



God's Hidden Hand in Your Life | Genesis 24

Sermon Discussion Participant's Guide

Purpose of Discussion: To name a disappointment, difficulty, or decision in your life that you want to entrust into God's hidden hand.

Icebreaker: How did you meet your spouse or best friend? Describe the circumstances.

Discussion:

1. Read Genesis 24:1-9 out loud. Describe the hardship that Abraham is facing here. What are some reasons it would be hard to trust God in Abraham's situation?

Abraham was now very old, and the Lord had blessed him in every way. ²He said to the senior servant in his household, the one in charge of all that he had, "Put your hand under my thigh. ³I want you to swear by the Lord, the God of heaven and the God of earth, that you will not get a wife for my son from the daughters of the Canaanites, among whom I am living, ⁴but will go to my country and my own relatives and get a wife for my son Isaac."

⁵The servant asked him, "What if the woman is unwilling to come back with me to this land? Shall I then take your son back to the country you came from?"

⁶"Make sure that you do not take my son back there," Abraham said. ⁷"The Lord, the God of heaven, who brought me out of my father's household and my native land and who spoke to me and promised me on oath, saying, 'To your offspring I will give this land'—he will send his angel before you so that you can get a wife for my son from there. ⁸If the woman is unwilling to come back with you, then you will be released from this oath of mine. Only do not take my son back there." ⁹So the servant put his hand under the thigh of his master Abraham and swore an oath to him concerning this matter.

2. Read Genesis 24:12-16 out loud. What strikes you about this story?

¹²Then he prayed, "Lord, God of my master Abraham, make me successful today, and show kindness to my master Abraham. ¹³See, I am standing beside this spring, and the daughters of the townspeople are coming out to draw water. ¹⁴May it be that when I say to a young woman, '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."

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

Nahor. ¹⁶The woman was very beautiful, a virgin; no man had ever slept with her. She went down to the spring, filled her jar and came up again.

3. **Optional (Digging Deeper):** Read John 15:7-8, 16. What is Jesus teaching us here about how and why to pray? How do we see this kind of prayer illustrated in Genesis 24:12-16 that we just read?

⁷If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. ⁸This is to my Father's glory, that you bear much fruit, showing yourselves to be my disciples. ... ¹⁶You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you so that you might go and bear fruit—fruit that will last—and so that whatever you ask in my name the Father will give you.

4. After meeting Bethuel and Laban (Rebekah's dad and brother), Abraham's servant recounts to them how God answered his prayer in meeting Rebekah. Now read the conclusion of the story in Genesis 24:48-52 where we see the reaction of Abraham's servant and Abraham himself. How can you see the hidden hand of God in the normal choices and circumstances of this whole story?

⁴⁸and I bowed down and worshiped the Lord. I praised the Lord, the God of my master Abraham, who had led me on the right road to get the granddaughter of my master's brother for his son. ⁴⁹Now if you will show kindness and faithfulness to my master, tell me; and if not, tell me, so I may know which way to turn."

⁵⁰Laban and Bethuel answered, "This is from the Lord; we can say nothing to you one way or the other. ⁵¹Here is Rebekah; take her and go, and let her become the wife of your master's son, as the Lord has directed."

⁵²When Abraham's servant heard what they said, he bowed down to the ground before the Lord.

5. Read Proverbs 16:9. What does this verse teach us about the interplay between our everyday human choices and God's hidden hand?

In their hearts humans plan their course,
but the Lord establishes their steps.

6. Dave tells the story of how God used the ordinary but hard circumstances his girlfriend breaking up with him in high school to direct his life in a good way.
Looking back, when was a time in your life that God gave you something disappointing, difficult, or different than you wanted at the time but that you are now glad that God gave you? Why are you glad now (how did God use that in your life for good?)?
7. In Acts 4, Peter and John are released from prison for preaching the gospel. When they rejoin the apostles, and report all that God has done, they break into a prayer of praise for God's hidden hand at work to rescue them. Read Acts 4:23-28 below. How does this

passage show us that God's hidden hand is always at work even in the very worst disappointments and difficulties we face? How can meditating of this truth help you trust him during your most difficult moments?

²³ On their release, Peter and John went back to their own people and reported all that the chief priests and the elders had said to them. ²⁴ When they heard this, they raised their voices together in prayer to God. "Sovereign Lord," they said, "you made the heavens and the earth and the sea, and everything in them. ²⁵ You spoke by the Holy Spirit through the mouth of your servant, our father David:

"'Why do the nations rage
and the peoples plot in vain?

²⁶ The kings of the earth rise up
and the rulers band together
against the Lord
and against his anointed one.'

²⁷ Indeed Herod and Pontius Pilate met together with the Gentiles and the people of Israel in this city to conspire against your holy servant Jesus, whom you anointed. ²⁸ *They did what your power and will had decided beforehand should happen.* [italics added]

Sharing and Prayer:

What is one disappointment, difficulty, or decision (past, present, or future) in your life that you want to entrust into God's hidden hand?

Pray for someone else in the group to trust God with their situation.