

Confronting Conflict in the Home

Preached by: Matthew S. Black

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Series: Genesis

Introduction: Open your Bible to **Genesis 27**. We are in a series going systematically through the book of Genesis. We are looking now at the walk of faith in the life of Abraham's son Isaac. This is the end of Isaac's life and the beginning of the saga of Jacob. The title of the message is "Confronting Conflict in the Home".

What creates unbelievable conflict in believing homes? What a better context than the last days of Isaac. He failed with his children. What does it profit our children if they gain the whole world but lose their own soul. It's one thing to be saved later in life and grieve over your children. It's a whole 'nother thing to raise your children in the light, but lose your children.

It's not a secret why lost children come from believing homes. There was a survey recently that said that around 80% of young people are leaving the church for the world. Fathers are not leading their homes. It's a sad state of affairs in the life of Isaac, and it is a sad state of affairs today.

Four thousand years ago there wasn't soap operas or television, but what we have Scripture being written about these families. So today we're going to look at a 4,000-year-old family at some of their lowest points and some of their most grievous sins, and we are going to see how we can avoid conflict in the home.

I. Carnal attitudes from husbands and fathers

- A. We must avoid fleshly **favoritism** **Genesis 25:27–28** (ESV) — "When the boys grew up, Esau was a skillful hunter, a man of the field, while Jacob was a quiet man, dwelling in tents. 28 Isaac loved Esau because he ate of his game, but Rebekah loved Jacob."

A worldly mindset kills godliness in the home. Just because you know the Lord does not mean your children will. You have nurture their soul.

Genesis 27:1–4 (ESV) — "When Isaac was old and his eyes were dim so that he could not see, he called Esau his older son and said to him, "My son"; and he answered, "Here I am." 2 He said, "Behold, I am old; I do not know the day of my death. 3 Now then, take your weapons, your quiver and your bow, and go out to the field and hunt game for me, 4 and prepare for me delicious food, such as I love, and bring it to me so that I may eat, that my soul may bless you before I die."

Specifically, Isaac planned to thwart God's choice of Jacob because he favored Esau. Why is Isaac acting this way? He acts out of local custom and convention. It was unheard of to put the blessing on the younger child. Yet God had told Isaac and Rebecca that the older would serve the younger.

Look at **Romans 9:7–13** (ESV) — “... not all are children of Abraham because they are his offspring, but “Through Isaac shall your offspring be named.” 8 This means that it is not the children of the flesh who are the children of God, but the children of the promise are counted as offspring. 9 For this is what the promise said: “About this time next year I will return, and Sarah shall have a son.” 10 And not only so, but also when Rebekah had conceived children by one man, our forefather Isaac, 11 though they were not yet born and had done nothing either good or bad—in order that God's purpose of election might continue, not because of works but because of him who calls— 12 she was told, “**The older will serve the younger.**” 13 As it is written, “Jacob I loved, but Esau I hated.”

Isaac was fighting against God's decree. Isaac might have said – but wait, Jacob is just as manipulative and cunning as Esau! That's what grace is all about.

But Jacob decides to work his own plan in his family, and go contrary to Scripture. And it is disastrous.

Application: When we choose to trust in ourselves and to lean on our own understanding, rather than being ruled by Scripture, we are placing ourselves right where Isaac is here. When you decide to make decision based on your whims instead of Scripture, it is devastating.

Examples:

- your children's friends
- their choice of a college
- your children's marriage partner
- a job choice – the Lord's day, etc.

When you do not lead your family according to Scripture and you let the world yourself choose according to desires and circumstances, there is a price to pay!

B. We must avoid fleshly **focus**.

Ephesians 6:1–4 (ESV) — “Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and **instruction of the Lord.**”

It's the father's responsibility to raise the children in the Lord.

Genesis 25:28 (ESV) — “Isaac loved Esau because he ate of his game, but Rebekah loved Jacob.”

Genesis 27:4 (ESV) — “prepare for me delicious food, such as I love, and bring it to me so that I may eat, that my soul may bless you before I die.”

Instead of warning his son, he’s concerned about feeding his own stomach. His focus is on the skill that his son has in hunting and preparing game.

Romans 8:5–8 (ESV) — “For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit set their minds on the things of the Spirit. 6 For to set the mind on the flesh is death, but to set the mind on the Spirit is life and peace. 7 For the mind that is set on the flesh is hostile to God, for it does not submit to God’s law; indeed, it cannot. 8 Those who are in the flesh cannot please God.”

Application: you had better pay strict attention to TV, media, friends, and influences in your life, because at all times you and your children are being influenced. This goes even for our relationships in the church. The wheat and the tares abide together until the harvest. The only one you can entrust your self and your children to completely is THE LORD!!

According to Deut. 6, parents need to be having a godly influence on their children at all times. This means if you entrust them to someone else, they’d better be trustworthy.

Look at how God tells Moses to instruct the children of Israel in **Deuteronomy 6:6–9** (ESV) — “And these words that I command you today shall be on your heart. 7 You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise. 8 You shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. 9 You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates.”

