

THE BLESSING OF BEING LED BY GOD

INTRODUCTION:

Not sure if you heard about this in the news this week or not, but televangelist Jesse Duplantis from Louisiana believes he has God's guidance to ask his supporters to provide money for a new private jet. He **already** has 3 private jets—but did say he will donate **one** when he gets the new one. His words—and I quote—"It was one of the greatest statements the Lord ever told me, he said, 'Jesse do you want to come up where I'm at? I want you to *bleed me* for a Falcon 7X.'"

The person writing the article then adds: "By "bleed," Duplantis -- er, Jesus -- apparently meant "ask for donations." "Bleed" is most certainly the correct word because a Falcon 7X carries the price tag of \$54 M!

Did Jesus **really** tell Jesse Duplantis to "bleed" his followers so he could have a 4th jet? "No—and a thousand more "No's" behind it!" Pursuing God's guidance is NOT about us—it is about God! It is not about what brings pleasure to us—it is about what brings pleasure to God. In a word, pursuing God's guidance should be for the purpose of **obeying** God.

Please take your Bibles and **turn to** Genesis 24 and follow along as I read verse 22 to 27 (read). Notice again the last part of verse 27—"I being in the way, the Lord led me..." Title: "The Blessing of Being Led by God."

1. The Pursuit of God's guidance

In order for us to see the connection between God's guidance and obedience, we need to go to the beginning of this wonderful account of the providential leading of God.

Notice first, A. The man (verses 1-2)

--v 1 "And Abraham was old, and well stricken in age"—140 years old, to be exact!

"Lord had blessed Abraham in all things"—he was wealthy (no jet, though 😊!)

--v 2 "Abraham said unto his **eldest servant**...that **ruled over all that he had**"

Who was this man; this un-named servant?

i. Abraham's **eldest** servant. Many commentators suggest it was Eliezer of Damascus—the servant that Abraham wanted to name as his heir while he was still struggling with doubt that God would allow Sarah to have a child in her old age. If it is Eliezer, he would most certainly have been the eldest servant because Eliezer served Abraham before the birth of Ishmael **fifty-four** years earlier!

ii. Not only was he the eldest servant, he was also the most **trusted** because he ruled over **all** that Abraham had. We also know he was the most trusted because of...

B. The mission (verses 3-4)

In a nutshell, the mission was to go back to Abraham's homeland—to Nahor, a city in Mesopotamia (v 10)—and find Isaac a wife! Abraham didn't want Isaac's wife to be a Canaanite because they were a wicked, idolatrous people and Abraham did not want his son to be led away by the false religion of his wife. I believe we see a precursor here of God's instruction to us in **II Corinthians 6:14** "Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers..."

C. The misgiving (verse 5)

"Peradventure the woman will not be willing to follow me unto this land..." Was Abraham's servant lacking faith? Was he worried for nothing? I don't think so—and here's why I say that:

- i. Hebron (where they were) to Nahor (where Abraham's family was) was **500** miles away—about a month's journey!
- ii. The wife-to-be would be leaving her family—and possibly never see them again—to go with someone she **didn't know** to meet someone she **didn't know** in order to spend the rest of her life with him!

Why did Abraham's servant want God's guidance?

- He had a mission from his master that he wanted to obey
- His mission was an important one that had long-term ramifications
- He had misgivings—there were things that were out of his control that could go wrong—and he needed God to oversee this mission to ensure what could go wrong did not go wrong

Let's pause here for a moment and consider this: Do you and I have a mission from God? Does God have a plan for us—a purpose for our lives—or are we like the white “puffy” flower of a dandelion that has gone to seed, floating to wherever the wind takes us? Or—probably worse than going **anywhere** at the whim of the wind—are we like rats on a wheel that go really fast, but in actuality go **nowhere**? That is NOT how we should look at our lives if we are a child of God!

So, what is your mission from God? In one sense, it would be crazy for me to tell you what God's mission is for **your** life because I **don't know** the mind of God and His detailed plans for **your** life. On the other hand, it would be wrong for me not to tell you **anything** because I **do know** the mind of God—as found in the Word of God—about a number of things God wants you to do.

D. God's mission for us

i. Grow in your **role**. Every one of us is a son or daughter; father or mother; grandfather or grandmother; church attender or church member; friend or neighbor; employee or employer. We all have a role—and in most cases multiple roles—and God's Word gives us instructions on how we are to live in those roles.

