

13. Is it ever loving, to send a family member back out into the streets?

*Yes, if the person is continuing in behavior that will be destructive to you or to the family. Love may mean waiting until the person is willing to change in order to truly help them.*

14. What should be our goal in loving a family member who has really blown it?

Our ultimate goal should be to help the family member find Christ. Our immediate goal should be to let the person know you're willing to stand with them if they want another chance.



**Turning Home Into Something Better**  
**Life-Sharing Lesson 3 Encouragement 1 Samuel 30:1-6**

**Commentary**

**1 the Amalekites had invaded ... Ziklag ... and burned it with fire**—Meanwhile, back at Ziklag, the Amalekite marauders seized the opportunity to invade the southern territory of a Philistia otherwise engaged. Ziklag was probably selected as the prime target of these nomad plunderers in revenge for David's recent raid upon their territory.

**2 had taken the women captives**—The Amalekites carried off the women and children to make them concubines and slaves. Throughout the ancient biblical world there was always a lively demand for both. The Amalekites were perhaps intending to take their prisoners to the Egyptian slave market.

**3 So David and his men came to the city, and, behold, it was burned**—It was about eighty-five miles from Aphek to Ziklag, a distance traveled by David's company in three days ([30:1](#)). The language implies that the smoke of the burned town was still visible, the sacking recent. Among the captives were Ahinoam and Abigail, David's wives ([30:5](#)).

**6-15 a Distressed David Pursues the Amalekites**

**6 David was greatly distressed**—For the moment, his abducted wives were not of topmost concern: his men had begun to complain in bitter terms. In their despair, they blame him for having left the town and their families defenseless. With outlaws it is always touch and go when setbacks occur. David has to assert his force of character, reassert his leadership in immediate action, or lose control entirely. The first step is to "encourage himself in the LORD, his God," by consulting the oracle that Abiathar had brought with him from Nob ([30:7](#)). It was the Lord, not the ephod, that was the source of David's confidence (Hertzberg).

Old Testament: Based on the Classic Commentary of Jamieson, Fausset, and Brown.

**1 Thessalonians 5:18 Therefore encourage one another and build up each other, as indeed you are doing.**<sup>NRSV</sup> The words "encourage one another" repeat Paul's words in [4:18](#). Despite persecution and their sorrow over fellow believers who had died, the Christians needed to *encourage one another* about the certainty of their future reunion with all believers who had gone on before ([4:13-18](#)) and the promise of eternal life through Jesus Christ ([5:9-10](#)). They ought also to *build up each other* in the faith as they dealt with the difficult issues and to seek to be ready for Christ's return ([5:1-8](#)). Apparently the Thessalonians were already doing this, so Paul took note of

that fact; yet he wanted them to continue to do so. Believers will never stop needing encouragement or building up. Just as one believer receives encouragement, he or she at another time will be in a position to offer it. The mutual giving and receiving in the body of Christ keep the church strong against the forces that attack it. God's people always need to stand together with one another as they anticipate their Savior's return.

Life Application Bible Commentary - Life Application Bible Commentary – 1 & 2 Thessalonians.

## Hebrews 3:13

**3:13** But encourage one another daily, as long as it is called Today, so that none of you may be hardened by sin's deceitfulness.<sup>NIV</sup> A safeguard against believers turning away from God is for them to *encourage one another daily*. Believers should continually remind each other to turn away from sin and to stay focused on Christ. The writer urged Christians to be alert themselves and to encourage others. A person cannot encourage or be encouraged apart from fellowship; thus, believers are urged not to give up meeting together ([10:24-25](#)). People cannot live as Christians in a vacuum. They need more than individual vigilance. They need encouragement and correction from their brothers and sisters in Christ. Allow fellow Christians to encourage you, and also see that you do not refuse to listen to a fellow Christian who may see sin or a problem in your life. Don't just wait for a pastor or leader to encourage someone else; each person, you included, has the responsibility (see [Galatians 6:1-2](#)).

Unfortunately, however, many Christians end up discouraged, rather than encouraged, by other Christians. Be careful that you take opportunity to actively encourage others. Without constant self-evaluation and encouragement, a person's sin can become a deceived mind, a hardened heart, leading to unbelief and rejection of Christ.

Sin is subtle, and often enjoyable, so we are easily drawn to it. Christians need each other so that they don't become *hardened by sin's deceitfulness*. Satan, the author of sin, could never be described as stupid. In fact, Satan is so intelligent that he can and does deceive people, even intelligent and normally faithful people.

We protect against sin's deceitfulness by checking our private intentions and desires against those of a group of trusted Christian friends, and by checking our group's intentions and desires against the teachings of the word of God.

The fundamental deception of Satan is the lie that obedience can never bring happiness.

*R. C. Sproul*

[Chart: How Does Sin Deceive Us?](#)

**3:14 For we have become partners of Christ, if only we hold our first confidence firm to the end.**<sup>NRSV</sup> True Christians, as mentioned in [3:6](#), must hold firm. Believers *have become partners of Christ*, meaning we have a great privilege in our relationship with him. The business terminology provides a metaphor: the believers can rely on Christ; he is the senior partner managing the firm. Christ, in turn, can trust that his partners will carry out his directions and pursue the best interests of the firm. Again we see the paradox of "now" and "not yet" in the Christian life. While believers have already become partners, we must still *hold our first confidence firm to the end*. That "first confidence" in Christ and all he has done brought us to belief; as time goes by, we must not let doubts or fears draw us away from that first confidence. The writer was concerned that the faith of some of these Hebrew Christians was faltering. He urged them to hold on to that first confidence until the end.

