



“The Covenant is Renewed”

Show Notes & Transcripts

Podcast General Description:

Follow Him: A *Come, Follow Me* Podcast with Hank Smith & John Bytheway

Do you ever feel that preparing for your weekly *Come, Follow Me* lesson falls short? Join hosts Hank Smith and John Bytheway as they interview experts to make your study for The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints' *Come, Follow Me* course not only enjoyable but original and educational. If you are looking for resources to make your study fresh, faithful, and fun--no matter your age--then join us every Friday and Saturday.

Podcast Episode Descriptions:

Part 1:

Was Rebekah particularly suited to counsel Isaac and what does this teach us about men and women working together? Dr. Camille Fronk Olson teaches the strength of complementary strengths in familial relationships, the strength of covenantal relationships, and how the Hebrew Bible demonstrates a need for the Atonement of Jesus Christ.

Part 2:

Dr. Camille Fronk Olson returns and instructs regarding the importance of covenantal marriage, how the Matriarchs and Patriarchs allowed trials to cause them to grow closer to the Lord, and how the people in the Old Testament allow us to see their need for redemption.

Timecodes:

Part 1

- 00:00 Welcome to Part I
- 01:06 Introduction of Dr. Camille Fronk Olson
- 03:50 Approaching the Old Testament
- 08:32 The Lord sticks with the family of Abraham
- 10:25 The importance of the entire family and God's plan through families
- 11:16 Sarah administered to her husband and women in the Old Testament
- 16:42 We learn more about Rebekah than Isaac
- 20:40 Abraham sends servant to find covenant wife for Isaac
- 22:36 Isaac's wife has agency to choose this marriage and this section shows Rebekah's value
- 25:41 Sign the Lord provides of who is to be wife for Isaac
- 27:48 Rebekah is a worthy partner and future matriarch
- 33:30 Jesus provides a way to keep covenants and Rebekah reports to her mother
- 37:18 Laban, Rebekah's brother is introduced
- 39:42 Rebekah is ready to leave her family and join Isaac, although she has never met him
- 46:05 Rebekah takes her nurse and others with her
- 48:09 Rebekah as type of the Church
- 50:53 Abraham dies and is "gathered to his people"
- 52:03 Abraham marries a third wife—and has six sons (one is important to Moses)
- 55:15 End of Part I

Part 2:

- 00:00 Welcome to Part II
- 00:20 Rebekah veils herself
- 01:57 Isaac chooses to love Rebekah and she is barren
- 06:34 The land of the Philistines becomes Palestine
- 09:58 Many of the matriarchs are barren as far as children or love of spouse
- 13:26 Rebekah is pregnant with twins and Esau and Jacob are born

- 20:01 What is pottage and the birthright
- 27:18 Esau may see birthright as more of a responsibility and problem
- 30:35 Elder Bednar talk regarding neglecting eternal relationships for digital diversions
- 31:08 Esau marries two women outside of the covenant but don't give up on Esau
- 35:22 The difficulties in Genesis Chapter 27
- 40:01 Animal skin, coat of many colors, and a rough garment
- 42:25 God would never have honored a blessing given by deceit
- 43:55 Women in the OT have to be clever to accomplish righteous purposes
- 48:01 The Abrahamic Covenant in Genesis 28
- 52:21 Jacob travels to Haran to avoid Esau's anger and to find a wife
- 54:42 The beautiful reunion of Esau and Jacob
- 01:01:13 End of Part II

Sources:

2022. *The Church Of Jesus Christ Of Latter-Day Saints*.

<https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/manual/come-follow-me-for-individuals-and-families-old-testament-2022/09?lang=eng>.

Andersen, Neil L. 2022. "Becoming A Covenant Person Among A Covenant People".

Churchofjesuschrist.Org.

<https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/liahona/2022/02/becoming-a-covenant-person-among-a-covenant-people?lang=eng>.

Bednar, David A. 2022. "Things As They Really Are". *Churchofjesuschrist.Org*.

<https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/ensign/2010/06/things-as-they-really-are?lang=eng>.

Bradshaw, Jeffrey M. 2022. "Knowhy OTL10A — What Are We To Make Of Jacob's Apparent

Deceitfulness? | The Interpreter Foundation". *The Interpreter Foundation | Increasing*

Understanding Of Scripture One Article At A Time. <https://interpreterfoundation.org/knowhy-otl10a-what-are-we-to-make-of-jacobs-apparent-deceitfulness/>.

Chernow, Ron C. 2022. "Amazon.Com". *Amazon.Com*. [https://www.amazon.com/Warburgs-](https://www.amazon.com/Warburgs-Twentieth-Century-Odyssey-Remarkable-Jewish/dp/0525431837)

[Twentieth-Century-Odyssey-Remarkable-Jewish/dp/0525431837](https://www.amazon.com/Warburgs-Twentieth-Century-Odyssey-Remarkable-Jewish/dp/0525431837).

Christofferson, D. Todd. 2022. "Why Marriage, Why Family". *Churchofjesuschrist.Org*.

<https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/general-conference/2015/04/why-marriage-why-family?lang=eng>.

Goodman, Michael. 2022. "Eternal Marriage And Family In The Old Testament | Religious Studies

Center". *Rsc.Byu.Edu*. <https://rsc.byu.edu/gospel-jesus-christ-old-testament/eternal-marriage-family-old-testament>.

- Halverson, Taylor. 2022. "“Birthright Blessings; Marriage In The Covenant” Genesis 24-29 | The Interpreter Foundation". *The Interpreter Foundation | Increasing Understanding Of Scripture One Article At A Time*. <https://interpreterfoundation.org/res-birthright-blessings-marriage-in-the-covenant-genesis-24-29/>.
- Hilton III, John. 2022. "Motherhood In The Old Testament | Religious Studies Center". *Rsc.Byu.Edu*. <https://rsc.byu.edu/gospel-jesus-christ-old-testament/motherhood-old-testament>.
- Lane, Jennifer. 2022. "The Lord Will Redeem His People | Religious Studies Center". *Rsc.Byu.Edu*. <https://rsc.byu.edu/sperry-symposium-classics-old-testament/lord-will-redeem-his-people>.
- Matthews, Robert J. 2022. "The Old Testament | Religious Studies Center". *Rsc.Byu.Edu*. <https://rsc.byu.edu/sperry-symposium-classics-old-testament/old-testament>.
- McConkie, Bruce R. 2022. "Our Sisters From The Beginning". *Churchofjesuschrist.Org*. <https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/ensign/1979/01/our-sisters-from-the-beginning?lang=eng>.
- Millet, Robert. 2022. "Prophets And Priesthood In The Old Testament | Religious Studies Center". *Rsc.Byu.Edu*. <https://rsc.byu.edu/sperry-symposium-classics-old-testament/prophets-priesthood-old-testament>.
- "Muslims And Latter-Day Saints: Beliefs, Values, And Lifestyles". 2022. *Churchofjesuschrist.Org*. <https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/manual/muslims-and-latter-day-saints?lang=eng>.
- Oaks, Dallin H. 2022. "Spirituality". *Churchofjesuschrist.Org*. <https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/general-conference/1985/10/spirituality?lang=eng>.
- Olson, Camille Fronk. 2022. *Amazon.Com*. <https://www.amazon.com/Women-Testament-Camille-Fronk-Olson/dp/1590387910>.
- Olson, Camille Fronk. 2022. "In The Hands Of The Potter - Deseret Book". *Deseretbook.Com*. https://deseretbook.com/p/hands-potter-camille-fronk-olson-69002?queryID=e700e02c4a0b373be0c9fc6bb438afce&variant_id=183191-paperback.
- Olson, Camille Fronk. 2022. "The Matriarchs: Administrators Of God’s Covenantal Blessings | Religious Studies Center". *Rsc.Byu.Edu*. <https://rsc.byu.edu/creation-sinai/matriarchs-administrators-gods-covenantal-blessings>.
- Olson, Camille Fronk. 2022. "What Is So Amazing About Grace?". *BYUH Speeches*. <https://speeches.byuh.edu/joseph-smith-lecture/what-is-so-amazing-about-grace>.
- Tuttle, A. Theodore. 2022. "Altar, Tent, Well". *The Church Of Jesus Christ Of Latter-Day Saints*. <https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/general-conference/1972/10/altar-tent-well?lang=eng>.

Biographical Information:



Camille Fronk Olson is an emeritus professor, former department chair of Ancient Scripture at BYU, and former teacher at BYU's Jerusalem Center. She completed a PhD in Middle Eastern Studies, a master's degree in Near Eastern Studies, and a bachelor's degree in Education. Her research focused on women in scripture, LDS/evangelical dialogue, LDS doctrine, and Palestinian families in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. Her publications include *Women of the Old Testament* and *Women of the New Testament*.

Prior to coming to BYU, Sister Olson taught seminary and institute for The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in the Salt Lake City area and served as Dean of Students at LDS Business College. She is a former member of the Young Women General Board and served a full-time mission to Toulouse, France.

Camille Fronk Olson is married to Paul F. Olson. They have two children and four grandchildren. She has no cats or dogs. She is originally from Tremonton, Utah.

Fair Use Notice:

The *Follow Him Podcast with Hank Smith and John Bytheway* may make use of copyrighted material, the use of which has not always been specifically authorized by the copyright holder. This constitutes a "fair use" and any such copyrighted material as provided for in section 107 of the US Copyright Law. In accordance with Title 17 U.S.C. Section 107, the material on this podcast is offered publicly and without profit, to the public uses or the internet for comment and nonprofit educational and informational purposes. Copyright Disclaimer under Section 107 of the Copyright Act of 1976, allowance is made for

fair use” for purposes such as criticism, comment, news reporting, teaching, scholarship, and research. In such cases, fair use is permitted.

No copyright(s) is/are claimed.

The content is broadcasted for study, research, and educational purposes.

The broadcaster gains no profit from broadcasted content. This falls under “Fair Use” guidelines:

www.copyright.gov/fls/fl102.html.

Note:

The *Follow Him Podcast with Hank Smith and John Bytheway* is not affiliated with The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints nor Brigham Young University. The opinions expressed on episodes represent the views of the guest and podcasters alone. While the ideas presented may vary from traditional understandings or teachings, they in no way reflect criticism of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day leaders, policies, or practices.



Hank Smith:	00:01	Welcome to Follow Him, a weekly podcast dedicated to helping individuals and families with their Come, Follow Me study. I'm Hank Smith.
John Bytheway:	00:09	And I'm John Bytheway.
Hank Smith:	00:11	We love to learn.
John Bytheway:	00:11	We love to laugh.
Hank Smith:	00:13	We want to learn and laugh with you.
John Bytheway:	00:15	As together, we follow him.
Hank Smith:	00:20	Hello everyone. Welcome to another episode of Follow Him. I'm your host Hank Smith. And I'm here with my cunning hunter co-host John Bytheway.
John Bytheway:	00:32	That has a certain Esau ring to it. Doesn't it?
Hank Smith:	00:35	It does. Yes. I was going to say plain man after Jacob, I figured cunning hunter you'd feel a little more complimented if I said it that way. We are in Genesis again this week, Genesis chapters 24 through 27. And John we've been waiting for this interview for a while because both of us have ties to our guest. Can you tell everyone who's with us?
John Bytheway:	01:06	Yes. We're so happy to welcome Dr. Camille Fronk Olson, she had faith in me so I am still teaching. Hank, she had faith in you so you're teaching. We were joking before, we know she'll be held accountable for that. But Camille is a retired professor, former chair of BYU's Department of Ancient Scripture in Religious Education. She's a scholar who's written multiple books on the role of women in the scriptures, which is perfect for today. She's also spoken widely in various forms on latter day saint beliefs, especially as they relate to women. She was born and raised in Tremonton, Utah, served a mission in the France Toulouse mission in Southern France. She has a bachelor's degree in education from Utah State University, an

MA, and listen to this, in west Asian studies and a PhD in sociology of the Middle East from BYU. She began her educational career as a full-time seminary teacher at a time when few women held that position. She was then on the faculty of LDS Business College, and that's been renamed Ensign College now where she also served as the Dean of students. She was a full-time member of BYU's Ancient Scripture faculty in religious education. She's also served as a member of the Young Women General Board and as a professor at the BYU Jerusalem Center. I was just going to hold this up because this is like one of the most beautiful books on my shelves behind me, Women of the Old Testament. I mean the paper, the illustrations, Hank, they don't publish books like this, I get recycled newsprint in my books. These are gorgeous, beautiful illustrated. But I love that she has done so much on women in the scriptures and in the Old Testament. And we're going to benefit from that today. So we're so glad to have you here, Camille, as a friend and as a respected colleague. Thanks for coming.

- Dr. Camille Olson: 03:08 Thank you. Old Testament women, oh there are so many and their stories are so unique and in such different time period. By women of the New Testament, which is the same size and format, I've actually got four women of the Old Testament in that one to introduce it, because this is the way Matthew introduced Jesus Christ. So that's where you find Tamar and Rahab and Ruth and Bathsheba, very interesting. You cannot tell the story of God's people at any time without seeing women figure very prominently.
- Hank Smith: 03:50 John, Camille, today Genesis 24 through 27, maybe how do you approach ancient scripture differently than you approach other scripture Old Testament versus New Testament? Anything like that?
- Dr. Camille Olson: 04:05 Well, I think the Bible specifically Old and New Testament, but probably even more Old Testament, it is just so critical to get the whole background story. It's so easy to just take these stories out of their context and place them in our 21st century Elders Quorums and Relief Societies, and go immediately to modern day applications. Every time we do that, these people are stranger and do weirder things, and you just want to say I can't do the Old Testament, let's just jettison. I wish I could time travel and I would go back and just see life there. It would be fascinating. And we would be so impressed with their intellect and their hearts and their understanding of things that we do not understand today. But it is a very different culture, and the more we can understand that culture, the more we can

appreciate what they dealt with and maybe be less judgmental of some of the decisions that they made.