Is it easy to **prioritize** your roles? It hasn't been for me. I have been a Pastor for a little over a year but was called to preach 30 years ago. Some might think— “What took you so long; why did you wait 30 years to obey God?” My answer is two-fold. First, I **did** begin preaching in junior church within a couple of years of becoming a member of that church so it wasn't like I was being unwilling or disobedient.

Second, we had children quite early in our marriage and I was faced with a decision:

- Work full-time, go to school, and let my wife primarily raise our children; OR
- Postpone going to school, serve God in my local church, work, raise my family, and THEN go to school. This is obviously where the specific guidance of God comes in. Is it **wrong** for a married man with children to go to Bible college and prepare for the ministry? I can't—and won't—decide that **for them**, but I did have to decide **for me** and was led by God to postpone schooling until my children were pretty much raised. You have a role; grow in your role.

ii. Second, God's mission for you as a child of God is to grow in **godliness, grace, and the knowledge of God**. **II Peter 3:11** “Seeing then that all these things [the heavens and the earth] shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all **holy conversation and godliness**,” **II Peter 3:18** “But **grow in grace**, and in the **knowledge** of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. To Him be glory both now and for ever. Amen.”

iii. Third, God's mission for you as a child of God is to grow in **going**; in spreading the gospel: **Matthew 28:18-20** “And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost; Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you...”

You know that I'm not a big fan of over-spiritualizing God's Word by looking for allegorical meanings, but we do have an interesting picture here—a man wanting guidance to seek a bride for his master's son. God is our master...His Son is Jesus...and we are to seek those that are lost. When a lost sinner is saved, they become a member of the church—the bride of Christ. Do not we need God's guidance and direction as we set out to share the gospel with others?

What is God's mission for you as a believer—and are you pursuing God's guidance to accomplish that mission? God's desire—God's mission—is for you to grow spiritually in your role; to grow in godliness, grace, and knowledge of Christ; and to grow in going to the lost with the Word of God. God desires to guide you in these things. Are you seeking His guidance—His direction and will—or are you content just to drift like the dandelion and “land where you land?” These are important things—not because I say they are—but because God says they are. Seek God's guidance to obey your mission!

Not only is there the pursuit of guidance, secondly notice...

2. The Prayer for God's Guidance (verses 12-14)

A. Why the servant asked for God's guidance

i. Task was *too difficult* to do in his own strength and wisdom

He could prepare for the trip—and he did (verse 10)

He could bring gifts to prove his master's wealth—and he did

--v 22 two golden earrings and two golden bracelets

--v 53 jewels of silver, jewels of gold and raiment were given to Rebekah

--Her brother and mother were also given precious things

But he did not have the ability to convince a young lady to leave her family once and for all; never to see them again! God had to do that work in her heart and the servant knew it.

ii. The servant also sought God's guidance because the task was *too important*—he did not want to *fail* in this mission and wanted to be a blessing to his master. Sarah had died at 127 years of age (Gen 23:1); Abraham was now 140. 500 miles was too far to make multiple trips so the servant wanted to “get it right the first time,” so to speak. Not only that, Abraham had made him promise that he would not bring Isaac back to the land of Abraham's kindred, yet Isaac needed to be married in order for the promise to Abraham of being the father of many nations to continue.

I trust you are in the habit of asking God for guidance—then waiting until you get that guidance before making a decision. In 1988 Abbey was a baby—sorry Abbey, I just told everyone how old you are—and the church we were going to in Eau Claire was going through an incredibly difficult time. The details are not that important; what is important is the fact that I was offered a military promotion—requiring a move to Marshfield—and was really torn as to what God wanted me to do. I was a deacon at the time and was in the thick of things as far as church goes. Taking the promotion—“and getting out of Dodge”—was soooo tempting, but I didn't want to base my decision on what was *easy*—I wanted to base it on what God wanted me to do!

And so I prayed—and waited—and wrestled; then prayed some more and waited some more and wrestled some more. I don't remember exactly how—hopefully I wrote it down somewhere and can find it someday—God made it plain that He wanted me to **turn down** the promotion and stay in Eau Claire to help get the church through this rocky time. We stayed, God slowly began to stabilize the church situation, and the same promotion opportunity came about a year later. This time I got the “green light” from God and we moved. I obviously have no way of knowing how our life would have been different had we stayed in Eau Claire, but what I do know is the wonderful blessings—church, family, and job—that we enjoyed the 13 years we lived in the Marshfield area!

