

# A Study in Genesis: Discord and Grace

---

## Scripture Focus: Genesis 25:19-28

Isaac married Rebekah when he was 40 years old and of course he is concerned about descendants. He prays for Rebekah to conceive, after a period of barrenness, and she does - yet there is a struggle within her. It is so great that she asks the question, *"If it is to be this way, why do I live?"* (v. 22) God answers her and it sounds anything but reassuring. *"Two nations are in your womb, and two peoples born of you shall be divided; the one shall be stronger than the other, the elder shall serve the younger."* (v. 23)

- What thoughts do you think Rebekah might have had given the information in the response God gives to her question?
- Of the four points contained within God's answer to Rebekah, which of them might have been the hardest to believe or accept?
- Is there any help in this text for dealing with the reality of discord in the present day, whether in our own family, community, or nation? We too might ask, "If it has to be this way, where does the motivation come from to carry on?"
- Where does God's grace become evident in this story? Does it help us see grace in our own story?

Reading Genesis 25:27-28, we are made aware of the seemingly unapologetic favoritism of Isaac and Rebekah toward their sons. Isaac loved Esau, Rebekah loved Jacob. Abraham's reason for his preference is given, Rebekah's is not. It has been noted that the book of Genesis does not record a single conversation or encounter between Esau and Rebekah.

- What do you make of such favoritism? While it might be understandable to a degree, is it ever permissible?
- How do we make certain that love promotes grace and harmony rather than discord and division?
- Might the answer be in always keeping before us *hesed*, the steadfast love of God toward us? Was or is that love ever preferential, as some might claim? "God so loved ...." Fill in the blank from John 3:16.