- Dr. Camille Olson: 05:15 The other thing I think different from say, the Book of Mormon, especially, and that is the Old Testament shows the humanness of all these individuals. I've often said, you cannot confuse the Lord with any of the other characters, he stands out. The others have need for a redeemer, very clearly.
- John Bytheway: 05:44 I can discern between me and thee.
- Dr. Camille Olson: 05:46 Yeah. Yeah. I mean, sometimes people in the Book of Mormon and you think they're doing pretty fine, they don't need an atonement. I mean, we can make them into such heroes. And if we're not careful, we will do that to people, especially prophets in the Old Testament and the Book of Genesis, especially in these chapters we're in, these are imperfect people trying to do the best they can. The Lord empowers them to do beyond their natural ability even when they continue to stumble and fall. And that ought to be very encouraging to us.
- John Bytheway: 06:23 I mean, does the firstborn ever get a birthright or is that just a tradition that we talk about that never happens?
- Dr. Camille Olson: 06:30 It's much more fluid than I think a lot of times, we like to make things so simple and they follow these rules. Talk about dysfunctional families, I just think you look at Abraham's family tree. And people that just get upset when sometimes multiple marriages, premature deaths, adoptions, divorces,
- John Bytheway: 06:55 Sibling rivalries.
- Dr. Camille Olson: 06:59 Sibling rivalries, estranged members of the family. We get them all. We get them all. I think trying to understand and appreciate that they had laws and expectations, in some ways different than we have opportunities today, and they can teach us. The main thing I just keep saying, we can get so caught up in stories and personalities sometimes and trying to exonerate some or making others look so terrible so that we don't hurt somebody else, we forget the purpose of story is to bring us to Jesus Christ and these stories are here to help us find him. Old Testament, he's the focal point, always, he must be. These men and women help us to see him better.
- John Bytheway: 07:51 One of the things I have really enjoyed about teaching the Book of Mormon was I noticed that the plan of salvation, it's only called that three times, it's called about 15 times the plan of

redemption and the idea of a redeemer and a need for a redeemer. And then I noticed the ones using the phrase were mostly Alma and the sons of Mosiah because they knew they needed a redeemer. And I'm looking at what you just said in the Old Testament, these folks, we're trying to exonerate them but they all needed a redeemer, that's the point. Point us to Christ.

- Dr. Camille Olson: 08:27 That is, and it shows his power on every single page.
- Hank Smith: 08:32 One thing I've been impressed with Camille is that here's the Tower of Babel, the world has gone bad, the Lord chooses Abraham and Sarah to save the world and he stays with them despite their, like you said, they stumble around. He could say, you know what, let's choose another couple.
- John Bytheway: 08:54 Back to the old drawing board.
- Hank Smith: 08:55 I think he messed up here. Yeah. He stays with this family, Abraham, Sarah, Isaac, Rebekah, Jacob, and Rachel, and Bilhah, and all the rest. He stays with them. He doesn't give up on them.
- Dr. Camille Olson: 09:08 That is right. I think that's the whole context, and we're talking mainly about Isaac and Rebekah and their immediate family here. I think we keep in mind, this is a family and those generations are interconnected. You have to place Isaac and Rebekah and their sons, Esau and Jacob in this larger context with not only Abraham and Sarah, but Hagar, it's coming through in this story. And then the next generation with not only Leah and Rachel, but Bilhah and Zilpah, and it'll go on to the 12 sons and then the next generation with Manasseh and Ephraim, and Joseph's wife, Asenath. There's something in that whole big picture that shows us that God's power and authority to pronounce his blessings was given through these heads of this extended family. But he trusted also they needed a matriarch or their wives to have a very significant position, and they actively influenced the wellbeing of these families and created an environment where life could progress and achieve God's plan. They were very, very important.
- Dr. Camille Olson: 10:37 The thing I find about these stories in Genesis, they're easy to do jokes with, and I think very often some of these stories have become comedic that we diminish the roles of these women into just having children, how many babies they can have, and the competition among them. It's far greater than this. It underscores the importance of the entire family and God's plan from the beginning to do it through families.

- Hank Smith: 11:07 This is great. Yeah. These women do not take backstage roles, they are receiving revelation and directing the course of the family.
- Dr. Camille Olson: 11:16 It's in the very end of section 132 of the Doctrine and Covenants that we read that Sarah administered to her husband, administered. I've just gotten onto how much of an administrative role that all those women had in those generations, that the husbands needed them. We go clear back to Adam and Eve when Eve was called a help-meet for Adam. And these women needed help at a time where the husbands needed inspiration in their leadership.
- Dr. Camille Olson: 11:55 Big picture, this is just getting us started, but just to see this. Remember back in Genesis 21, God directed Abraham to harken to Sarah's voice when it had to do with Isaac and Ishmael, turning them together. Hagar received the witness of an angel of the Lord concerning the important role of her unborn son. In Genesis 16, the Lord talked directly to her and sent her back and as a result, both she and her son when he's born, Ishmael, receive part of the covenant. That's critical. God revealed to Rebekah, and we're going to see this in this time about before her children were born that she was going to have twins and that the younger one would serve, would be the leader.
- Dr. Camille Olson: 12:45 Despite all the tension between Leah and Rachel it seems, there's a moment that I just think is so powerful in Genesis 31, where Jacob is leaving, the Lord tells him he needs to leave that homeland of Leah and Rachel and leave their father Laban and he brings those wives together and sits down and says, what shall I do? And they said, do what the Lord commanded you to do. It's a family decision. Tamar saves Judah's bacon, I'm telling you. Chapter 38 of Genesis we rarely talk about, before the story of Tamar, Judah wants to kill his brother Joseph, sells him off to Egypt. I mean, he's a pretty rotten brother. And after Tamar, he's willing to give his own life for his brother Benjamin. The way to understand that, it's Tamar and she saves Judah's lineage who is intent on having the Canaanites' more influence in his life, and Tamar changes that. It's a fascinating thing to read her as being in the lineage of Jesus Christ. I love it.
- Hank Smith: 13:59 Right. In Matthew one, right?
- Dr. Camille Olson: 14:03 And then, if you even go as far as Moses, Zipporah. Again, this is Joseph Smith translation, but the Lord is ready to take Moses' life. That's not a part of the story that we often look at, but you're reading the Joseph Smith translation. He, for some reason, wouldn't circumcise his son. Zipporah finds the rock and

she says, "I'll do it," and it saves Moses' life. These stories, collectively and individually, show that we are stronger when we work together. Men and women working together using the talents and inspiration that God gives each one of us, and that's what shapes Israel. That's what is the foundation for all of Israel. In concert with their husbands' divinely appointed assignments, these women establish a people who had pledged allegiance to the God of Abraham in a very polytheistic world. It's wonderful.

- Dr. Camille Olson: 14:58 And maybe I could do just one other, just to kind of just see these, all of this in perspective. It is section 132 of the Doctrine and Covenants verse 37, talking about plural marriage, specifically, we'll get into with Isaac and Rebekah. But I'm just going to read that verse. "Abraham received concubines and they bore him children, and it was accounted unto him for righteousness because they were given unto him and he abode in my law."
- Dr. Camille Olson: 15:27 So right there, we're saying, again, from the Doctrine and Covenants what the Lord told Joseph Smith. These multiple wives, this family situation he's well aware of. "As Isaac also and Jacob did none other things than that which they were commanded. And because they did none other things and that which they were commanded, they have entered into their exaltation, according to the promises, and sit upon thrones and are not angels, but are gods."
- Dr. Camille Olson: 15:58 That tells us very specifically the future of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, but we know from both that section and section 131, exaltation is not given individually. Can't you read in that? This includes Hagar and Zilpah and Bilhah, and they are all in there. And I think that is something helpful to remember before we just want to throw some of them that we don't really agree with under the bus. But the Lord's going to exalt them. It's very powerful.
- Hank Smith: 16:32 That's a big picture overview that we need to have. We need to be able to place now this little story in the big story-
- Dr. Camille Olson: 16:38 Yes. Yep. Yep.
- Hank Smith: 16:39 ... where it belongs.
- Dr. Camille Olson: 16:40 Yep. Okay. Main characters, Isaac and Rebekah here, and what is interesting in this generation I think is that we learn a lot more about Rebekah in these chapters than we learn about Isaac. In fact, Isaac, as an adult is more often in the background,

more of a passive character, and Rebekah is this dynamic power of force. And that already sets this off as just being this like, oh wait, that's not the way it should be. But I don't know if there is a couple that represents what we should be. They have different talents.

- Dr. Camille Olson: 17:21 And so I found this talk given in October 1972 General Conference, Elder Theodore Tuttle. He took it from a verse in Genesis 26, speaking of Isaac called Altar, Tent, and Well, because that's what... Isaac built an altar and he called upon the name of the Lord and he pitched his tent and dug his well. He gives a perspective that I think that sometimes we can miss because Isaac is quieter. We don't see him so dynamic in these chapters.
- Dr. Camille Olson: 17:55 This is what he said, "Altar, Tent, and Well. Isaac did not become an Abraham or a Jacob. He did not reach the heights of Abraham, called the Father of the Faithful, nor is he as impressive as his son, Israel, Father of the 12 Tribes. Yet Isaac is loved and revered. He worshiped God, cared for his home, and pursued his work. He is remembered simply as a man of peace. The eloquent simplicity of his life and his unique ability to lend importance to the commonplace made him great. Altar, Tent and Well. His worship, his home, his work, these basic things of life signified his relationship to God, his family and his fellow men. Every person on earth is touched by these three."
- Dr. Camille Olson: 18:50 Kind of a nice way to think about Isaac too. You don't have to be the gregarious, out there commanding in all things. There's a peacefulness about Isaac. And then by contrast, here, we have Rebekah. Her individuality and vitality among the covenant people is striking in these stories, and we see her using that individuality and her agency to make choices and free to decide how she will act to fit her perception of what's best for her family. And so this dynamic is what we're going to run into.
- Dr. Camille Olson: 19:28 Should we start here at chapter 24? We start out, Abraham was old and well-stricken in age. We get in the next chapter, chapter 25, verse 7 and 8, he dies. Sometimes I've wondered if chapter 25 is perhaps a little out of context. If his death could have happened before Rebekah ever joins the family, and I'll tell you why I might think that. But we don't see Abraham after Rebekah comes back. We don't see any connection there. But Abraham is old. Sarah has already died, right? The chapter before, in chapter 23 versus 1 and 2, Sarah has died. And it seems like, yes, the Lord has blessed Abraham in all things, except he's seeing the end of his life. Remember how old he was when Isaac was born? So it's not surprising that here he's thinking Isaac

hasn't married, and Abraham was promised the sands of the sea, and it's looking pretty single kernel of sand-ish right now.

- John Bytheway: 20:37 Not exactly a beach yet.
- Dr. Camille Olson: 20:40 He's anxious to make sure that next generation is taken care of. And what was very common, arranged marriages in that day. He's in the land that God has given him as an inheritance, and he sends his servant back to where he came from to see if there's some covenant people up there, or I should say... believers that he could find, the servant could find a wife for Isaac. He doesn't want them to marry among the Canaanites that surround him.
- Dr. Camille Olson: 21:11 I've often thought, Melchizedek was around not long ago, right? Not far that Abraham paid tithes to him. But it does appear from the Joseph Smith translation that he and his people have gone to meet the city of Enoch, and so that would've been convenient to find Isaac a wife there, among those people. But he sends him back to his own country. He has his servant make this oath with him. And you see this, in verse 2, "I pray thee thy hand, put thy hand under my thigh," which is a quirky way of making an oath.
- Hank Smith: 21:47 Is this a Joseph Smith translation to a hand clasp?
- John Bytheway: A covenant of some kind that way?
- Dr. Camille Olson: 21:54 I don't know. Yeah. I think it would make sense to us, a hand clasp, that's how we would do it, but they might have had a way of doing this back then that was different. The idea is we don't need to get hung up on that. It's the idea that they had an agreement. We think this could be Eleazar because that's the servant of Abraham's that he's so close to, but it never says his name specifically there. But I do always wonder if that's who it is. He trusts him and he sends him up with all these camels and a lot more men.
- Dr. Camille Olson: 22:23 But notice in verse 5, the servant is concerned saying, "What if she won't come?" I mean, you think about this. This is going to a land, and he'll be bringing a woman that'll never return to her homeland again. It is quite a remarkable marriage negotiation, perhaps different from some of the others because of the distance that's involved here, and not knowing the family that this daughter is going to marry into except by reputation perhaps, if they are really connected. And so the servant is worried.

