

Determined Faith

BLESSINGS & CURSES

World Outreach Church
Sermon Discussion Guide
Sunday Sermon: **February 05, 2023**



Paul speaks very directly in 1 Corinthians 9:24, declaring that we need to run a race as if we **intend** to get the prize. Now, that takes consistent determination and focus. But do you know you can be on the “race team” without having your heart in it? Well, ultimately, we want to be included on the team—but when no one else is watching, we have other priorities and plans. You see, Paul is really talking to us about what it means in our lifestyle to be a Christ-follower. But today, the heart condition of the Church is troubling, and as Christ-followers, we need to yield our self-determination and consistently choose God’s best. Pursuing continuous and persistent growth in the Lord is key ...

I. PRINCIPLES NEEDED TO “WIN THE PRIZE”

1 Corinthians 9:24

*Do you not know that in a race all the runners run, but only one gets the prize? **Run in such a way as to get the prize.***

- A. Continually Choosing God’s Best
- B. Establish Satisfaction in the Lord
- C. The Will to Keep Moving

1. What do you think it means to live a life focused on “running in such a way as to get the prize?”

II. ABRAHAM, ISAAC & JACOB

Genesis 12:1–4 ¹ *The Lord had said to Abram, “Leave your country, your people and your father’s household and go to the land I will show you.”* ² *“I will make you into a great nation and I will bless you; I will make your name great, and you will be a blessing. ³ I will bless those who bless you, and whoever curses you I will curse; and all peoples on earth will be blessed through you.”* ⁴ *So Abram left, as the Lord had told him; and Lot went with him. Abram was seventy-five years old when he set out from Haran.*

Blessings & Curses

- ❖ **Blessings** = Outcomes which exceed personal effort or ability
- ❖ **Curses** = Adversaries of unusual strength and perseverance

Genesis 26:1–6 ¹ *Now there was a famine in the land—besides the earlier famine of Abraham’s time—and Isaac went to Abimelech king of the Philistines in Gerar.* ² *The Lord appeared to Isaac and said, “Do not go down to Egypt; live in the land where I tell you to live. ³ Stay in this land for a while, and **I will be with you and will bless you.** For to you and your descendants I will give all these lands and will confirm the oath I swore to your father Abraham. ⁴ I will make your descendants as numerous as the stars in the sky and will give them all these lands, and through your offspring all nations on earth will be blessed, ⁵ because Abraham obeyed me and kept my requirements, my commands, my decrees and my laws.”* ⁶ *So Isaac stayed in Gerar.*

Genesis 26:2–5 ² *The Lord appeared to Isaac and said, “Do not go down to Egypt; live in the land where I tell you to live. ³ Stay in this land for a while, and **I will be with you and will bless you.** For **to you and your descendants** I will give all these lands and will confirm the oath I swore to your father Abraham. ⁴ I will make your descendants as numerous as the stars in the sky and will give them all these lands, and through your offspring all nations on earth will be blessed, ⁵ because Abraham obeyed me and kept my requirements, my commands, my decrees and my laws.”*

Genesis 26:12–16 ¹² *Isaac planted crops in that land and the same year reaped a hundredfold, because the Lord blessed him. ¹³ The man became rich, and his wealth continued to grow until he became very wealthy. ¹⁴ He had so many flocks and herds and servants that the Philistines envied him. ¹⁵ So all the wells that his father’s servants had dug in the time of his father Abraham, the Philistines stopped up, filling them with earth. ¹⁶ Then Abimelech said to Isaac, “Move away from us; you have become too powerful for us.”*

Genesis 26:17–25 ¹⁷ *So Isaac moved away from there and encamped in the Valley of Gerar and settled there. ¹⁸ Isaac reopened the wells that had been dug in the time of his father Abraham, which the Philistines had stopped up after Abraham died, and he gave them the same names his father had given them. . . . ²³ From there he went up to Beersheba. ²⁴ That night the Lord appeared to him and said, “I am the God of your father Abraham. Do not be afraid, for I am with you; **I will bless you** and will increase the number of your descendants for the sake of my servant Abraham.” ²⁵ Isaac built an altar there and called on the name of the Lord. There he pitched his tent, and there his servants dug a well.*

2. **When was a time you sacrificed something that seemed very important in order to cooperate with the Lord? What was the result?**
3. **Blessings and curses tend to pass from generation to generation. What impact has this had on your own life?**
4. **How can you intentionally align yourself with God's purposes in order to extend those principles and blessings to future generations?**

An Unexpected Conclusion

Genesis 26:34–27:4 ³⁴ When Esau was forty years old, he married Judith daughter of Beeri the Hittite, and also Basemath daughter of Elon the Hittite. ³⁵ They were a source of grief to Isaac and Rebekah. ¹ When Isaac was old and his eyes were so weak that he could no longer see, he called for Esau his older son and said to him, “My son.” “Here I am,” he answered. ² Isaac said, “I am now an old man and don’t know the day of my death. ³ Now then, get your weapons—your quiver and bow—and go out to the open country to hunt some wild game for me. ⁴ Prepare me the kind of tasty food I like and bring it to me to eat, so that I may give you my blessing before I die.”

Genesis 27:27–29 ²⁷ So he (Jacob) went to him and kissed him. **When Isaac caught the smell of his clothes, he blessed him and said, “Ah, the smell of my son is like the smell of a field that the Lord has blessed.**

²⁸ May God give you of heaven’s dew and of earth’s richness— an abundance of grain and new wine. ²⁹ May nations serve you and peoples bow down to you. Be lord over your brothers, and may the sons of your mother bow down to you. May those who curse you be cursed and those who bless you be blessed.”

Genesis 27:30–37 ³⁰ After Isaac finished blessing him and Jacob had scarcely left his father’s presence, his brother Esau came in from hunting. ³¹ He too prepared some tasty food and brought it to his father. Then he said to him, “My father, sit up and eat some of my game, so that you may give me your blessing.” ³² His father Isaac asked him, “Who are you?” “I am your son,” he answered, “your firstborn, Esau.” ³³ Isaac trembled violently and said, “Who was it, then, that hunted game and brought it to me? I ate it just before you came and I blessed him—and indeed he will be blessed!”

³⁴ **When Esau heard his father’s words, he burst out with a loud and bitter cry and said to his father, “Bless me—me too, my father!”** ³⁵ **But he said, “Your brother came deceitfully and took your blessing.”** ³⁶ Esau said, “Isn’t he rightly named Jacob? He has deceived me these two times: He took my birthright, and now he’s taken my blessing!” Then he asked, “Haven’t you reserved any blessing for me?” ³⁷ Isaac answered Esau, “I have made him lord over you and have made all his relatives his servants, and I have sustained him with grain and new wine. So what can I possibly do for you, my son?”

Our Story

- ❖ WOC was birthed from the sacrifices of God’s people.
- ❖ We have repeatedly responded with faith and sacrifice.
- ❖ God has honored each step and brought fruitfulness.

We have a God-invitation before us now!

5. **Did your decision to follow Jesus require you to leave anything behind? How has He rewarded your faithfulness to Him?**

PRAYER

(Day 2 prayer from *the Family Prayer Guide for the Sanctuary of Scripture: the Walk Way*)

Lord, increase my awareness of the promptings of Your Spirit so I can obey and confidently step out in faith. Your thoughts and ways are higher than mine. I will trust Your plans, for they bring hope and healing. In Jesus’ name, amen.