

Th131 God's Plan

Lesson Th131-10 Choice

In our last few lessons you learned that God is love. You also learned that love is not complete in itself, but rather love is made complete when it has someone to love. You discovered that love cannot be forced upon someone, but that love should be freely given, freely received, and freely returned.

There is one aspect of love yet to be discussed that is very important. In order for love to be freely given, freely received, and freely returned, there must be a choice. The recipient of the love must have the freedom to choose whether or not to receive and return the love. Love should never be forced, there should always be choice.

In the Bible we learned how a wife was chosen for Isaac. How his father sent his servant to find a relative to be the wife of Isaac. When the servant found Rebekah, her father and brother asked her if she wanted to go with the servant to become Isaac's wife. Rebekah was given a choice. She was not forced to marry Isaac. This resulted in Rebekah and Isaac freely loving each other their entire lives.

We also have seen what happens when love is forced upon someone. Isaac's son Jacob was tricked into marrying Leah. He did not love her nor did he want her, but his father-in-law, Laban, deceived him. Jacob was forced into a marriage he did not want or choose. Although Leah chose to love Jacob, Jacob did not return her love. This caused great sorrow in the family.

Love cannot be forced. If there is no choice, then the love can be hollow and empty.

In many cultures it is the responsibility of the parents to find good spouses for their children. In some instances the children have no say in whom they marry. Some of these marriages grow into love and are happy. Some of these marriages never find true love as neither the husband nor the wife had a choice.

There was a young man in India whose parents had died. Life was very difficult for him and he would have to work very hard as there was no one to help him succeed. Not only was there no one to help him get started in a career there was also no one to arrange a wife for him. For a young man in India this could cause great difficulty.

But the young man had a friend whose family had opened their home to him to visit. And his friend had a beautiful sister. Now the first time they met, the young man and the girl did not like each other. He was too brash and she was too strong a personality. But after visiting the home many times the young man began to wonder if perhaps this strong girl was just the woman he needed for a wife. So he spoke to his friend and asked him to help arrange a marriage between him and the sister.

The girl's brother, wishing to help his friend, but not expecting a positive response from his sister, asked her if she would be interested in becoming engaged to his friend. No one really

knows who was more surprised the brother or his sister, when she surprised herself and said, "Yes." Over the next few months the young man spent time talking with the young woman and they discovered that they were well suited for each other. It was during this time that a love for each other began to grow.

Now, many years later, this man and woman speak about their love for one another and discuss how they will find good husbands and wives for their children. Even though this was an arranged marriage, both the young man and the young woman had a choice.

It is this choosing that adds great value and satisfaction to love. We have spoken about the great sorrow Leah had as Jacob did not choose to return her love. But we have not spoken of the great joy that Jacob and Rachel shared. Each of them chose to love each other. Jacob chose Rachel above all the other women. Jacob chose her above her sister. Jacob demonstrated his love for Rachel by working for her father for seven years just for the right to marry her, and then another seven after he was deceived. Rachel knew that Jacob loved her and she chose to love him back. Their love for each other is one of the greatest love stories recorded in the Bible.

This lesson is **important** because it teaches that love cannot be forced. If there is no choice to love, then the love will be meaningless.

The **main truth** of this lesson is that God will never force us to love him. Only we can choose to love God as he desires to be loved.

To **review** this lesson, answer the following questions:

1. Today you have learned that perfect love cannot be forced, but requires what to exist? [Pause]
A. If you said that perfect love requires a choice, you are correct.
2. Why did Jacob and Rachel have such a wonderful love for each other? [Pause for 5 seconds.]
A. If you said that they chose each other, you are right.
3. Why was Jacob's wife Leah so sad? [Pause for 5 seconds.]
A. If you said that she loved Jacob but that he did not love her back, you answered correctly.

Your **assignment** for this lesson is to replay this lesson two or three times until you understand the concept that perfect love requires a choice.

Then, find someone with whom you can discuss what has been taught about love in the previous lessons. This is important, since in our next lesson we will begin to understand God's plan for mankind and the universe.