Dr. Camille Olson: 22:55 Verse 7, I love this. Abraham says to him, "The Lord, God of heaven, which took me from my father's house and from the land of my kindred, and said to me," look at the end of that verse "unto the seed will I give this land. He shall send his angel before thee, and thou shalt take a wife unto my son from thence." He's confident the Lord is going to do that. And then verse 8, "If the woman will not be willing to follow thee, then thou shalt be clear from my oath; only bring not my son thither again." Don't take him up there if she won't come. We ought to pause there. He allows the woman to have a say in this.

John Bytheway: 23:35 Yes. There's consent and agency.

Dr. Camille Olson: 23:36 Yes, it's very important. And I think sometimes when we talk about patriarchal era, because this is a time where people lived in families, in family clans, and there's not a city government over them, it is family, patriarchal, that we think women had no say. And we see it in this story many times the agency of Rebekah. Verse 10, they take his 10 camels. And it says in verse 10, "All the goods of his master were in his hands." Well, we know very well his master is exceptionally wealthy, right, and we think of a number of servants he has alone. But could this be perhaps a document that outlines Abraham's assets-

John Bytheway: 24:26 Property. Yeah.

Dr. Camille Olson: 24:27 ... all of that and how impressive it is, because he's going to need to show that to the bride's family to show this family can take care of your daughter.

Hank Smith: 24:37 I didn't have that when I got married. I didn't have a list of assets.

John Bytheway: 24:40 If I just show you my balance sheet as an -

Dr. Camille Olson: 24:42 Yeah. Yeah.

John Bytheway: 24:44 ... incentive, if you want to go out with me or not.

Dr. Camille Olson: 24:47 Yeah. That was part of the negotiation that a family would not put their daughter in a situation where she wasn't taken care of. And so there would've been gifts or a bride price that the servant would've taken up... I mean, 10 camels. What are you taking up there? There's some stuff that they're going to leave up there for the bride's family because they're going to take her away. And she's very valuable. I mean, this tells you how valuable daughters were too. Her work, her contribution to the

family, to the clan would be important, and this is compensation for that.

- Dr. Camille Olson: 25:24 So he goes up, it's up in Mesopotamia. This is like we see later in these chapters, Paddan Aram. Aram is another name that we refer to as Syria. It could be as much as like 800, 900 miles. I mean, it's a distance and taking all of this stuff. So he gets up there, and not surprising, end of verse 11, it's evening. And where does he know the women will be in the evening? Women draw the water, and morning and evening are the times you're going to need the water.
- Dr. Camille Olson: 25:57 And so he goes to the well, and here's his prayer. First thing, the steps he takes, he knows he cannot succeed without the Lord, and the Lord is with him all the way here. "Oh Lord God of my master Abraham, I pray thee, send me good speed this day." Oh, can you imagine the responsibility to find the right woman who is going to be the matriarch in this companionship to secure and guard and protect the covenant for the next generation?
- John Bytheway: 26:31 For millennia after too.
- Dr. Camille Olson: 26:33 Yeah. Yeah.
- Hank Smith: 26:35 I can say, Camille, I know a little bit of the pressure of finding a woman who would be willing to take on a huge project, but-
- Dr. Camille Olson: 26:44 But could you think of doing that for your son or for someone else?
- Hank Smith: 26:50 Right.
- John Bytheway: 26:50 And for Abraham, you know what Abraham's been promised, and you have to go, "I can't get this wrong, Lord. You got to help me."
- Dr. Camille Olson: Yeah.
- Hank Smith: 26:57 Yeah.
- Dr. Camille Olson: 26:58 And I think he's seen and watched Sarah, and saying we got to have someone that can be strong like Sarah. It reminds me a little bit of the brother of Jared, where he comes up with a plan and then said, "Hey, will this work?" And this is the way the Lord asks us a lot of times, isn't it, to suggest... So here's the servant's plan. "I stand here by the well of water and the daughters of the

men of the city come to draw water, and let it come to pass that the damsel to whom I shall say let down my pitcher, I pray thee, that I may drink; and she say drink and I will give thy camel's drink also. Let the same be she that has been appointed for my servant, Isaac." Because there's all these women. How do I know? Don't you love it? Verse 15, "And it came to pass before he had done speaking." Oh, yeah.

John Bytheway: 27:45

Yeah. The Lord is fast.

Dr. Camille Olson: 27:48

And suddenly here comes Rebekah. We are told this and we're even told her lineage. And see, the servant doesn't know this yet, but it is so good. She's the daughter of Bethuel, who's the son of Milcah, who's the wife of Nahor, who's Abraham's brother, she's coming with her pitcher on her shoulder. Oh, this is just too good. But all the servant sees is, "Oh, here's this damsel who's very fair to look upon." And in some ways, I want to say at that age, young women all are beautiful. And when she is also God fearing, and honest, and true, she is, you can almost see, there's just a glow about her. She's a virgin, "Neither hath any man known her." Go down to the footnote, "Known the like unto her." Oh, Joseph Smith translations, she just stands out. You can see a little light just glowing around Rebekah. He notices her. And verse 17. He's not waiting around. Watch this. "He ran to meet her." I love the verbs in this story. And he says, "Let me, I pray thee drink, a little of I pitcher."

Dr. Camille Olson: 29:06

And she said, drink my Lord. And then how does she respond? She hastened, I mean, she's going fast. And she gave him to drink. And then she says almost before he can finish drinking, it seems like, I'll give water to thy camels also until they have done drinking. And she hastened and emptied her pitcher into the trough and ran again to the well, to draw water, and drew for all his camels. I mean, some have tried to figure out how many gallons of water she'd be drawing for 10 camels. And I don't know how far we go into this, but the idea is you can see she has energy. She's not afraid of work. There's a hospitality and service orientation about her.

Hank Smith: 29:51

It's not like this is the first time she's ever done this. She knows what she's doing.

Dr. Camille Olson: 29:55

I think she's got some serious muscle. You know, she doesn't have to go to the gym. She's got it. She's there. And the man wondering at her held his peace. He's just in awe. Talk about easy. The Lord's made this so easy. And so that fast, in verse 22, as the camels had done dreaming, the man took out this golden ring or earring, just come over here, let's see. Verse 47. We get

a little bit more about that earring. "I put the earring upon her face." In the Hebrew... I love to point this out because it gets you right there. This is perhaps a different culture.

- Dr. Camille Olson: 30:35 This is clearly a nose ring that he gives her. She has it on her face, just a little ring that goes on the one nostril. And so I love the details when you start visualizing. And then he gives her these two bracelets and the weight of this jewelry, it's heavy. This is serious gold here. And two bracelets is a typical kind of a wedding gift or for a bridal gift because it represents man and woman creating a new family, the two bracelets. And so he's already moving on this, if you noticed, he's starting giving away the presents.
- Hank Smith: 31:12 The gifts.
- Dr. Camille Olson: 31:12 And he asks, "Whose daughter art thou? is there room in your house that I might be able to stay?" And then she tells him what we already know about her lineage. And tells also in verse 25. Yep. We have plenty of room if you'd like to stay. You know, this servant is as God fearing as his master Abraham, as he finds that out, look that immediately, verse 26, "The man bowed down his head and worshipped the Lord." And he says, "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." Can I just do an insert just as I read that. I want to do a shout out to Elder Uchtdorf's general conference talk last October. October, 2021, especially with the footnotes.
- Dr. Camille Olson: 32:08 He starts out talking about the way, and if you follow those footnotes, it just hit me. Christ is the way. Think of what he taught in the new... I am the way, the truth, and the life. It is his way. It is him. Lehi's path. Now, I got thinking of this. That path leading to the tree of life. There's Christ at the tree of life. There's Christ with the fruit of the tree of life. But he's the path. He's the iron rod. He's the way. So, every time now I run into where it says the way, I put Christ in there. I got that from Elder Uchtdorf's General Conference talk on the way.
- John Bytheway: 32:51 This is one of the reasons I love my last name.
- Dr. Camille Olson: 32:55 B-T-W. I do too.
- John Bytheway: 32:57 I was holding my scriptures once over my thumb, of the personalized and it was covering everything, but the way, and I was like oh, my name tells me to be by the way.

Dr. Camille Olson: 33:12 Oh that.

John Bytheway: 33:12 Jesus is the way. So I joke about it a lot, but I love that I have the way in my name.

Dr. Camille Olson: 33:18 That is good.

Hank Smith: 33:20 Camille, I feel like I've had these moments before, where I am shocked at how things worked out. Right? Just are you kidding?

Dr. Camille Olson: 33:30 And I think you see that in these stories. And when you see these in these stories, it reminds you to look at your own life and you see, he has been there to show us the way as well.

Hank Smith: 33:41 Yeah. He says I stopped at a well, and I found the right girl, and this is just amazing. Right? I love those moments of amazement that things have worked out.

Dr. Camille Olson: 33:53 You know, he knows immediately, this is the Lord's doing. He's not taking credit at all. And look at verse 28. I think reading between the lines does Rebekah, is she clueing into this? Does she have any emotion about what's going on? And the damsel ran, oh, she's fast, and told them of her mother's house, these things. I mean, I think she's excited. She has a clue of what's happening here. She's got the jewelry, and I think she's excited, but the negotiations haven't happened.

Dr. Camille Olson: 34:28 And you ought to also pick up whose house is she running to? Her mother's house. That is very unusual. We know her father is Bethuel, but with one little side reference over here in verse 50, it's the only time we read of him there. I would like to suggest that Bethuel might have passed away already. Because all the negotiations, it's the mother and Rebecca's brother Laban, and it's her house. But it also then underscores her leadership. She is chief of the house. It hasn't fallen to Laban's house. It's not my brother's house. It's my mother's house. And that tells us something else about this patriarchal era as well.

Hank Smith: 35:12 How can we emphasize this more? He got this idea for this, I'll stop by the well, and the right person will come out.

John Bytheway: 35:20 Yeah. Usually, you don't tell the Lord what sign to give you. But I love that he was so eager to get it right.

Dr. Camille Olson: 35:27 There are times we say, I've got to get this right. And I've got to be able to know. Can you help me? This is one way I could recognize it. Of course, he doesn't have to do it that way. But

oftentimes he likes us to think it through and maybe come up with something, especially like in the decisions about marriage. That we have a feel, that we connect with it. And it's not just saying very coldly. There's a person go marry that person. And no emotion in it at all. That we might say, if I can feel this, or if this can happen, there is just something that I think the Lord can bring it into a way that we could recognize and understand. And you don't get the idea that the Lord is upset that he's made this suggestion.

- John Bytheway: 36:20 Right. Love verse 50. "The thing proceeded from the Lord." It's like then Laban and Bethuel answered and said, the thing proceeded from the Lord. He's made it obvious. We don't want to get in the way of the Lord's will here, because he's made it clear.
- Dr. Camille Olson: 36:33 And that verse 50, I think has an important... That tells you where this family of Bethuel is coming from. Are they believers? And that's critically important as well. This is not just because they've got the right lineage, and they've got some wealth and they've raised their daughter up well to be a good, hard worker. And she's beautiful. They're believers.
- John Bytheway: 36:55 And she runs a lot.
- Hank Smith: 36:56 Yeah.
- Dr. Camille Olson: 36:56 And she runs a lot. Let's not forget that. She's one fit cookie. Yes.
- John Bytheway: 37:03 The cross country team of Syria there.
- Dr. Camille Olson: 37:07 Rebecca had a brother, verse 29, and his name was Laban. We're going to see Laban the next generation, because he's going to have two daughters that come into this family as well. Right?
- John Bytheway: 37:17 Same Laban.
- Dr. Camille Olson: 37:18 And Laban ran out unto the man. When he saw this, he can't wait for the servant to get there. He runs out to meet him. This is just too good. You know, he got a little hint of the wealth. When he saw the jewelry on Rebecca, they bring him in, they're ready to feed him and wash his feet, all the hospitality. And look at the end of verse 33, the servant says, "I will not eat until I have told you my errand." I mean, he's got to say, I don't want

to mess this up. Let me finish and make sure this is going to work. I can't relax and have a dinner yet.

John Bytheway: 37:53 You have got to hear this. It sounds like that too.

Dr. Camille Olson: 37:56 And he just goes on. You get the whole story again. He tells it-

John Bytheway: 38:00 I was there at the well, and I said if you could... Yeah.

Dr. Camille Olson: 38:04 Including I was promised an angel would be there. Verse 40. "The Lord before whom I walk will send his angel before thee and prosper thy way." He quotes Abraham. That's an important part of what he was doing there. I want to just point out though, as we're going through this, he continually calls Abraham his master. Keep that in mind. So then, oh, they're just going. This is good. This is good. And-

John Bytheway: 38:29 Before I had done speaking, he repeats that part again in verse 45.

Dr. Camille Olson: 38:33 Oh, yeah. I mean, he's got the details. This is his testimony. I know this is what's supposed to happen. He gives verse 48. "I bow my head and worship the Lord and blessed the Lord, God of my master Abraham." Rebecca's family is saying, yep, this is from the Lord again. Verse 52. "He worshiped the Lord bowing himself to the earth." Every step he's remembering the Lord and the servant brought forth jewels of silver and jewels of gold and raiment and gave them to Rebekah. And he also went to her brother and her mother." Again, you see, it's the brother and the mother, the father isn't there. It doesn't seem. And then they're eating and drinking and it is so good. And end of verse 54, he says, okay, send me away. Let's go. Verse 55. Her brother and her mother said, oh, can't he stick around 10 days.

John Bytheway: 39:31 You can stay for just a little while longer. Yeah.

