

## I. Roles of Fathers in Courtship

- a. Establish the Need: Does parents play any role with their children's courtship?
- b. Social and cultural tension concerning the role of Fathers in the West
  - i. Some have never heard of this teaching before.
  - ii. It also goes against my society's current norm that relationships are private matters and nobody else's business.
  - iii. Yet in more Asian culture the role fathers and parents are very important
  - iv. So what should we do and practice? We must go by God's Word if we are to be God's people!
- c. Purpose: It is important for courtship to have the involvement of parents and fathers in particular. Therefore it is important to seek someone who would respect their own fathers and the father of the person one is courting.
  - i. God demands Fathers have an important role with courtship
  - ii. Application for courtship
- d. Fathers have an important role with courtship
  - i. Note God's creation order before the Fall: *"<sup>24</sup> For this reason a man shall leave his father and his mother, and be joined to his wife; and they shall become one flesh"* (**Genesis 2:24**)
    1. When one cleave in marriage, one leave their parents
    2. This presupposes the authority of one's mother and father when one is not yet married.
  - ii. After the fall we see how Jacob pursuit of marriage presupposes the role of the girl's father (see **Genesis 29**)
    1. Jacob was interested in Rachel and sought the father Laban: *"Then Laban said to Jacob, "Because you are my relative, should you therefore serve me for nothing? Tell me, what shall your wages be?" 16 Now Laban had two daughters; the name of the older was Leah, and the name of the younger was Rachel. 17 And Leah's eyes were weak, but Rachel was beautiful of form and face. 18 Now Jacob loved Rachel, so he said, "I will serve you seven years for your younger daughter Rachel." 19 Laban said, "It is better that I give her to you than to give her to another man; stay with me." 20 So Jacob served seven years for Rachel and they seemed to him but a few days because of his love for her." (**Genesis 29:15-20**)*
      - a. Note that Jacob was interested in marrying Rachel.
      - b. Jacob talked to Rachel's father Laban.
      - c. It was not just a ceremonial asking that means nothing. Note how Jacob offer a condition for him to marry Rachel in **verse 18**.
      - d. Laban approved of Jacobs offer in **verse 19**.
      - e. Thus we see the role and importance of fathers in courtship and approval of marriage.
  2. Even after the deception of the father in law, Jacob still recognized the authority of the father in pursuing marriage: *"Laban also gave his maid Zilpah to his daughter Leah as a maid. 25 So it came about in the morning that, behold, it was Leah! And he said to Laban, "What is this you have done to me? Was it not for Rachel that I served with you? Why then have you deceived me?" 26 But Laban said, "It is not the practice in our place to marry off the younger before the firstborn. 27 Complete the week of this one, and we will give you the other also for the service which you shall serve with me for another seven years." 28 Jacob did so and completed her week, and he gave him his daughter Rachel as his wife. 29 Laban also gave his maid Bilhah to his daughter Rachel as her maid." (**Genesis 29:24-29**)*

- a. Notice Jacob's shock in **verse 25** to find out that he has been deceived after the wedding night:
  - i. "So it came about in the morning that, behold, it was Leah!" ←The "behold" here shows shock on the part of Jacob.
  - ii. Note Jacob confronted his father in law: "And he said to Laban, 'What is this you have done to me? Was it not for Rachel that I served with you? Why then have you deceived me?'"
- b. Laban the Father in Law responds in **Genesis 29:26-27**.
  - i. He explains his rationale in light of his cultural practices: "But Laban said, "It is not the practice in our place to marry off the younger before the firstborn" (**Genesis 29:26**)
  - ii. Laban sets new conditions in order for Jacob to marry Rachel: "Complete the week of this one, and we will give you the other also for the service which you shall serve with me for another seven years." (**Genesis 29:27**)
    1. Note how Laban did not even have to explain himself nor have to defend the idea that he has a say concerning who marries his daughters and what are the conditions.
    2. This shows the idea of the role of fathers in the courtship process is assumed to be the right way.
- c. Jacob complies; read **Genesis 29:28**.
  - i. Yet in his compliance we see that Jacob did not object which further reinforce the idea that fathers do have a role in selection of men and the condition to marry his daughters.
  - ii. The fact that Jacob didn't object even though he was wronged by Laban shows just how deeply ingrained this manner of father being involved with daughter's marriage is.
- iii. God's Laws also require that unmarried daughters be protected by their fathers in regards to vows and obligation: "If a man makes a vow to the Lord, or takes an oath to bind himself with a binding obligation, he shall not violate his word; he shall do according to all that proceeds out of his mouth. 3 "Also if a woman makes a vow to the Lord, and binds herself by an obligation in her father's house in her youth, 4 and her father hears her vow and her obligation by which she has bound herself, and her father says nothing to her, then all her vows shall stand and every obligation by which she has bound herself shall stand. 5 But if her father should forbid her on the day he hears of it, none of her vows or her obligations by which she has bound herself shall stand; and the Lord will forgive her because her father had forbidden her. 6 "However, if she should marry while under her vows or the rash statement of her lips by which she has bound herself, 7 and her husband hears of it and says nothing to her on the day he hears it, then her vows shall stand and her obligations by which she has bound herself shall stand. 8 But if on the day her husband hears of it, he forbids her, then he shall annul her vow which she is under and the rash statement of her lips by which she has bound herself; and the Lord will forgive her." (**Numbers 30:2-8**)
  1. According to **verse 2** if a man makes a vow to the Lord he has to keep it.
  2. But according to **verses 3-5** a woman's vow who is under her father is conditional upon her father's approval.
    - a. Description of the woman (**v.3**):