Carnal Attitudes from Dad can bring serious conflict into the home.

II. Contentious wives and mothers

- A. Mothers can fail to **trust** the Lord. Genesis 27:5–7 (ESV) — “Now Rebekah was listening when Isaac spoke to his son Esau. So when Esau went to the field to hunt for game and bring it, 6 Rebekah said to her son Jacob, “I heard your **father** speak to your brother Esau, 7 ‘Bring me game and prepare for me delicious food, that I may eat it and bless you before the **LORD** before I die.’”

As Rebekah was awaiting her husband’s death, she is still conniving to get her way. She wants Jacob to be blessed, and by the way, that is God’s promise. The older would serve the younger. But she does not trust God.

Proverbs 3:5–6 (ESV) — “Trust in the LORD with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding. 6 In all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make straight your paths.”

B. Mothers can fail to **strengthen** their husbands. Genesis 27:5-7; 1 Pet. 3:1-2.

1 Peter 3:1–2 (ESV) — “Likewise, wives, be subject to your own husbands, so that even if some do not obey the word, they may be won without a word by the conduct of their wives, 2 when they see your respectful and pure conduct.” Even if a husband is disobedient to God’s Word or even lost, the wife is to live godly before God and her husband. Instead Rebekah joined into Isaac’s sin.

C. Mothers can fail to **submit** to her husbands and to God, Genesis 27:8–13 (ESV) — Rebekah says to Jacob: “Now therefore, my son, obey my voice as I command you. 9 Go to the flock and bring me two good young goats, so that I may prepare from them delicious food for your father, such as he loves. 10 And you shall bring it to your father to eat, so that he may bless you before he dies.” 11 But Jacob said to Rebekah his mother, “Behold, my brother Esau is a hairy man, and I am a smooth man. 12 Perhaps my father will feel me, and I shall seem to be mocking him and bring a curse upon myself and not a blessing.” 13 His mother said to him, **“Let your curse be on me, my son; only obey my voice, and go, bring them to me.”**

Here we see Rebekah’s plan unfolded to usurp her husband’s authority and to gain the blessing for her favorite son.

Rebekah has a just cause. She has had the word of God in her own ears tell her that Jacob is to be the son of blessing. But she apparently never approaches God. She never takes this to Him in prayer. She never goes the way of faith. Instead, she takes matters into her own hands: Lord, I can fix this is Rebekah’s response. She becomes the mastermind of deceit in trying to help God Almighty accomplish His plan.

Rebekah’s integrity problem

Rebekah has an integrity problem here. She does not trust God to carry out His plan. Rebekah’s fundamental problem is spiritual. She lacks faith in the justice and sovereignty of God. And so, she takes her cause into her own hands, thinking that she will be able to fix it better than almighty God.

Application: We can go about the right thing in the wrong way as Christians. We want to reach the world, but we cannot become like the world to reach them. There are churches in the area that are using worldly means to reach people. They bring in entertainment and make everything cool and hip and as close to the fad and fashion of the MTV culture as possible. What ends up happening is these churches entertain the sheep instead of feeding the goats. Now it is God’s will for those who are reached to be saved, that is not in question. But God doesn’t need our worldly methods and manipulation.

The Gospel found in the Sufficient Word of God is all we need! **Romans 1:16** (ESV) — “For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek.”

Right thing in Wrong way - Application: church

Churches ought not to be like the world. If I want what is in most churches, I can go to a rock concert. Could these churches exist without their technology and media? I’m not against it, but the church ought not to be built upon it. A church ought to be able to meet in the woods and have nothing but the love of Christ.

Right thing in Wrong way - Application: home

In our home, we want to teach our children the Word of God. Some moms and dads think if they bring their kids to church, that’s enough for them to come to know Christ. It often is not. It is Dad’s responsibility to raise the children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. If Dad and mom’s heart is not connected to the children, you will almost always lose the children to the world or to their friends.

III. Conniving brothers and sisters

- A. They employ lies. Genesis 27:14–19 (ESV) — 14 “So he [Jacob] went and took them and brought them to his mother, and his mother prepared delicious food, such as his father loved. 15 Then Rebekah took the best garments of Esau her older son, which were with her in the house, and put them on Jacob her younger son. 16 And the skins of the young goats she put on his hands and on the smooth part of his neck. 17 And she put the delicious food and the bread, which she had prepared, into the hand of her son Jacob. 18 So he went in to his father and said, “My father.” And he said, “Here I am. Who are you, my son?” 19 Jacob said to his father, “I am Esau your firstborn. I have done as you told me; now sit up and eat of my game, that your soul may bless me.”
- B. They use spiritual **smoke screens**. Genesis 27:20, “But Isaac said to his son, “How is it that you have found it so quickly, my son?” He answered, “Because the LORD your God granted me success.”

IV. Unconverted sons and daughters

- A. Unconverted children seek **immediate gratification**.