Hank Smith: 39:33 I'm not ready for her to leave. I have a daughter right now who's about ready to go to college, and I can see that. No, no, let's not let her...

Dr. Camille Olson: 39:42 Don't. And the servant saying, "hinder me not, seeing the Lord has prospered my way." Let's don't mess this up. Let's don't get anything that could happen. Maybe another man could come into town and I don't know whatever. But here's the solution. Verse 57. Her family says... I love this. As a woman, I love this. "We will call the damsel and inquire at her mouth." What does she think? Let her make that decision. I think we've already

seen Rebekah likes the idea. And verse 58. "They called Rebekah and said unto her, wilt thou go with this man." Oh, this, next words I've got so highlighted. She said, "I will go." I can almost cry as I read that. My friends, my friends, my friends, I will go. We sing songs. We memorize scriptures about a young man. Not much different from Rebekah's age that said, I will go and do the things which the Lord commanded. Nephi is a hero.

Dr. Camille Olson: 40:42 But I think about what Rebekah is saying, I will go for, and she's not coming back. It's not just a months trip back to get some plates. It's dangerous, but it is giving her life, in this family, and trusting in the Lord. Okay. I'm changing the mood a little bit. I brought you a little surprise today, my friends. Because I was working with young women a few years ago when they had the theme from 1 Nephi 3:7, "I will go and do the things which Lord had commanded.: I go, I got to teach these young women.

Dr. Camille Olson: 41:17 There's a young woman who has that example of I will go. And so I took the liberty of writing my own lyrics to the song of Nephi's courage. Okay. Are you ready? I'm not going to sing it, but I'll give them to you. And Rebekah has three syllables and Nephi only has two. So you have to do a little... But you know. "The Lord commanded Rebekah to marry Sarah's son. Trusting in a servant who far away had come. Knowing she'd never again, her home a spy, Rebecca was courageous. This was her reply. I will go, I will do the things the Lord commands. I know the Lord prepares a way. He wants me to obey...

Dr. Camille Olson: 42:02 I will go, I will do the things the Lord commands. I know the Lord prepares a way, he wants me to obey." So I didn't stop there. I did one for each of the books so I tried this. "An angel commanded Mary to mother God's own son. Mary had a question, "How could this be done?" Trembling and fearful, she did not ask him why. Mary was courageous, this was her reply." She said, "Behold, the handmaiden of the Lord. Be it unto me according to thy will." But that is basically, "I will go, I will do the things the Lord commands. I know the Lord prepares a way, he wants me to obey." "The Lord commanded Lehi to leave Jerusalem. Sariah was obedient and gladly followed him. She began to murmur when she feared her sons were dead. Then she was courageous and voiced her faith instead. I will go, I will do the things the Lord commands. I know the Lord prepares a way."

Dr. Camille Olson: 42:59 Then my last verse, "The Lord commanded women to teach His Word at home. He gave to us his promise, we'll never be alone. At times we are discouraged and ask, why should I try? Then we turn courageous and this is our reply. I will go, I will do, the

things the Lord commands." We're all asked to do challenging things and these women can be our example. Remember General Relief Society President Mary Ellen Smoot, back in the May, 2000 Ensign, her talk that she gave at the women's meeting just prior in April, she gave Rebekah as an example in this very setting. She was talking about telling us as women, do we ever say to ourselves, "What will I create of my life, my time, my future?" The first thing she suggested, "Go where the spirit directs. Be still and listen. Your Heavenly Father will guide you as you draw near to Him. Immerse yourselves in the holy word of the prophets, both ancient and modern and the spirit will speak to you."

- Dr. Camille Olson: 44:10 But her second point was, "Don't be paralyzed from fear of making mistakes. Thrust your hands into the clay of your lives and begin. I love how Rebekah of old responded to Abraham's servant who came in search of a wife for Isaac. Her answer was simple and direct. 'I will go,' she said." Rebekah could have refused. She could have told the servant to wait until she had a proper sendoff, a new wardrobe. Until she'd lost a few pounds or until the weather was more promising. She could have said, 'What's wrong with Isaac that he can't find a wife in all of Canaan?' But she didn't. She acted. And so should we. The time for procrastination is over. Begin. Don't be afraid. Do the best you can. Of course, you will make mistakes. Everyone does. Learn from them and move forward." I like that little quote from Sister Smoot.
- Hank Smith: 45:05 That's wonderful. I could have waited until the weather was a little ... Let's give it a month.
- Dr. Camille Olson: 45:10 Yeah, lose a few pounds so I can look better in my wedding dress. Yes, okay. She's leaving. This is sayonara.
- Hank Smith: 45:18 You can miss the emotion here if you're not careful.
- John Bytheway: 45:22 It sounds like it's for a long time, right? They may never see her again.
- Dr. Camille Olson: 45:26 In fact they don't. Rebekah's going to send her son Jacob up there, but she doesn't go.
- John Bytheway: 45:34 A matter of, it sounds like, 24-hour period almost. How long is this when the servant of Abraham shows up and she leaves? How much time is there?

Dr. Camille Olson: 45:43 It seems like as short a period as you possibly can have to take care of his business.

John Bytheway: 45:49 Wow. Your life can change in a minute.

Hank Smith: 45:53 There's a little bit of a Emma Smith feel to this, that she leaves Harmony and never sees her family again, right? This both feet in full dedication to God's work.

Dr. Camille Olson: 46:08 It's the women most frequently that are the ones asked to leave and they join the family of their husbands. And we don't give them credit for that sacrifice often enough.

John Bytheway: 46:20 I had a question about verse 61, Rebecca arose and her damsels. She took people with her?

Dr. Camille Olson: 46:27 Yes. In fact, up in verse 59, she got to take her nurse and we're going to run into that nurse later. She's taking care of Rachel when Rachel gives birth. I wonder if she's with all Jacob's wives as they give ... You wonder, so she might have gone back with him. I don't know, but we see Deborah. Her name is Deborah. We learn her name, the nurse's name. And so, she probably brought other people. She would've brought her dowry. She would've been sent with a lot. Those 10 camels are probably going back laden, again, coming back.

Hank Smith: 47:03 Who is this speaking in verse 60? They blessed Rebekah. Is this the people she's leaving?

Dr. Camille Olson: 47:08 Yes, this is her brother and her mother.

Hank Smith: 47:12 Oh, this is tender.

Dr. Camille Olson: 47:12 It is. This is their greatest gift they can give. That you be this mother of thousands, of millions.

John Bytheway: 47:22 That's a phrase you don't see very often. Thousands of millions.

Dr. Camille Olson: 47:26 People would call that a curse too often today. But back then, that was the best blessing ever. They appreciated children.

John Bytheway: 47:34 Elder Pace down at BYU, he said that they were in a beat up station wagon, going to church with a sticker on the back that said Families are Forever, and people didn't know if it was a boast or a complaint.

Hank Smith:	47:48	As a father of a wonderful daughter, I find verse 60 kind of tender.
Dr. Camille Olson:	47:52	It is.
Hank Smith:	47:54	Saying goodbye.
Dr. Camille Olson:	47:55	I have put the focus a lot here on Rebekah, but you are feeling it, the family behind.
John Bytheway:	48:01	There goes my little girl.
Dr. Camille Olson:	48:02	They love her and she has made contributions. Do you know how hard she works? They're going to miss her work.
John Bytheway:	48:08	She's always running around.
Dr. Camille Olson:	48:09	And she's doing good. It's an interesting thing that with Abraham willing to sacrifice Isaac, that we've talked about already, there's often the parallel between Isaac and Jesus Christ. Isaac is a type of Christ. And as Isaac marries Rebekah, we know the bride of the bridegroom is symbolically the church. So I've oftentimes considered also looking at Rebekah and her attributes and responses to a type of us as members of the church and how we respond to our Savior when he gives us direction. That running around has new meaning to me. Be quick. Quick to respond
John Bytheway:	48:56	And running about doing good, we might say.
Dr. Camille Olson:	48:59	Yes. She's not hesitating. She's not hoping the command will change by the time she gets there. She's acting.
John Bytheway:	49:06	And I suppose we could say that her willingness to say, "Well, let me take care of your camels also," was an insight into her character. Her service orientation. I'll do that too. Take care of your camels.
Dr. Camille Olson:	49:19	And you get a little hint about what contribution she's going to make in the clan of Abraham, Isaac's now. Which is where we're coming. Well, first, verse 62, we notice where Isaac is living and you notice that well name, Lahai-roi, this is the one that Hagar named. This is the well where Hagar, when she ran off and she thought everyone had forgotten her, that the Lord sends an angel to speak and she names it, "the God who sees me." That's what it is. And obviously, the family has not forgotten.

- Dr. Camille Olson: 49:58 That place has become important to the entire family, and we'll see them a couple of times living there. Isaac is there meditating in the field. We always wonder what he's meditating about. He looks up and here come the camels. Rebecca sees him afar off. Verse 65, "She had said unto the servant, 'What man is this that walketh in the field to meet us?' And the servant said," notice the wording here. " It is my master." Now, did you notice something? Who has been his master before this? We don't hear about Abraham. This is one of those that I have sometimes wondered if perhaps he could have died prior to this. Before Rebekah came back.
- Hank Smith: 50:52 While the servant was gone.
- Dr. Camille Olson: 50:54 Just glancing, while we're right there, just go right across the column where Abraham does die. End of verse eight. This is good. This is chapter 25 now. End of verse eight, "He dies," old age is saying it lightly, "and was gathered to his people." That's an interesting phrase. Does that suggest, understanding of the spirit world, and that you will be with family there?
- Hank Smith: 51:19 Gathered to his people, reunited with his wife.
- Dr. Camille Olson: 51:25 And his sons Isaac and Ishmael buried him in the cave of Machpelah. We can just glance by that, but I'm going to argue that Abraham never forgot or lost where Hagar and Ishmael ended up living. They were in contact and they're here together. I'm going to stand up as Ishmael, as a covenant son. He's not the leader of the covenant, but I'll get there. He was circumcised. They went back and lived there with Abraham. Part of my reasoning, let's go back and just fill in where I just skipped, chapter 25, verse one. Again, chronology, in section 132 it says, "Abraham married his wives and concubines." Plural. She's called a wife. "Abraham took a wife and her name was Ketura." Here's a third wife of Abraham and she has six sons by Abraham. His numbers are growing faster and more than we'd sometimes remember. We go through the names of those sons and then grandsons, and then you know there are daughters and granddaughters. But one of the sons that we really click into is the fourth one whose name is Midian. That becomes important, right? Why? Who's Midian?
- John Bytheway: 52:50 Jethro's father-in-law, he's a Midianite, right?
- Dr. Camille Olson: 52:53 He's a Midianite. Why is Jethro so important to Moses? Not just because he's got a daughter, Zippora, that Moses marries. But what does Jethro do for Moses?

John Bytheway:	53:07	He ordained him.
Dr. Camille Olson:	53:08	He ordained him to the Melchizedek priesthood. And so, what does that tell you about Midian?
John Bytheway:	53:15	There was priesthood there.
Hank Smith:	53:17	These are covenant sons.
Dr. Camille Olson:	53:17	It's not just Isaac. I think there's more happening here. And this covenant, they're blessed. Those other sons, he sends them off, but he gives them gifts for six. The sons of the concubines which Abraham had, he gave them gifts and sent them off. What I understand about this, like sons of concubines, the law didn't require that, but he gets them something to really make a good life for them and then sends them off so that they make their own clans. But they've taken priesthood. Could I even suggest that? And knowledge of the covenant and knowledge of God and their worship. But he's, verse five, Abraham gave all he had unto Isaac. Isaac is the one who's going to succeed him in leadership and with birthright, with the bulk. This is his estate, so to speak.
John Bytheway:	54:16	Please join us for part two of this podcast.



John Bytheway:	00:03	Welcome to part two of this week's podcast.
Hank Smith:	00:08	Hey Camille, can I ask you a quick question before we move on from 24? When Rebekah meets Isaac, can we just talk about that really quick?
Dr. Camille Olson:	00:16	Yes.
Hank Smith:	00:16	I'm interested in what you have to say about what she does here.
Dr. Camille Olson:	00:19	Who is that? And the servant says, this is my master. It's Isaac. Therefore it's just instantaneous she took a veil and covered herself. We have so many different interpretations about what a veil could symbolize. This is the tradition where brides wear veils today. I think that is interesting. In the next generation, Leah will wear a veil when she's married to Jacob and Jacob won't be able to see her face and thinks he's marrying Rachel, right? You might consider modesty, but it's not like they wore them all the time. Obviously, when she was getting water, the servant could see her right there. Some have even suggested she was maybe dusty and dirty and she didn't want the first time she sees her new husband to be. Let me get cleaned up first, before we see.
John Bytheway:	01:09	It's been a long trip.
Dr. Camille Olson:	01:11	It's been a long trip, but it is an instinctive thing, perhaps that is part of her whole attire. This is how she wants to present herself to begin with. I don't think we need to see negative in veils. I think we see that with so many today of our Muslim sisters who wear veils and how beautiful. And that could be as far as what was beauty then too. I don't know.
Hank Smith:	01:39	And I do like the little end at the very end of 67.
Dr. Camille Olson:	01:44	Yes. Read that.

Hank Smith: 01:45 Isaac was comforted after his mother's death. He misses Sarah's influence in his life.

Dr. Camille Olson: 01:52 He brought her into his mother Sarah's tent. They had their own space, her tent.

