

Icebreaker:

Do you think Rebekah told her son Jacob about what the Lord had told her? (See Genesis 25:23 from last week's scripture)

Questions:

1. Observing Jacob and Esau's family, have you seen such dysfunctions in other families? Have you experienced such tensions in your own nuclear family? If so, what were/are these like?
2. What does it tell us about God that he would use a dysfunctional family like this?
3. Do you think Esau was truly famished, about to die? Why or why not? How do his words characterize him?
4. Esau was willing to sell his future blessing (his birthright) in order to feed his immediate hunger. Are there things you do to feed an immediate hunger rather than waiting for a better future?
5. Which twin are you more like? Are you pleased by that likeness? Why or why not?
6. From this incident in Genesis 25, what is the Lord saying to you? What, if anything, are you to do?

Prayer:

As you pray for one another, please pray for the following needs in our church family:

prayer requests

> Prayers of healing for Sue Armstrong, Pam Bierwagen, and Ken Miller.

Info for your group:

> Home Group Leader Meeting | Sunday, February 25 | Noon

Leader's notes:

Jacob's story can be a hard one to read and study as he is not often a likable guy. He's a schemer. His family takes sides and his mother works with him against Esau. One thing that is so intriguing about God's Word is that it includes God's people as flawed sinners. Yet God can use anyone, truly anyone, to accomplish his purposes. We learn again this week about human nature, life, and God from the story of Jacob and Esau.

[Question 1] Be bold in talking about your own family. While you do, be careful to not put people down or speak in a way that would hurt someone. It is good to be transparent about yourself and your family, but also to be appropriately transparent in what you choose to share. Share in such a way that you and your group can learn from your story.

[Question 2] God can, and will, use anyone to accomplish his plan. It is good that not all Bible characters are noble and heroic. If they were, we would feel we could never measure up. So often they are like us – we see their worries, their weaknesses, and how they cry out to God for help. We can do the same in our weakness.

[Question 3] Kids often say after playing outside, "I'm starving!" Esau was probably not truly so famished that he was about to die. More likely we see his impulsive nature here. He wanted something right now to fulfill his hunger. He didn't care, or didn't think about, that it might cost him his future. The story seems to tell us more about Esau's character flaws than the idea that he was dying of hunger.

[Question 4] A birthright was a special honor to the firstborn son that meant a double portion of the inheritance and the leadership of the family in the future. Later would come the father's blessing to confirm this birthright. Like Esau, we can give in to immediate hunger today. It can be all kinds of hungers, such as eating pizza and ice cream rather than waiting to stay on that diet and get healthy. It can mean lying on the couch rather than exercising. It can mean being lazy or comfortable rather than doing what we think we should do or what God is telling us to do. What are your examples?

[Question 5] Esau was a skillful hunter, a man of the fields. Jacob was a quiet man, living amongst the tents. Jacob stayed around his mother, while Esau was favored by his father. Esau was strong and impulsive while Jacob was quieter and a thinker (a schemer). God chose Jacob to carry on his the line of Abraham and the nation of Israel. Which one are you more like? Is that good?

[Question 6] Genesis was written a long time ago to the people of Israel to tell them their story in a certain setting and context – to a nomadic people living in tents who would be settle in a Promised Land to be God's people. But the Bible is also God's Word for us today. Through the Holy Spirit, God brings alive the scripture to speak to us today – often in different ways depending on our context and season of life. What does this passage from God's Word say to you? What will you do about it?