Genesis 27:21–29 (ESV) — “Then Isaac said to Jacob, “Please come near, that I may feel you, my son, to know whether you are really my son Esau or not.” 22 So Jacob went near to Isaac his father, who felt him and said, “The voice is Jacob’s voice, but the hands are the hands of Esau.” 23 And he did not recognize him, because his hands were hairy like his brother Esau’s hands. So he blessed him. 24 He said, “Are you really my son Esau?” He answered, “I am.” 25 Then he said,

“Bring it near to me, that I may eat of my son’s game and bless you.” So he brought it near to him, and he ate; and he brought him wine, and he drank. 26 Then his father Isaac said to him, “Come near and kiss me, my son.” 27 So he came near and kissed him. And Isaac smelled the smell of his garments and blessed him and said, “See, the smell of my son is as the smell of a field that the LORD has blessed! 28 May God give you of the dew of heaven and of the fatness of the earth and plenty of grain and wine. 29 Let peoples serve you, and nations bow down to you. Be lord over your brothers, and may your mother’s sons bow down to you. Cursed be everyone who curses you, and blessed be everyone who blesses you!”

Jacob wanted the blessing and the land. Esau wanted the blessing and the inheritance. God’s blessing was that Jacob was to be the promised seed through faith. It wasn’t until Genesis 32 when Jacob fled from Esau and wrestled with God at Bethel that Jacob was likely converted. Until then Jacob was scheming and conniving and heel snatching to get his way.

B. They dishonor their parents, vs. 30-33

Genesis 27::30-33 (ESV) — “As soon as Isaac had finished blessing Jacob, when Jacob had scarcely gone out from the presence of Isaac his father, Esau his brother came in from his hunting. 31 He also prepared delicious food and brought it to his father. And he said to his father, “Let my father arise and eat of his son’s game, that you may bless me.” 32 His father Isaac said to him, “Who are you?” He answered, “I am your son, your firstborn, Esau.” 33 Then Isaac trembled very violently and said, “Who was it then that hunted game and brought it to me, and I ate it all before you came, and I have blessed him? Yes, and he shall be blessed.”

C. They hate the consequences more than the sin.

Genesis 27:34–38 (ESV) — “As soon as Esau heard the words of his father, he cried out with an exceedingly great and bitter cry and said to his father, “Bless me, even me also, O my father!” 35 But he said, “Your brother came deceitfully, and he has taken away your blessing.” 36 Esau said, “Is he not rightly named Jacob? For he has cheated me these two times. He took away my birthright, and behold, now he has taken away my blessing.” Then he said, “Have you not reserved a blessing for me?” 37 Isaac answered and said to Esau, “Behold, I have made him lord over you, and all his brothers I have given to him for servants, and with grain and wine I have sustained him. What then can I do for you, my son?” 38 Esau said to his father, “Have you but one blessing, my father? Bless me, even me also, O my father.” And Esau lifted up his voice and wept.”

Hebrews 12:16–17 (ESV) — “that no one is sexually immoral or unholy like Esau, who sold his birthright for a single meal. 17 For you know that afterward, when he desired to inherit the blessing, he was rejected, for he found no chance to repent, though he sought it with tears.”

D. They seek the **material** over the spiritual. Both Jacob and Esau sought the material over the spiritual. Be careful to remember the words of Jesus in John 3:5 (ESV) “Jesus answered, “Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God. 6 That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.7 Do not marvel that I said to you, ‘You must be born again.’””

- **Romans 8:7**, “For the mind that is set on the flesh is hostile to God, for it does not submit to God’s law; indeed, it cannot.”
- **1 Corinthians 2:14**, “The natural person does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are folly to him, and he is not able to understand them because they are spiritually discerned.”

E. They don’t mind **hurting** their families. **Genesis 26:34–35** (ESV) — “When Esau was forty years old, he took Judith the daughter of Beeri the Hittite to be his wife, and Basemath the daughter of Elon the Hittite, 35 and they made life bitter for Isaac and Rebekah.”

Lost children cause great heartache for parents. **Proverbs 10:1**, “A wise son maketh a glad father: but a foolish son is the heaviness of his mother.”

What is the answer? **Proverbs 22:6**, “Train up a child in the way he should go; even when he is old he will not depart from it.”

V. Real help for conflict at home (Ephesians 5:22-6:4)

Ephesians 5:22–6:4 (ESV) — “Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord. 23 For the husband is the head of the wife even as Christ is the head of the church, his body, and is himself its Savior. 24 Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit in everything to their husbands. 25 Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her, 26 that he might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, 27 so that he might present the church to himself in splendor, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, that she might be holy and without blemish. 28 In the same way husbands should love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. 29 For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as Christ does the church, 30 because we are members of his body. 31 “Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh.” 32 This mystery is profound, and I am saying that it refers to Christ and the church. 33 However, let each one of you love his wife as himself, and let the wife see that she respects her husband. 1 Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. 2 “Honor your father and mother” (this is the first commandment with a promise), 3 “that it may go well with you and that you may live long in the land.” 4 Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord.”

- A. Wives submit.
- B. Husbands love.
- C. Children obey.
- D. Parents pay attention.

Conclusion: Much conflict in the home is caused because mom and dad are not committed to the Scriptures as they ought to be.