John Bytheway: 01:57 I think I've heard whole talks given about, and he loved her. The love is a verb idea. Maybe Isaac, the same revelation the Lord is in this thing.

Hank Smith: 02:09 Right. But he makes the choice to love her.

John Bytheway: 02:11 Is it a feeling, is it a decision?

Dr. Camille Olson: 02:13 And the thing of it is he's just looked at her. They haven't been sending communications ahead saying, let me tell you about this woman I'm bringing home to you. Arranged marriages, love was not even part of the equation, but they grew into love. We don't have the details of that story much. I mean, as far as their life. All we know is that it's going to be 20 years before she's able to get pregnant to have a child. Chapter 25 it goes into the descendants of Ishmael and so we get 12 sons, 12 princes. He had a big family. We're going to learn later, he had daughters and those will become important.

Hank Smith: 03:01 So chapter 25 looks to me like we need to tell you that God fulfilled his covenant to Abraham. There is a lot of kids.

Dr. Camille Olson: 03:08 And that's part of it, so let's keep the... I just think that is an important part. It's part of the covenant. And verse 17, again, reflective that Isaac was aware. I mean, who's keeping this record before it's record. We've got when Ishmael dies and he's gathered unto his people, same phrase.

Hank Smith: 03:36 Yeah, he's not forgotten and-

Dr. Camille Olson: 03:38 He's not forgotten and going, you're saying, into the spirit world. Can you see a reunion with Abraham? And I think Sarah... I'd want to go back to Sarah had love for Ishmael too, but that's another story. And it says, look at verse 19, and these are the generations of Isaac, Abraham's son and Abraham begat Isaac. There you go. Short verse. Short genealogy. And Isaac is 40 years old when he took Rebekah to wife, you get the idea Rebekah was far younger than that when she would've married. That's typical. And they are praying in verse 21 because she's barren. It sounds like he's the one entreating the Lord and Rebekah conceives. So you don't know how much is happening

here before that 20 years. Let me suggest, can I just flip over to chapter 26 and do a little bit there and say, this could have been during that years. These are not necessarily written in chronological order, but because we're going to get onto those children here pretty quickly and that story take off, let's just take a look at chapter 26 for a minute. Shall we? Can we do that?

- Hank Smith: 04:59 Okay.
- Dr. Camille Olson: 04:59 There's no evidence as far as the children going with them. This could be later, but there's a famine sometime and that happens so frequently. And we saw it with Abraham and Sarah that ended up going to Egypt and the Lord tells them, in this case, you don't need to go that far. You can just go over there to Philistia and to Gerar. There in that context, we get our first hint and I just think these have happened earlier. And I don't know. I don't know the Lord's way of thinking, but verse 3, what is the Lord telling Isaac? I will be with thee and I will bless thee here in the land of Philistia for unto you and unto thy seed I will give all these countries. This is a foreshadowing of what's going to come for the descendants of Abraham and I will perform the oath, which I swear unto Abraham, my father, and I will make thy seed to multiply as the stars of heaven and will give unto thy seed all these countries and in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed. I mean, what is it?
- John Bytheway: 06:05 It's the Abrahamic covenant.
- Dr. Camille Olson: 06:07 Still chapter 26, verse 24, the Lord appeared unto him the same night and said, I am the Lord, God of Abraham, my father, fear not for I am with thee and will bless thee and multiply thy seed for my servant Abraham's sake. And he built an altar and there's the verse. And he pitched a tent and he dug a well, but somewhere in here, it seems like that covenant is bestowed specifically on him.
- John Bytheway: 06:34 For our listeners, could you elaborate on Philistia and what that is and what that land becomes?
- Dr. Camille Olson: 06:42 All right. For the famine, they go to an area called Philistia, which is coastal there, the Philistines live there and later when the Greeks conquer that area and the Romans are in that area, you can see the change from the languages, call it Palestine. And so that whole land takes on the name that had originally been Philistia. It was kind of a derogatory for the people of... the Jews who were there to call it by Palestine, but it took on that name and that name still continues today. Our Palestinian

friends are some of our favorites. Are they not? Here's just one incident and I don't have a whole lot to say about it. It's another parallel with Abraham and Sarah when they were in Egypt because of the famine.

- Dr. Camille Olson: 07:34 It's just kind of quirky because it just keeps coming up and you're not saying, what do I do with this? Because for some reason, and this one is a little different because there's no indication here that the Philistines are so anxious one of them to marry Rebekah, that they would be willing to kill her husband to do so as was the case down in Egypt with Abraham and Sarah. All we can see is they see that Rebekah is beautiful. This might be another reason that I might think this is earlier in Rebekah's life rather than later, but I don't know. Verse 7, the man of the place asked him of his wife and he said, she's my sister for he feared to say she is my wife lest the man of the place should kill me for Rebekah because she was fair to look upon. I don't know if he's learning this from his dad and just say, "Boy, watch out because self-preservation here."
- Hank Smith: 08:27 This sounds very familiar this story.
- Dr. Camille Olson: 08:29 It is. But what is different about this is no one's coming to take Rebekah like was in the case of Sarah and the Philistines are out looking, the king of the Philistines Abimelech is looking out the window and he sees, quote, Isaac sporting with Rebekah. It's that word. Not sure exactly. But it's kind of like they're behaving not like brother and sister. Can we say that? And Abimelech's said, "Wait a minute, this isn't your sister. She's your wife."
- Hank Smith: 09:01 He said, "Why'd you lie to me?" Yeah.
- Dr. Camille Olson: 09:03 As Isaac explains, Abimelech verse 11 charges his people saying don't touch this man or his wife, the Lord has blessed him. Leave him alone. And as long as Isaac and Rebekah are there, they just wax great.
- Hank Smith: 09:17 Yeah. Verse 13.
- Dr. Camille Olson: 09:20 And become great. And all this flocks and herds... I just wonder, see, that's what I'm wondering if this could have been during that 20 years.
- Hank Smith: 09:28 So maybe we're not getting the exact chronological order.
- Dr. Camille Olson: 09:31 I don't know. Because I don't know where to place it chronologically, but it would fit there. It would fit there.

Hank Smith: 09:35 Yeah, because there's no mention of the twins here.

Dr. Camille Olson: 09:37 Not until you get to the very last two verses and then that just comes out of the blue. So I'm going to keep those two verses. And can we go back to chapter 25?

Hank Smith: 09:47 It's fascinating to me that we've got Keturah, all these kids, we've got Ihsmael, all these kids and then the one that we're counting on-

Dr. Camille Olson: 09:58 20 years. Yeah.

Hank Smith: 10:00 ... nothing.

Dr. Camille Olson: 10:00 I just think it is fascinating how often the idea of these incredibly important, strong, good women who are barren. It happens. It happens in the next generation with Rachel and you go, "Well, Leah isn't barren." But she is barren as far as the real love of her husband and feeling of acceptance as much in that clan and in every single case in those times of real emptiness, that's when each of these women seem to really cement a relationship with God that I wonder if would not have happened in quite the same way. I have just learned from personal experience that sometimes when blessings don't come in the way you expect or as when you expect, and you are an outlier in any way and you go to church and maybe church doesn't quite connect with what you are going through because it assumes you're like everybody else. That's when you start seeing God is aware of you. I think of Hagar so much. He sees me, the God who sees me.

Dr. Camille Olson: 11:21 And the fact that God is going to be talking to Rebekah before she has children, it is not the fact that she has born children that makes her now of value to the Lord. She's already of value to Him. And the fact that she's having a communication with the Lord and gets an answer as clear and as precise and detailed and informative as this one would indicate to me prayer is not an anomaly for Rebekah. She knows the Lord and she knows his voice. We don't have those verses, but if you read between the lines, I think her heart, she's been pouring out her... We read in chapter 25, verse 21, Isaac entreating the Lord on her behalf and Isaac's been praying. I think his prayers... He's not getting another wife like his father did. We don't see any other wives for Isaac and he doesn't have other children. Yeah. The genealogy stops with Isaac.

Hank Smith: 12:28 That's such an important principle. Is your difficulties turning you to the Lord.

John Bytheway: 12:34 Yeah. I like to tell my students, the first syllable of testimony is test and the first symbol of question is quest. You can ask a question of Siri or Google in an instant, but a quest is a long arduous search.

Dr. Camille Olson: 12:51 And we don't like that kind of answer, especially in a world where we do have Siri and Google to give it to us right then.

John Bytheway: 12:58 I tell my students I worry about gen Z, as you want Google speed answers to golden questions.

Dr. Camille Olson: 13:05 Ah, that's good. That's good.

Hank Smith: 13:08 Instant messages, right? I'm like, Lord, just DM me.

John Bytheway: 13:11 Just text me.

Hank Smith: 13:13 Yeah. Just text me.

John Bytheway: 13:13 I'm waiting.

Hank Smith: 13:16 The Lord left me on red. I can't believe this.

John Bytheway: 13:18 I can see the dot, dot, dot, but it's sure taking a long time.

Hank Smith: 13:21 I can see. Yeah.

Dr. Camille Olson: 13:24 Okay. All right. I love it. I love it. Let's get into her prayer and the answer because this is going to change, this is the rest of our story today. Verse 22 of chapter 25, Rebekah has conceived and there's nothing to tell her that it's not going to be a single birth.

Hank Smith: 13:44 What is going on? Why am I thus?

Dr. Camille Olson: 13:48 She is struggling. There's some major discomfort going on now that she's... I've obviously talked to some other women and they're saying this just doesn't seem normal.

Hank Smith: 13:58 We have twin boys.

Dr. Camille Olson: 13:59 Oh yes.

Hank Smith: 14:01 I remember my wife said to her doctor, she said, "This one feels different." And he said, "Oh, it's your fourth. You probably

haven't had a girl in a while." And she's like, "No, this definitely feels different." And by the end it was two seven pound baby.

- Dr. Camille Olson: 14:17 Ooh.
- Hank Smith: 14:18 Yeah.
- John Bytheway: 14:19 For twins, that's really heavy. Isn't it?
- Hank Smith: 14:21 Yeah, it was.
- John Bytheway: 14:23 Wow.
- Dr. Camille Olson: 14:24 They seem to be these fetuses that are getting well acquainted in the womb.
- Hank Smith: 14:34 They struggled together within her. Get away from me. Give...
- Dr. Camille Olson: 14:38 They're starting to really develop their personalities already. So yes, she asks the Lord, why am I thus? And she went to inquire of the Lord. We just pause over that. We don't get this captured in scripture often enough, but it's going on. We just can't assume that other women aren't praying and getting answers and having that personal relationship. It's too easy to imagine them going through prophet husband.
- Hank Smith: 15:08 She inquired of the Lord. She went.
- Dr. Camille Olson: 15:11 And the Lord tells her, now look at this, I don't get answers in paragraphs, typically. Two nations are in thy womb and two manner of people shall be separated from thy bowels. Ah, you wonder how often... I mean, how normal having twins? I mean, if she had even known anyone women that had had twins. And the one people shall be stronger than the other people and the elder shall serve the younger. I think how do we have this in scripture? Rebekah has reported the Lord's answer to her.
- Hank Smith: 15:48 And she knows what has to happen.
- Dr. Camille Olson: 15:49 And she knows what has to happen. And when her days to be delivered were fulfilled, behold, there were twins in her womb, kind of like... That's almost from the midwives point of view. Well, what do you know? Because Rebekah already knew. The first came out red. We're going to see some corollary with that in a minute. Yes. And all over like a hairy garment. I mean, I don't know all over. This is some hairy child. Yes. And they called his name Esau. And after that came, his brother out and

his hand took hold on Esau's heel. This is going to be the reason that Jacob gets his name and his name was called Jacob. And this is where we find out Isaac was three score years old when she bear him. So 40 years old when he was married, 60 years old when they had the children, there's 20 years there. In Hebrew, Jacob's name literally means he shall follow at the heel and that's where that idea of a supplanter or an overreacher.

- Dr. Camille Olson: 16:58 But I think interesting too, from the revelation, Rebekah knew that Jacob would surpass his brother to receive the birthright. He would be the stronger one. And we're talking probably in a sense spiritually, especially initially. So there the boys are born and right after we start getting them, they're growing up and we start learning about them. Verse 27, Esau was that cunning hunter like unto John Bytheway.
- Hank Smith: 17:25 Yes. My cunning hunter cohost.
- Dr. Camille Olson: 17:28 This is a good quality. He's good at hunting. And I'm telling you, the family needs that. He's a man of the field. He's an outdoorsman. You can just kind of start getting a little bit of personality and you can just see his physical prowess and strength and-
- John Bytheway: 17:47 He had the four wheel drive camel.
- Dr. Camille Olson: 17:49 Yeah. Yeah. And Jacob was a plain man. I mean, that is about as nonplused description as you can find.
- Hank Smith: 17:59 I know.
- Dr. Camille Olson: 18:00 But put a footnote with that. It's the same word used to describe Noah in Genesis 6:9. It's the very same word. Perfect in all his generation. Perfect. Oh, see, you can see in this footnote it says Hebrew whole complete, perfect, plain simple. It's the same word.
- John Bytheway: 18:22 That's interesting because-
- Dr. Camille Olson: 18:24 Yeah, it is.
- John Bytheway: 18:25 ... why wouldn't you use perfect there?
- Dr. Camille Olson: 18:26 I don't know.
- John Bytheway: 18:26 That's interesting.

