

Struggle and blessing

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Recently, I learned that a young couple I know had filed for divorce after 18 months of marriage. By my calculations, they spent more time planning the wedding than being married. Like many newlyweds, Lauren and Jeff hit some snags around finances. In the end, they decided it was easier to split up than to hold on and work through a solution. When asked if there was a chance of reconciliation, Lauren said, "I'm tired of struggling. I just give up." Yet they'd only struggled for 18 months!

When I was a newlywed, I met a couple who were celebrating their 70th wedding anniversary. Someone asked them what the secret was to staying happily married for 70 years, and the wife said, "Well, it wasn't all happy. There were some bad years." It was the phrase "bad years" that caught my attention. After a bad week, I would start to worry that my marriage to Neil was on the rocks. How did you get through bad years?

The lesson this week's passage from Genesis offers is the power of just holding on. Don't let go--there is surely a blessing in your future.

There's also the issue of the limp. I don't think there is such a thing as an unencumbered blessing. Every blessing from God comes at a price--something you give up, something you must endure, something you must do. The trick is to embrace the blessing and the cost as gifts from God.

When my son was six years old, we visited friends who had an indoor pool. We let Walter swim in his underwear, even though it meant the ride home was damp and uncomfortable. That night when saying his prayers he said, "Thank you God for the wet underwear and the pool that made them wet." I'll bet that's how Jacob felt about that limp.