- i. This is “*a woman... in her father’s house*” (v.3)
  - ii. This is “*a woman... in her youth*” (v.3)
  - iii. This is a woman who “*makes a vow to the Lord, and binds herself by an obligation*” (v.3)
  - iv. What kind of vows and obligations would a young woman primarily make during Biblical times? It would have been concerning marriage.
- b. The father’s role
  - i. The daughter’s vow stands if her father does not object: “*and her father hears her vow and her obligation by which she has bound herself, and her father says nothing to her, then all her vows shall stand and every obligation by which she has bound herself shall stand*” (v.4)
    - 1. The scenario described is if the father hears of “*her vow and her obligation by which she has bound herself.*” (v.4a)
    - 2. In which case v.4b states that if “*her father says nothing to her, then all her vows shall stand and every obligation by which she has bound herself shall stand*”
  - ii. The daughter’s vow is not obligatory if the father does not approve: “*But if her father should forbid her on the day he hears of it, none of her vows or her obligations by which she has bound herself shall stand; and the Lord will forgive her because her father had forbidden her*” (v.5)
    - 1. The scenario described is “*if her father should forbid her on the day he hears of it,*” (v.5a)
    - 2. The result is the following: “*one of her vows or her obligations by which she has bound herself shall stand; and the Lord will forgive her because her father had forbidden her*”
      - a. Here we see that she is no longer under obligation to fulfill her vows.
      - b. But is she therefore sinning? In this instance “*the Lord will forgive her.*”
      - c. Why will the Lord forgive her? It is “*because her father had forbidden her*”
  - iv. Fathers also have the role of protecting their daughter’s purity in regards to relationships and sexual manners: “*If a man seduces a virgin who is not engaged, and lies with her, he must pay a dowry for her to be his wife. <sup>17</sup> If her father absolutely refuses to give her to him, he shall <sup>[a]</sup>pay money equal to the dowry for virgins.*” (Exodus 22:16-17)
    - 1. Note there is a penalty for the seduction.
    - 2. “The man who seduces the virgin must answer to her father.”<sup>1</sup>
    - 3. The father has the right to refuse her daughter marrying the man (v.17)
    - 4. He still pays the fine even if the father refuse for them to marry.
- e. Application
  - i. Parents:
    - 1. With daughters...

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<sup>1</sup> Voddie Bauchman Jr., *What He Must be...if He wants to Marry my Daughter* (Wheaton: Crossway 2009), 56.

- a. Are you guys raising your daughters with the intention of preparing them for marriage?
    - b. Fathers are you actively involved in being diligent with protecting your daughter's purity?
    - c. Do you talk about values, relationship, courtship and boys?
    - d. Have you taught your daughter to introduce any boy interested in her to the parents as soon as possible?
  2. With sons...
    - a. Are you guys raising your sons with the intention of preparing them for marriage?
    - b. Do you talk about values, relationship, courtship and girls?
    - c. Have you taught your son to talk to the parents of someone they want to pursue courtship with?
    - d. Have you taught your son to respect the girl's father by consulting him before the relationship?
- ii. Singles
  1. How are you obeying your father? It reveals more about you than you may think.
  2. Do you know if the person you are interested in courting is able to submit to, and love his or her father?
    - a. Man who can't submit to authority is someone who will practice tyranny.
    - b. Woman who can't submit to his father won't submit to her future husband.
- iii. Couples in courtship:
  1. Don't be so individualistic in your relationship that there is no role for your parents.
  2. Is the other person respectful of their own father?
  3. Is the other person respectful of your father?
  4. For those who might not have fathers, is there a father figure in your church that you can also have be involved with your courtship process?