Dr. Camille Olson:	18:26	I don't know.
John Bytheway:	18:29	I like how it says he was intense too. Oh, sorry. Dad joke.
Dr. Camille Olson:	18:33	Yeah.
John Bytheway:	18:33	Dwelling in tents.
Hank Smith:	18:37	It says Noah was a just man and perfect in his generations. And the same word here for 27, a plain man dwelling in tents.
Dr. Camille Olson:	18:46	He's a good kid. He's different from his brother. I don't know. I don't know if he's just more sensitive or... They're different and they don't really see eye to eye in a lot of stuff, right?
John Bytheway:	19:00	He's going hunting again?
Dr. Camille Olson:	19:01	Yep. Yep. And Jacob says I'll stay home and fix dinner because he can make a mean bowl of soup. I'm telling you, we find that out here.
John Bytheway:	19:11	That's coming up
Dr. Camille Olson:	19:12	Verse 28. Isaac loved Esau because he did eat of his venison. That's a good reason. Don't you... But it seems like Isaac related to Esau and appreciated so much some of the tales perhaps that he told of being out there, but Rebekah loved Jacob and we... I don't know... I just don't want to make this so much of, that means Rebekah didn't like Esau and Jacob didn't like... Or Isaac didn't like Jacob. I think probably every parent has some ways that they can relate more to one child than another, but the love and what they'll be willing to do.
Hank Smith:	19:45	Yeah. I get that. I can see that. That you relate more to one because they're more like you. You're like, "Oh, that one was... He looks like me. He acts like me." Versus a different child who you're going, "Where did you come from?"
Dr. Camille Olson:	20:00	I don't know if Rebekah might have felt a particular connection with Jacob just knowing what she knew and maybe had a little bit more as far as saying, I got to make sure he stays on the straight and narrow because he's the one the Lord has chosen to do this. Okay. Here's one of our major incidents here, right? Jacob's sod potage. Sod is just one of those little old words that boil or cook. This is not soup made out of dirt or the lawn.
John Bytheway:	20:35	Two square feet of grass.

Dr. Camille Olson: 20:37 Yes. Yes. And it's so fun that this Hebrew word potage... Why don't you just say soup? But potage has the same three consonant root as does red, as does Edom. It's yod, dolet, mem or Y D M and the Y sound is kind of that... Yeah, but it is kind of this play on word that is really very fun. Feed me I pray thee, some of that red potage. I think the reason potage is in italics is you almost didn't have to say that. That's what the translators added because it's almost the same word. It is red and it is this fixed stewish kind of potage with lentils.

John Bytheway: 21:32 Give us a little background on why in King James some words are italicized.

Dr. Camille Olson: 21:37 I think this is such an important thing and I love the King James version of the Bible. This is one of the reasons I love it. When the translators were going through the Bible, if they'd come upon a phrase or a sentence where a part of speech was missing or it didn't make quite sense and... If you've ever translated from another language, you can see that they aren't parallel and you will oftentimes have to insert other words to make it make sense in a different language. They would put it in italics not so you would emphasize it, but so that you would know they have added it.

Hank Smith: 22:15 What is this with red? I mean, are they just saying he was red? We made red soup.

Dr. Camille Olson: 22:22 Yep. Well this is-

Hank Smith: 22:22 We called him red.

Dr. Camille Olson: 22:24 He was red, the soup is red.

Hank Smith: 22:28 We nicknamed him red.

Dr. Camille Olson: 22:29 They named him red. But I think it is, it's kind of like red symbolizes Esau, but his descendants in the Old Testament are called the Edomites and you will lose that if you don't put this connection that these are the descendants of Esau.

John Bytheway: 22:45 Yeah. They're not the Esauhites. They're the Edomites because of that red associated with him.

Dr. Camille Olson: 22:51 Yep. Okay. So here's the situation, Esau's been out hunting. He knows how to find food. I don't know how far away from home they are or if they're kind of close by, but as he comes up being out there in the fields and hunting all day, he's hungry. I mean,

you know those days. And he can smell the soup. Oh, oh, it's good. And he says, I am faint. And Jacob goes... I mean, I think they've had this little bantering back and forth probably their whole lives and he goes, okay... Obviously Jacob's been thinking... Has thought a lot about the birthright and he's going to get it because he's the oldest, but I would really like it. I want that added responsibility. I would do it.

- Hank Smith: 23:38 And maybe he sees Esau doesn't take it as seriously.
- Dr. Camille Olson: 23:41 And he says, sell me this day thy birthright and Esau said, "Behold, I'm at the point to die." I mean, come on. Esau's not going to die.
- Hank Smith: 23:48 You're not going to die.
- John Bytheway: 23:52 Yeah. That's I am dying of hunger. What is the birthright? It's more than just, "Oh, I'll give you a father's blessing."
- Dr. Camille Olson: 23:59 It's a hard thing in this story, especially to see if we're talking about multiple blessings or all the same. There is a birthright blessing that it seems families at this time all had and it typically went to the oldest son. The son that gets the birthright gets twice as much as any of the others. But the idea is there's a responsibility with it that if down the line... So the father dies and you've got a widowed mother. You take care of that mother as long as she lives and if-
- Hank Smith: 24:28 That's why you have that-
- Dr. Camille Olson: 24:29 That's why you have it. And you have sisters that something happens and they don't marry or something else... You are responsible for the entire clan. And you have that double portion specifically to help them. It's not for you, it's for them.
- John Bytheway: 24:46 And it's not just a... I don't want to minimize a priesthood blessing, but it's not just, "Oh, I'll give you a blessing." It is temporal responsibilities that go with it.
- Dr. Camille Olson: 24:56 A priesthood blessing is... What we've seen it's oftentimes combined with the birthright. Some have argued, it doesn't have to be. Three things. The birthright blessing, a father's blessing and then the blessing that would say you are in charge of the covenant. You're succeeding in being the guardian of the Abrahamic covenant for your generation and the responsibility of being the leader of the covenant people, a spiritual assignment of leadership responsible for all families of the

covenant. All that was given to Isaac. It's possible all three of those are going to be given to Jacob, but it's also possible it's three different things and birthright is a separate thing and Esau and Jacob are kind of fighting it out for it here. I don't know if this'll be helpful.

- Dr. Camille Olson: 25:51 I am reading a book that has nothing to do with the Bible. It's Ron Chernow's history on The Warburgs, an incredible Jewish family of bankers. Germany and then some of them were in the United States and the second generation of that incredibly strong, bright, genius and wealthy family. The two oldest sons, Abby and Max, Abby was the oldest. He didn't want the birthright. He did not want to take over as head of the bank in the next generation and he made a deal with his brother Max when they were younger and he said, "Look, I'll let you take that. You be the head of the bank as long as you buy me books the rest of my life. All I want are books." And he actually did.
- Hank Smith: 26:42 He sold the birthright for some books.
- Dr. Camille Olson: 26:43 For books, but he got them for the whole life. And Max had no idea how much of a reader, a scholar, a student that Abby was. Thousands upon thousands of books every single year. So I always think Esau could have done better and said, I could at least have a bowl of soup every day for the rest of my life for the birthright. But I think sometimes you can just see, it did not mean... At this point in Esau's life, it meant nothing, that added responsibility and stuff, he didn't care about it. In fact, we read at the end of verse 34, he despised his birthright.
- John Bytheway: 27:18 And verse 32, what profit shall this birthright do to me? He's like, "I don't see the value in it."
- Dr. Camille Olson: 27:23 I don't see. It's more responsibility than it is profit.
- Hank Smith: 27:27 So it's not really a trick here. It's Jacob saying, "Look, I want this. You obviously don't care about it."
- Dr. Camille Olson: 27:35 And the fact that he would do so cavalier and say, "Yeah, for that bowl of soup, I'll take it. You can have it. You can have it."
- Hank Smith: 27:42 Camille, if it's okay. I'm going to read something from the manual. If you're at home with teenagers, this is a great little lesson. It says, as you read Genesis 25:29-34, consider why Esau might have been willing to give up his birthright in exchange for a meal. What lessons can you find for yourself in this account? And then is there any, quote, potage, that's distracting you from

blessings that are more valuable? What are you doing to focus on and appreciate those blessings? So I just think... I do this all the time. I have an opportunity to spend time with my kids and I am on my phone, right? I'm on social media. I have a chance to build a relationship with my wife and I'm watching whatever on TV. We sell our birthright in a way for-

- Dr. Camille Olson: 28:33 A mess of potage.
- Hank Smith: 28:34 ... things that don't have any real value.
- John Bytheway: 28:37 It's become a common expression isn't it? You've traded that for a mess of potage.
- Dr. Camille Olson: 28:43 But you know at the moment that's all that Esau cared about and that is having eyes to see those, eternal kind of eyes and trust in what the Lord has promised. To sacrifice what we want right now for something that we would care about and will make a difference in the long run. I think about parents, generally, parents do that all the time. And Esau I think, is going to learn that one day, but he hasn't figured that out quite yet. Jacob seems to be much more in tune to that. Doesn't he?
- Hank Smith: 29:18 What is that old saying, John? There's nobody who puts on their tombstone, I wish I had spent more time at work.
- John Bytheway: 29:23 More time at the office.
- Hank Smith: 29:24 Right? We do it all the time. We do it every day. So I think that'd be a good activity for everyone to do listening is to just kind of stop and go, "How do I sell the most important blessings for very trivial things?"
- John Bytheway: 29:39 I loved what Camille said that I think another way that is put that we hear a lot is to trade what we want most for what we want in the moment.
- Dr. Camille Olson: 29:47 I've got this quote from then Elder Dallin H Oaks. October, 1985 general conference. He said the contrast between the spiritual and the temporal is also illustrated by the twins Esau and Jacob and their different attitudes toward their birthright. The firstborn Esau despised his birthright. Jacob, the second twin desired it. Jacob valued the spiritual while Esau sought the things of the world. When he was hungry, Esau sold his birthright for a mess of potage. Behold he explained, I'm at the point to die in what profit shall this birthright do to me? Many

Esau have given something of eternal value in order to satisfy a momentary hunger for the things of the world.

- Hank Smith: 30:35 I've got this one from Elder Bednar. He talks about digital distractions. He said often, we neglect eternal relationships for digital distractions, diversions, and detours that have no lasting value.
- Dr. Camille Olson: 30:53 It is easier to see it in an ancient's life than in my own though.
- John Bytheway: 30:57 Yeah. Those silly Israelites, my goodness.
- Hank Smith: 31:04 Ah, oh, Esau. I would never do that. How dare you?
- Dr. Camille Olson: 31:08 Okay. We're going to go over. Its chapter 26 to the end of chapter 26, because we looked at the beginning of it earlier, right? And look at the last two verses. So we got some hint as far as Esau with the birthright. Now, look at verse 34 and this is the one that just breaks Isaac and Rebekah's heart. Esau was 40 years old when he took to wife Judith, the daughter of Beeri the Hittite and Basemath the daughter of Elon, the Hittite. He married two Hittite women and you hear Rebekah say, what good is my life? I mean, why are they doing this? Again, here's the genealogy, right? We got down to Isaac. Now we have two sons and here's the first one to marry and it's not good. The implication from everything else we read and their grief is the fact that they are not believers, they would not value the covenant.
- Dr. Camille Olson: 32:10 They would have more the influence on Esau to take him away than to bring them into the covenant. And which could be kind of part of that, the way he's responded to the birthright too. I mean, I don't know. You can see some of that almost a little bit of rebellion in him right now that he's going, "I don't need this. I don't need this." But Isaac and Rebekah have not crossed him off and definitely the Lord has not.
- Hank Smith: 32:40 Camille, there's going to be many people listening who are going to say that's me. My children are not making decisions that I wish they would. Is it my fault? You've got Isaac and Rebekah. Here's the greats. These are the greats of what we'd say are faithful people and they've got a son just isn't interested in... I don't know if there's comfort in the fact that, "Hey, you're in the same boat as some of the greats." When your children say, I'm not interested.

- Dr. Camille Olson: 33:11 Well, that's why I think I have to go a little bit into chapter 28. I mean, this story is not over right here.
- Hank Smith: 33:19 Yeah. Don't give up on the Esau.
- Dr. Camille Olson: 33:23 It doesn't end with chapter 27 because that's what our reading assignment for this week is. There's more. And especially we see Rebekah in this, she does not let go. You remember. She's going to send Jacob up to her family. She's keeping Esau close by. This is a mother's love and I can't help, but think that they will continue to have influence. I will hope to prove by the end of this that Esau does change. We can all change. And again like Rebekah waited how many years before she had children, it's going to be how many years before she sees and maybe it's not in this life. Change is possible in the next life. I mean, it just keeps going and we just keep with them and we love them because they're sons and daughters of God and he loves them.
- Dr. Camille Olson: 34:20 There is redemption. That's this whole thing, right? All these stories. If we had a family that everything worked out and all their kids just right in line and stuff, and you could almost come away in saying, "They don't need the atonement. They don't need Christ. They're doing just fine. Boy! Wish they could raise my kids." No. And it isn't easy. There aren't easy answers.
- Hank Smith: 34:43 In my mind I think when Jacob and Esau have that future reunion, that she got to see it, that she got to see it from her seat wherever she was.
- Dr. Camille Olson: 34:53 Wherever that was. Wherever that was. And that's genuine. Okay. Chapter 27. And if there's the hardest chapter in Genesis, this could be it. This is a tough one. There's a lot of questions. And I would say right at the get go, I don't think we have the full story. And our tendency is to make one person, the good person and one person the bad person. And we've got a family who's struggling and trying to find answers.
- Hank Smith: 35:22 Right. I'd see Rebekah as protecting her family and her posterity.
- Dr. Camille Olson: 35:27 Maybe Isaac is thinking, "Ah, let's just see if we can do something more for Esau and he'll get with it." I mean, they care. They care. We start chapter 27 and Isaac is old. He would be about a hundred years old now because... Right? Esau is 40 when he marries and Isaac was 60 when the boys were born. So whatever age means, but it's old. That still is old there.