Notice next, B. What he asked for

i. Success: v 12 “O Lord God of my master Abraham, I pray thee, *send me good speed this day.*”
‘God, bless my efforts, make me prosperous in this mission.’

ii. A sign (vss 13-14)

It is noteworthy that the servant did not ask for some outlandish sign—like Gideon did when he asked for dew to be on the ground, but the fleece be dry—then vice versa.

One man wrote: “He might have proposed as a test, ‘let her who stumbles on the first step of the well be the designed wife of Isaac;’ or, ‘Let her who comes with a certain-colored flower in her hand’ be the one.” (Dods)

The sign the servant prayed for was more realistic—and yet at the same time more significant. My heart was blessed when several commentators pointed out just how significant the sign was.

Verse 13 tells us that it was a custom for the daughters of the men of the city to water the animals;

Verse 16 tell us she was very fair to look upon. In spite of her beauty, it seems she was **not vain**—she was still doing what the others her age did. She didn’t decide to “stay in the house” because she was “too good” to do the chores; she considered herself like everyone else.

Second, her willingness to draw water for him showed that she was **courteous and kind** to strangers—an important quality, especially in that culture where travelers were dependent on the kindness of others to have a place to stay.

Lastly, her willingness to draw water for the stranger’s camels suggested that she was **hard-working**. It was no small task to draw water out of a well for a bunch of thirsty camels! The sign, then, was not like Gideon’s fleece; instead, it was an examination of her character!

Why did the servant seek God’s guidance? Because the task was too difficult and too important.

What did the servant ask God for? Success and a sign. Notice now....

C. How he asked

How did the servant ask for God’s guidance? What kind of attitudes did he display?

i. Humility

Three times in this 3-verse prayer we see the servant referring to *his master*. Getting this prayer answered was not about the servant—it was about Abraham! “Abraham was old and well stricken in age” (v 1)—answer this because of him! I can’t make her come with; “peradventure the woman will not be willing to follow me” (v 5). Abraham had given me this mission—shew kindness unto him and answer for his sake (v 12).

ii. Trust

--Trust seen because of the faith of Abraham. Notice Abraham’s words at the end of verse 7: “He shall send his angel before thee, and thou shalt take a wife unto my son from thence.”

--Trust seen in the fact that he prayed. Why ask God for assistance if he didn’t believe could or would give it?

3. The providence of God’s Guidance

The unmistakable, wonderful, sovereign hand of God is seen in the response of Rebekah and her family.

A. The right action

The servant asks for a drink (v 17), she gives him a drink (18), then says “I will draw water for thy camels also, until they have done drinking” (v 19).

B. The right ancestry

She was a relative, specifically the grand-daughter of Abraham’s brother (v 24)

C. The right attitude

i. Of the family. Notice verses 49-51. The servant wanted to know if they would approve; they said it was “of the Lord.”

ii. Of Rebekah herself. In verses 57-58, Rebekah herself is asked. Her response: “And she said, I will go.”

4. The Praise for God's Guidance

Is it a blessing to be led by God? It most certainly is!

Genesis 24:26-27 "And the man bowed down his head, and worshipped the Lord. And he said, 'Blessed be the Lord God of my master Abraham, who hath not left destitute my master of his mercy and his truth: I being in the way, the Lord led me to the house of my master's brethren.'"

Genesis 24:51-52 "Behold, Rebekah is before thee, take her, and go, and let her be thy master's son's wife, as the Lord hath spoken. And it came to pass, that, when Abraham's servant heard their words, he worshipped the Lord, bowing himself to the earth."

CONCLUDING REMARKS: Three things to consider:

1. Are you saved? I realize the message this morning was geared primarily to God's children and His providential leading in our lives, but God is working in your life even if you are not saved. His work is of a different nature, though. Instead of guiding you, He may be "resisting you" to bring you to the end of yourself and show you that you need Him.
2. Child of God, how serious are you about finding—and accomplishing—the mission that God has for you? Every one of us has a role—and God has instructions in His Word regarding our role. Are you content to float around like a dandelion flower—or are you asking God to guide you as you seek to obey Him? Life is too short to drift around aimlessly—make your life count!
3. Have you enjoyed the providential leading of God in the past? If so, He can do it again—regardless of the difficulty of the decision you have to make or the obstacles you face. We need to humbly trust Him, though, and be willing to do what it is that He wants us to do.