Faith is a journey, not just a state of mind. Many Christians today imagine faith to be like a pill to be ingested or like a pillow to be embraced. But Hebrews pictures faith as what Norwegians call a *joggetur*—a brisk walk or run along a wilderness path. Christians should be able to say with Paul: "I have finished the race, I have kept the faith" ([2 Timothy 4:7](#)).

Jewish readers of Hebrews would understand this picture of faith because it was the actual experience of the generation that had fled Egypt in the Exodus. Through unfaithfulness and rebellion, the Israelites had lost God's blessings. The writer turns to this theme in the following verses.

Life Application Bible Commentary - Life Application Bible Commentary – Hebrews.

On a scale of 1 to 10, how would others in your home or family rate you as an encourager?

1. Who was the last person to give you some encouragement and what did it do for you?

*I probably would get about a 6. The last person I gave encouragement to as of writing this was Keon. I was encouraging him on preparing for worship for Men's Day at Calvary.*

2. What are some ways in which children discourage their parents?

*Rejecting their parents advice, deliberate disobedience of rules, being disrespectful with their attitudes or words. Bringing embarrassment or disgrace on the family through their actions.*

3. What are some ways in which parents discourage their children?

*Setting standards to high for their kids to keep. Setting punishment periods too long or not connecting the punishment or discipline to the wrong that was done. Refusing to show an interest in things the kid really like doing. Continuous bringing up of past mistakes or errors. Expecting their kids to behave differently from them. Showing favoritism to their kids.*

4. What are some ways in which children discourage other children in the home?

Not doing their share of the load. Calling one another names. Making fun of limitations a person may have in appearance, athletic ability, intelligence, academics and the like.

5. What keeps us from having a steady flow of encouraging words from flowing through our homes or our families?

*Pride and selfishness. We are usually thinking more of ourselves than of the needs of others. As a result we do not see their need for encouragement as much as we see how they may have disappointed us. Then there are times when we intentionally withhold encouragement to keep the other person humble. That's pretty sad of a comment on our part.*

### **1 Thessalonians 5:11 (NIV)**

<sup>11</sup> Therefore encourage one another and build each other up, just as in fact you are doing.

### **Hebrews 3:13 (NIV)**

<sup>13</sup> But encourage one another daily, as long as it is called Today, so that none of you may be hardened by sin's deceitfulness.

### **Hebrews 10:24-25 (NIV)**

<sup>24</sup> And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds.

<sup>25</sup> Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another--and all the more as you see the Day approaching.

6. Why are we told in the Scriptures to encourage one another?

*When we are discouraged, we are more likely to fall prey to Satan's traps. We are also less likely to believe what God says about us. We are even tempted to think that God may no longer care about us. We will make poor decisions when we are discouraged.*

7. What are some practical ways in which we can encourage one another beyond just speaking words?

*Doing tasks for others or doing tasks alongside of them will encourage them. Help clean the house, wash the car, rake the leaves, do the family visiting, and other things to give the person a break. The other way we encourage us is by having the right positive attitudes. Our attitudes can either lift a person up or send them down in greater depths. Doing what we do for others with a good attitude goes a long way in encouraging them.*

8. What does God do for you when God knows that you need encouraging?

*God will answer a small prayer, or have someone send me an e-mail saying something I did was a blessing to them, or surround me with His love in a way that I know its God at work.*

### **1 Samuel 30:1-6 (NIV)**

<sup>1</sup> David and his men reached Ziklag on the third day. Now the Amalekites had raided the Negev and Ziklag. They had attacked Ziklag and burned it, <sup>2</sup> and had taken captive the women and all who were in it, both young and old. They killed none of them, but carried them off as they went on their way. <sup>3</sup> When David and his men came to Ziklag, they found it destroyed by fire and their wives and sons and daughters taken captive.

<sup>4</sup> So David and his men wept aloud until they had no strength left to weep.

<sup>5</sup> David's two wives had been captured--Ahinoam of Jezreel and Abigail, the widow of Nabal of Carmel. <sup>6</sup> David was greatly distressed because the men were talking of stoning him; each one was bitter in spirit because of his sons and daughters. But David found strength in the LORD his God.

10. Why do you think David's men were so angry with him?

*They blamed David for them having left their families unprotected. It was David's insistence that they go and fight for the Philistine King Achish. They may have been thinking, if David had left as soon as Achish said he could not go into battle instead of*

*waiting until the next morning to leave, they might have gotten back in time to protect their families. They felt David had really let them down as their leader.*

11. Is it possible that some of the anger we see in our families is actually displaced anger? Why or why not? How might it manifest itself.

*Yes. There are soldiers who never stop fighting battles in Vietnam, Iraq or Afghanistan even though they have come home. They may take their anger out on their families. There are parents that did us wrong, and we never dealt with it. We may take it out on our spouse or children. There are people that we may be angry with in our families from the past and we take it out on their children. There may be boyfriends or girlfriends or spouses, that did us wrong, and we take it on the child that was born.*

12. What does it mean to find strength in the Lord when it seems like you have lost everything?

*It means to regain a new sense of hope and a willingness to start over again, recognizing that with God, you're still in a position to succeed. You recognize that your life is not over and that with God, things are still possible.*

13. How does one know if he or she has the spiritual gift of encouragement?

*People will often tell you things such as , "you are such an encourager", "my spirit gets lifted up when I'm around you," or "just your presence makes me feel better."*

14. Who can you identify in your home or in your family that you could offer a little more encouragement to in order to help them in life.

*Everybody that's in my home.*