Hank Smith: 35:56 They've taken away his chariot license.

Dr. Camille Olson: 36:01 His eyes are dim. He cannot see, he cannot see. And he calls, Esau his eldest and he said-

Hank Smith: 36:10 I still love the meat.

Dr. Camille Olson: 36:11 Yep. I still love the meat. I know I'm going to die. It's kind of like, he feels like his death is pretty soon. Therefore, take thy weapons and go get me some of that venison in verse 3. Verse 4, bring it back to me that my soul may bless thee before I die. Rebekah hears that and she immediately thinks he's going to give the blessing and maybe the one that she was told in the revelation should go to Jacob. That's her interpretation and she runs. We know this about her and that fast. She has got Jacob-

Hank Smith: 36:51 She still has it.

Dr. Camille Olson: 36:52 She still has it. And she calls Jacob and says, "Look, this is what your father said. Go out and you go get some kid from the flock and I'm going to fix that savory meat for him that fast and then you go in and tell him that you're Esau." I mean, this just everything about it just feels like, now, why are we doing this?

Hank Smith: 37:16 Yeah. Why are we deceiving Isaac here?

Dr. Camille Olson: 37:18 Why is this happening? Yeah. He says, he's going to bless Esau and he wants... Verse 10, thou shall bring it to thy father that he may eat that he may bless thee before his death. She wants that and Jacob says, "Well, he can't see me, but Esau my brother is a hairy man and I'm a smooth man."

Hank Smith: 37:39 He'll know. Yeah.

Dr. Camille Olson: 37:40 He'll know. And I'll look like a deceiver. I mean, he's worried. He doesn't want to even give the appearance of doing something that could be evil. And she says, "Look, put it on me. I'll take it. I'll take it." I don't know. I mean, is this justification? Is this inspiration? Is this administering and helping where her husband might be not being as strong as he typically would be? Is this helping to enable him to do what is the right thing to do? It just feels uncomfortable.

Hank Smith: 38:17 When you pointed out that revelation, these two nations are in thy womb. She knows. Genesis 25:23. I'm going to write that in as a cross reference here that she's-

Dr. Camille Olson: 38:27 She knows that.

Hank Smith: 38:28 She trusts the Lord here.

Dr. Camille Olson: 38:29 And I always ask the question, I just go, "Did she ever tell that to Isaac?" A lot of times we're given information and we're told not to tell that's not for others. And that would only make the conflict between Jacob and Esau worse if she's out there saying, "I've known boys that since before you were born..."

Hank Smith: 38:47 Yeah. We're going to see how that works with Joseph. That doesn't work out very well.

Dr. Camille Olson: 38:49 Doesn't work very well. That's exactly right. But speaking of that, this is just one of those fascinating things I have just played around with for a long time, because we always focus on the fact that she's going to take the skins of kids of goats and put it on the hands and the smooth of Jacob's neck and I go, "By Golly, he's a hair... Esau is one hair suit guy if he's like the goat. Man!" But look at verse 15. Rebekah took goodly raiment of her eldest son, which she had in the house and put them on Jacob, the younger. Now let me tell you, this is one of those early Jewish from the midrash, the rabbinic traditions that the early Rabbis taught about. I think it's an interesting one in that rabbinic tradition, Esau's wonderful garments, as they were translated, goodly garments were the high priestly raiment in which God had clothed Adam, which had been handed down to Noah, Shem, Abraham, Isaac, and finally to Esau as Isaac's first born.

Hank Smith: 40:01 Whoa.

Dr. Camille Olson: 40:02 Now I start playing with that and I just go, "Wait a minute, remember what? It was an animal skin." It's an animal. It's hairy and it symbolizes Christ. It symbolizes his life and sacrifice. And remember there was a covering that Noah had that his sons were jealous of. We don't know a whole lot that's going on there. Remember it is Joseph, the covenant son that's going to get... We translate it coat of many colors, but in Hebrew you don't know what it is. It's something. We don't know this coat. It is a covering. Okay. Now stay with me here. In Zechariah 13:4, the Prophet Zechariah... I know we don't usually quote that, but warns against false people who are playing false prophets because they wear a rough garment with the intent to deceive. Was that a way you recognized a representative of the Lord? Elijah had such a rough garment. Remember Christ in the sermon on the mount. He said to beware of false prophets because they are wolves in sheep's clothing.

Dr. Camille Olson: 41:17 I mean, I just play around with this and I just go, was this... I'm not saying the very same garment that Adam was given turned out, but there was something... There is something about this royal or goodly or wonderful raiment and the Rabbis connected it with what Adam and Eve had been given. It's kind of an interesting one.

Hank Smith: 41:40 That is. It's cool.

Dr. Camille Olson: 41:41 Anyway, I think that's kind of fun. How do we unpackage this? What do we do? Would the Lord ever honor a blessing, especially a blessing of being over his priesthood if it was done by deceit? Can you trick the Lord? Does the Lord stoop to being a trickster? I mean, all those kind of things you start seeing where we run into some... We can attribute false attributes to God. I love Robert J. Matthews and I don't know if either of you ever got to know him, but ah.

John Bytheway: 42:16 I got to give him a ride from the Salt lake airport to BYU once and just the two of us and I treasure that memory. That was fun.

Dr. Camille Olson: 42:25 So I love his explanations and how he... Let me read to you what he said. " How could Jacob get a different patriarchal blessing through deceit and it be legitimate? We wish we had a more complete account of what really happened. We do not get additional help from the JST in this instance. " Don't you think that's interesting, of all the JST Joseph Smith Translation? Nothing on this chapter. " I'll add a comment by Joseph Fielding Smith on the subject of patriarchal blessings. President Smith said," this is still brother Matthews, " there is a difference between the words of a blessing and the actual realization and reception of the promises stated in that blessing. The Lord would not have been obligated to fulfill the words of Isaac, if Jacob and Esau didn't get the blessing that each deserved.

Dr. Camille Olson: 43:19 So an answer to the question, how can Jacob get a legitimate, different patriarchal blessing through deceit? I would answer he can't and he didn't. Isn't that great? I got that quote from this lovely book that just came out edited by Daniel Belnap and Erin Shade. And this is a chapter on Isaac and Jacob by Erin Shade. Great, great resource.

Hank Smith: 43:46 Both are coming on our show hopefully later this year. So the Lord isn't deceived here, Isaac may be, but the Lord isn't.

Dr. Camille Olson: 43:55 The Lord isn't. I wonder too, how many times we've seen in different circumstances that women are in that because of what their options were, they did some things that might be considered trickery. Let me just remind you of some. Well, one that's later on. David's first wife, Michal, when Saul was sending his men to come and kill David, she got David out the window and she stuffed a pillow in his bed. When the man came to kill David, she said, "Oh, he's in there sick." I don't know if that sent them away. I guess they couldn't kill him when he was sick. But there's that one. How about the midwives Shiphrah and Puah when pharaoh told them to kill all the baby boys, as soon as they delivered them and they said, "Oh, sorry. As soon as those Jewish women, those Hebrew women gave birth-

Hank Smith: 44:52 They delivered too fast.

Dr. Camille Olson: 44:52 "They deliver so fast. It's all..." And pharaoh goes, "Oh, okay. That's..."

Hank Smith: 44:57 I like that. Rebekah doesn't have a lot of options in her culture.

Dr. Camille Olson: 45:00 I mean, she can't give that blessing. Rahab tells the man of Jericho that the Hebrew spies ran out long or we better hurry because you might be able to catch them. And Yael when Sisera the Canaanite captain comes to get refuge because his army's being slaughtered by the Israelites and he thinks Yael is going to save him. She goes, "Oh, here have some warm milk and sleep." And while he's sleeping, she hammers-

Hank Smith: 45:29 She hammers-

Dr. Camille Olson: 45:29 ... his head to the floor. But you just see different kinds of things that are happening here.

John Bytheway: 45:35 Could it be that Rebekah is being an instrument in the Lord's hands to get the right thing to happen? And could it be that Isaac is old and is not exactly sure what he's doing? I hate to... I'm trying to do the same thing and trying to help make sense of it, but the right thing happened.

Dr. Camille Olson: 45:53 If it was switched around, we wouldn't have trouble. If it was Rebekah struggling and Isaac came through and did something, they went through, we're used to that more, but it's when it's the woman doing it, it's like she's micromanaging, she's where she shouldn't be. But that's why I love this quote from Elder McConkie, " women are appointed Rebekahlike to be guides and lights in righteousness in the family unit and to engineer

and arrange so that things are done in the way that will result in the salvation of more of the father's children. " Elder McConkie even says, "Oh, that all more women could be more like Rebekah and engineer things. Create an environment where the right blessing could be given." Okay, we got to turn to this one. Hebrews 11. I know we're New Testament, but remember Hebrews 11, this is the great roll call of the faithful-

- John Bytheway: 46:49 Faith hall of fame.
- Dr. Camille Olson: 46:50 These are the people who were so sure about the promises that God had given, that they acted even without any evidence to the contrary. In a tiny little verse 20, we read this, by faith Isaac blessed Jacob and Esau concerning things to come. I think bottom line with all of it, when Isaac is giving that blessing, he's not doing it with his physical senses. It's not his sight, it's not his smell, it's not his taste that's telling him about this. He's getting this. He thinks... There's something in here that this could be Esau, but he gives the blessing that the Lord gives to him to give to that son by faith, by the spirit. It's the Lord. You have to have that verse.
- Hank Smith: 47:42 And Camille, I actually love how complicated and-
- Dr. Camille Olson: 47:45 It is. Yeah.
- Hank Smith: 47:46 ... difficult this is. It's good. It's human. There's something the Lord just says, "Yeah, work this out in your mind. It'll be a fun..."
- Dr. Camille Olson: 47:52 And it's such a real story. It's messy just like our lives are messy.
- John Bytheway: 47:57 It helps us when our lives are messy. Yeah.
- Dr. Camille Olson: 48:00 He gives the blessing and here it is down here, 28 and 29, therefore... This is chapter 27 of Genesis, 28, 29. Therefore, God gave thee the dew of the earth and the fatness of the earth and plenty of corn and wine that people serve thee and nations bow down to thee, be Lord over thy brethren and let thy mother's sons bow down to thee. Cursed be everyone that curse at thee and blessed be he that bless thee. Some of that reflects what Rebekah was giving in her revelation before they were born. You can't say it is a hundred percent precisely Abrahamic covenant, and putting him in charge, but there are some echoes of it in there. While we're right there, flip over to chapter 28. Here is Isaac again blessing Jacob and this time he says some similar things, but adds, and this definitely is Abrahamic covenant.

Dr. Camille Olson: 48:55 God almighty, bless thee and make thee fruitful and multiply thee that thou mayest be a multitude of people and give you the blessing of Abraham to thee and to thy seed with thee, that thou mayest inherit the land wherein thou art a stranger, which God gave unto Abraham.

Dr. Camille Olson: 49:12 So again, you wonder if we've got three different kinds of blessings: birthright, a father's blessing, and then here the leadership of the covenant blessing, or if this is all one, given there. You can argue both ways, but we got to go back to 27 because it's classic. Because Esau comes back, just after he finishes giving that blessing and Isaac seems to be confused, doesn't he?

Hank Smith: 49:37 Yeah.

Dr. Camille Olson: 49:38 He's going-

Hank Smith: 49:39 Who?

Dr. Camille Olson: 49:40 And he said, "Wait a minute. Who are you?" Verse 32. "Oh, I'm your son, your first born Esau." And Isaac trembled, verse 33, very exceedingly. He said, "Who? Where is he that has taken venison?" And verse 34 Esau heard the words of his father and cried with great and exceeding bitter cry. Bless me, even me also, oh my father. Thy brother came with subtlety and hath taken away thy blessing. Then Esau says, is not he rightly named Jacob for he has supplanted me these two times? He took away my birthright and behold now he's taken away my blessing. So that does indicate kind of two separate kind of events here. Isaac does bless Esau and he gives him a great father's blessing right there, but no indication as far as his brother serving him. That order was given to Jacob.

Hank Smith: 50:44 So Isaac knows. I don't know. In my mind, I'm like "Isaac knows he gave the right blessing to Jacob."

Dr. Camille Olson: 50:52 By the spirit, he definitely knows.

Hank Smith: 50:55 Yeah. At this point, he's going, this needed to happen. He's...

John Bytheway: 50:59 And what Camille read in Genesis 28:3,4, I've got in my margin Isaac confirms the right one got the birthright.

Hank Smith: 51:08 I'm team Esau. I like that he comes around later, but when he blames Jacob in verse 36, it reminds me of Laman and Lemuel,

right? That we're always wronged. Nephi is always taking it from me.

Dr. Camille Olson: 51:22 I'm the victim.

