

# 4

## Anticipating God's Blessing

*Isaac*

*Hebrews 11:17-20;  
Genesis 27:1-40*

Our kids pick up a lot from us. Sometimes that makes us proud—like when they imitate our perseverance and get all A's on their report card or when they inherit our work ethic and athleticism and kick the winning goal in soccer. At other times we are a little embarrassed by our influence—like when my son shouted at another driver from his car seat in the back: “Watch out, you idiot!” Where did he learn that? Our children often become very much like us—for good or not so good.

**GROUP DISCUSSION.** Tell the group a story about a time when you caught yourself acting or talking like one of your parents.

**PERSONAL REFLECTION.** What good traits in your life would you trace to the influence of your parents? What areas of struggle can you link to their example?

Isaac lived in the shadow of his famous father, Abraham. His birth was the beginning of the fulfillment of God's promises to Abraham, but Isaac seems to fade into the background in the presence of his faith-filled father. The truth, though, is that Isaac was a man of faith too, as the writer of Hebrews reminds us. *Read Hebrews 11:17-20.*

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1. What do we learn about Isaac in these verses?

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2. Isaac's name first appears in Hebrews 11 in the context of God's command to Abraham to sacrifice him. What do you think Isaac would have remembered most from this experience of sacrifice and rescue as he grew into adulthood?

How do you think those memories would have affected his relationship with God?

*Read Genesis 27:1-40.*

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3. In time, Isaac had sons of his own, Jacob and Esau. How would you describe these twin brothers based on Genesis 27?

4. In the culture of Isaac's day, the father's blessing—a promise of prosperity and the inheritance of prominence over the family—was given to the firstborn son. Yet in Genesis 25:23, when Isaac's wife, Rebekah, became pregnant with Esau and Jacob, God told her that "the older [son] will serve the younger." Why do you think Isaac still planned to give Esau his blessing?

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5. What does Jacob and Rebekah's deception reveal about their relationship with and trust in God for the future?

Where is your level of trust in God for the future compared to theirs?

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6. Does Jacob's success in deceiving Isaac demonstrate God's approval of his actions? Why or why not?

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7. The author of Hebrews says that Isaac acted "by faith" when he blessed Jacob and Esau in regard to their future (11:20). How was Isaac's response to this deception an act of faith?

8. Whose blessing or approval means the most to you and why?

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9. Where have you seen God's blessing and grace in your own life?

Where are you experiencing great disappointment?

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10. What can you learn from this account that will increase your level of active faith in God?

*Ask God to help you trust him fully for your future, and for the futures of those you love.*

### **Now or Later**

Think about the relationships within your own family. Are there deceptions and wounds that you have been responsible for? Have you been the wounded one? How can you begin the process of healing? Determine to take one step toward reconciliation or restoration this week as an act of faith in God's power and grace.