Hank Smith: 51:24 Yeah. And it's like, you made the decision to trade the birthright. You married outside of the covenant. You did these things.

Dr. Camille Olson: 51:34 And so what is Esau's response then? After we mourn my father... I won't do it until my father's gone because I don't want to hurt his feelings, but this is end of verse 41. Then I will slay my brother, Jacob. That'll take care of it.

Hank Smith: 51:49 That's a very Laman and Lemuel attitude

Dr. Camille Olson: 51:52 Who is right there to say, "Hey, I got to save both of my boys."? It's Rebekah.

Hank Smith: 52:00 Yep.

Dr. Camille Olson: 52:01 And that's where at the end of chapter 27. Flee thou to Laban my brother to Haran and tarry with him a few days until thy brother's fury turn away. Oh, isn't that a mother for you? It won't take long and we'll all be one big happy family here again.

Hank Smith: 52:20 A few days.

Dr. Camille Olson: 52:21 And then I'll come and fetch you. And verse 46, Rebekah said to Isaac, "I am weary of my life because of the daughters of Heth." I think we're going back again to Esau, marrying out of the covenant. If Jacob take one of the daughters of Heth such as these, which are the daughters of the land, what good shall my life do me?

John Bytheway: 52:45 Is Heth the same as a Hittite?

Dr. Camille Olson: 52:48 Yeah. If you go back and... That table of nations.

John Bytheway: 52:53 Oh, that's where-

Dr. Camille Olson: 52:54 You'll find-

John Bytheway: 52:55 About Noah.

Dr. Camille Olson: 52:56 ... where that's connected. Yes.

Hank Smith: 52:59 Oh, poor Rebekah. You just feel for her.

Dr. Camille Olson: 53:01 I know. And so she says, can you say going by to Jacob and they've got a really close relationship and we're going to be seeing that Jacob's life go on and it's going to be tough. It's not an easy one. I mean, he's going to have a rough... It's going to be 20 years before he returns. And we don't see Isaac and Rebekah when he comes back, right? And so this is saying goodbye.

Hank Smith: 53:23 I wonder Camille, if way back when Abraham's servant found Rebekah, they needed that kind of sign because she's got to be questioning herself after all this. Maybe I wasn't the right person for the job.

Dr. Camille Olson: 53:37 I know. But I think, see isn't that wonderful... That's a marriage as far as... You can't have someone who is there as a help meet for them unless you actually need them. And I'm not saying giving birth to those children were critical and the only thing... and she's the only one that could do it. For Isaac to do what he needed in his priesthood position, her support, her inspiration, administrative skills made a difference. And I think he will bless Rebekah forever as Abraham will Sarah and vice versa. It isn't just ideal in the way that you say, "Oh, this would be the cover of the Ensign." I'd love to see more of Esau's mindset after Jacob leaves. And he's there with his wives and his children and Isaac and Rebekah and feeling like I have so disappointed them.

Dr. Camille Olson: 54:42 Look at verse six of chapter 28. When Esau saw that Isaac had blessed Jacob and sent him away to Padan-aram to take him a wife from thence and that as he blessed him, he gave him a charge saying thou shall not take a wife of the daughters of Canaan. That Jacob obeyed his father and his mother and was gone to Padan-aram and Esau seeing that the daughters of Canaan pleased not Isaac his father. I want to say this is a time of change of heart for Esau. It's starting to dawn on him. "Wait a minute. I did this to myself." Look what he does next in verse 9. Then Esau went to Ishmael. He knows right where Ishmael is and took unto the wives which he had, Mahalath, the daughter of Ishmael Abraham's son, the sister of Nebajoth to be his wife. We see there in verse 9, Esau change direction and he marries one of Ishmael's daughters.

Dr. Camille Olson: 55:47 Now you might say, oh, this is just window dressing. Not if you see Ishmael being of covenant and that he has blessings too. And what reinforces that is 20 years later here comes Jacob back with four wives and 12 sons and how many daughters?

And he sees Esau coming to him from afar. Oh, it is the most beautiful, chapter 33.

- Hank Smith: 56:18 I better send him gifts.
- Dr. Camille Olson: 56:20 And Jacob is already feeling guilty. He's going to say, oh, here it comes and he starts sending out-
- Hank Smith: 56:25 Last time I saw him-
- Dr. Camille Olson: 56:25 ... all these gifts.
- Hank Smith: 56:27 ... he was going to kill me. Yeah.
- Dr. Camille Olson: 56:28 But chapter 33, verse 4, Esau ran to meet him. Oh, it's Esau running. And he embraced him and fell on his neck and kissed him and wept, and they wept and he says, "Who are these?" And they introduced their families to each other. And then he asks, "Jacob, why are you giving me all of this? What meanest thou..." Verse 8. "By all this drove which I met?" And Jacob says, "These are to find grace in thine eyes." And Esau says, "I have enough my brother. Keep thou that thou has to thyself." I mean, it is a beautiful reunion and there's no competition or animosity. I mean, there could still be... I don't know how close you're going to be living by each other after this, we don't hear about Esau, but let's not justify bad feelings between brothers today or between peoples. This is not the place to say, Palestinians and Israelis are enemies forever more because of Esau and Jacob or because of Isaac and Ishmael.
- Dr. Camille Olson: 57:34 The Bible tells us the Lord's plan of this family is one of redemption and with time incredible things happen and section 132, these husbands and wives do not sit on thrones, but are gods. They are exalted. And that's just one of the generations right there, the real people and one day we will get to meet them and find out the parts of the story that I just messed up a whole lot.
- John Bytheway: 58:06 Oh, it was beautiful. And I think, I loved... I can't remember who said it Hank, but somebody talking about look, the Old Testament is messy, but it's a book of redemption. So I love that you said that. It's all about redemption. Thank heavens for all of us. It's all about redemption.
- Dr. Camille Olson: 58:25 Thank goodness they had each other, but especially, thanks be to God and his grace and mercy, to Jesus Christ who made all things possible.

Hank Smith: 58:35 Camille, what a great day! That reconciliation, that's a beautiful moment. I feel so much more love for Rebekah, leaving her family behind, taking on... And it's not like the Lord called her to this awesome situation. I mean, this is rough. This 20 years of being barren and then her sons are... She's got to work this out between them.

Dr. Camille Olson: 59:03 I think they speak to men as well in the same way that Abraham, Isaac and Jacob speak to me and to women.

Hank Smith: 59:12 We want to thank Dr. Camille Fronk Olson for being with us today. Wow. Wow. Wow. Thank you all for listening. We're grateful for your support. We want to thank our executive producers, Steve and Shannon Sorenson, and our sponsors, David and Verla Sorenson. And we hope everyone will join us next week for our next episode of followHIM.



followHIM *favorites*

with Hank Smith & John Bytheway

- Hank Smith: 00:00 Hello, everyone. Welcome to followHIM Favorites. You know the deal this year, John and I take on a single question from this week's lesson. John, the lesson this week is Genesis 24 through 27. And we've got a difficult question for you that I hear from my students all the time. Which is, "How do I find a spouse?" Abraham has a servant who goes and finds a spouse for Isaac and brings her home and just sets her right in front of Isaac. How great would this be for those who are thinking, "I've got to find somebody on this planet to marry and be an eternal companion. Why can't I have a servant like Abraham does, who's going to do this for me?" What would you say to a student who says, "How do I find a spouse?"
- John Bytheway: 00:47 Oh, I wish it were an exact science. It's so different now. I like to think that marriage is one of the only commandments that you cannot obey by yourself. That agency is so important. And, if an arranged marriage here, that's a totally different time, place, part of the world. But for us today, you have to find somebody who's willing to marry you and you're willing to marry them. The only other commandment I can think of that requires someone else's agency is multiply and replenish the earth, and you're supposed to get those in the right order, right?
- Hank Smith: 01:15 Yeah.
- John Bytheway: 01:16 So, it's a totally different type of thing. And, I think sometimes the best you do is just be where you're supposed to be, doing what you ought to be doing and ask Heavenly Father to help put somebody in the same space where you are somehow. In your school, in your ward, in your neighbor, whatever, because no, it's not an exact science. With Isaac and Rebekah maybe the Lord had a special interest working out the way that it did. It's a great question. I want to hear what you have to say, Hank.

Hank Smith: 01:47 Yeah, it's difficult. Do you remember section 88 of the doctrine covenants where the Lord says, "Light cleaveth unto light," right? Intelligence cleaves to intelligence. Truth cleaves to truth. So, I've always told my students, if you want someone who is full of light and truth and intelligence to be attracted to you, you must be full of light and truth and intelligence. So, I think we control what we can control, which is ourselves.

John Bytheway: 02:12 Yeah.

Hank Smith: 02:12 And, our own choices. So, we fill our lives full of good things. And then we trust that the Lord will bring the person he wants to in the right time and the right place. I found that fairly early in my life. I was just 22 when I got married. But yet you were a little bit older, if I remember?

John Bytheway: 02:30 I was 33 the day I got married. And, so it was a good time though, because it really made me wrestle with some things. And, there's a YouTube, I guess, on the education week channel, a talk that I gave, I think they titled it "Who, when, why we marry" or something like that. That was my attempt to answer this very question. The funny thing is people that have seen it, see me now and say, "Oh, you're older." So, it was recorded a while ago. I loved some of the things that the prophets have said about what falling in love is because mostly the database we use to figure out what falling in love is. is Hollywood and songs on the radio, which is a terrible place to go to figure out how to do life. I went to Nephi and Mr. Go and Do just went and did.

John Bytheway: 03:16 And that was over, but he was large in stature. And, so for us, it's a little harder, but I love what you said, "Light cleaveth to light, be where you're supposed to be, doing what you're supposed to be doing. Be out there." I know for a fact, the Lord can put compatible people in the same room somehow. I like what Michael Wilcox says, a guest that we've had. He says, "This isn't a decision that God will make for you. You still need to make it." But, he can get good people in the same space.

Hank Smith: 03:42 Yeah, that's what I would say too is, we spend too much time trying to control things we can't control. We're going to end up frustrated and disillusioned and maybe even kind of jaded and angry. If we say "I can control me, then I'm going to be the best possible version of me I can be. And I'm going to be happy where I am." I've never seen someone unhappy single all of a sudden become happy, married, right? Happy single people make happy, married people.

John Bytheway: 04:10 Right.

Hank Smith: 04:11 So, I would say find happiness in the situation you are in, be the best version of yourself you can possibly be. And, then we trust the Lord, right? We trust the Lord that the right thing will come at the right time.

John Bytheway: 04:23 And, it's not an exact science. We all know wonderful, talented, righteous, incredible single adults. And, so if there were a perfect formula, we'd share it, but I think there's some explanations that may just have to wait. But, like you said, Hank, love that idea. In fact, I wrote an article for the New Era once called "I have no friends" by John Bytheway. A kid came to me and said, "How do I make people like me?" And really, I thought, "Well, I don't know if you can make people like you, but you can make yourself more likable." And, that's kind of what you were talking about, Hank. Don't try to find the best person, but try to be the best person that you can be. Let Heavenly Father work his magic. Let him see if he can get you both in the same space. Don't have a perfect answer, but have perfect faith that things will work out.

Hank Smith: 05:11 Yep. Things will work out.

John Bytheway: 05:13 Sometime.

Hank Smith: 05:14 Yeah. I like that, John. Things will work out for you. So, be optimistic, right? Be optimistic, be hopeful. And, you never know the miracle you might be looking for, could be just around the corner, but you won't find it if you stop turning corners, if you stop the journey. So, keep moving forward. President Hinkley would say with a cheerful heart, with optimism, accentuate the positive and things will work out.

John Bytheway: 05:38 He did this, what would I do if I were you this whole poem at BYU once, "What would I do if I were you, if marriage didn't come through, I'd be sad, but I'd say there's no time to stew. Get busy, find something important to do." And, I think that marriage is more likely to come as a byproduct of pursuing other useful activities and goals. And, that's right out of an Ensign talk. I think it was Elder Carmack, John Carmack. And, then "By a direct and pointed campaign," he said, it's more likely to come as a result of pursuing other activities and goals. A byproduct. You're out there. You're doing good things. You meet somebody that way. So.

Hank Smith: 06:17 And I like that. I think one more time we probably ought to say John, that maybe you don't end up married in this life. But, we trust the Lord, even in those situations.

John Bytheway: 06:28 Right.

Hank Smith: 06:28 Knowing that great latter day saints have come before that have never been married.

John Bytheway: 06:36 Right.

Hank Smith: 06:36 And, incredible work on the planet. You don't have to be married to do incredible, good, important things.

John Bytheway: 06:44 I love to say that Moroni's greatest work was accomplished while he was a single adult. That Moroni that stands on top of the temples. I'm alone, my father's been killed in battle. He is the one who abridges the book of Ether, puts it in the Book of Mormon. Writes those remaining chapters of Moroni, last two chapters of Mormon. Greatest work while he was a single adult.

Hank Smith: 07:05 Yeah. I remember he said, "I have not friends nor wither to go." And it reminded me of my high school years. I had not friends nor wither to go. Well, we hope that you will join us each week for followHIM Favorites and come join us on our full podcast, it's called followHIM. You're going to love the podcast this week. It's with Dr. Camille Fronk Olson, who just does a really incredible job. So, let John and I help you get your scripture study in, but if not, we'll see you next week for followHIM Favorites.