

Icebreaker:

Have you played a trick or practical joke on someone, or has someone played a trick on you pretending to be someone else?

Questions:

1. Rebekah had been told in Genesis 25 that the older would serve the younger. Yet she and her son Jacob are deceptive to get the father's blessing. What does this reveal about their character and their trust in God?
2. How would you describe this family of four: as "religious"? as "Godly"? as "dysfunctional"? as "sinful"? What do you think was our Creator's original intent for the family? What's happened?
3. In Genesis 27:30-40, we see an amazing scene. Can you picture that scene? When Esau found that Jacob had stolen his father's blessing, he was very upset. Have you ever held a grudge against someone or been resentful of their actions? Were you able to forgive them?
4. In verses 34-40, Esau cried and wept aloud. In your imagination, how does Esau appear? With what words did Isaac "bless" Esau? What is telling about this "prediction"? Was Isaac's a blessing or a curse? Why do you think so?
5. How do you deal with someone taking advantage of you? What is the best, most Godly way, to handle those situations?
6. Whose blessing or approval is, or has been, most important to you? Why? Is there someone whose blessing you always wanted, but never received?
7. Who can you impact with a "blessing"? How would you plan to do so?
8. What from this passage is a "word of the Lord 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, Ken Miller, and Janet Winebar, sister of Nancy Baker.

Info for your group:

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

Leader's notes:

One reader of this passage says it is "powerful, painful, poignant." Although we like things to go smoothly in our families, often they don't. We can choose our friends, but we can't choose our families. Yet, God chose to use this dysfunctional family in his story of the nation of Israel. God chose to include their sad story in his Word. That says something about God and how he cares for each family despite our flaws and will use our families if we are available and open to be used.

[Question 1] Perhaps Rebekah did not trust that God would make it happen for Esau to serve Jacob – or perhaps she felt it was her job to make it happen with Jacob. Either way, the mother and younger son secretly plan to trick and deceive the older son and the father. It certainly reveals some character flaws of dishonesty and deceit.

[Question 2] God's original intent for marriage was for it to be a symbol of God's relationship to his people. It involved submission and sacrifice by both husband and wife. The family is an institution God designed to help the world grow and follow him – with parents passing down God's love to children (Deuteronomy 6:1-7). Yet in deception, living for the moment, and favoritism this family has nearly imploded. Our families are full of sinners, too. We can keep turning to God for his help, guidance, and wisdom for our families.

[Question 3] If you have time, re-read Genesis 27:30-40 to answer questions 3 and 4. Ask your group to picture the scene in their minds. It is powerful. Have you been able to forgive those, maybe even in your family, who have hurt you?

[Question 4] Esau is furious, and cries aloud during this sad scene. In his blessing, Esau will receive land, but it will not be as good as Jacob's. His line will start another nation, Edom, which will be an enemy to Israel. His blessing is a true prediction and filled with sadness at the loss of relationship with his brother.

[Question 5] This is a question for you to figure out together. The New Testament tells us to speak the truth in love (Ephesians 4:15) as we become more mature in Christ. When you have been wronged it is good to be patient, think about your response, how it will affect you and others, and then to respond with truth and grace.

[Question 6] Often the blessing we most seek is from a parent. Did you wish for and receive the blessing of your Mother or Father? Do you feel a spouse or a close friend blesses you? These can be hard questions. Respond graciously with your group if these are difficult answers.

[Question 7] Certainly we can bless our own children. Perhaps the most powerful blessings we can give are to those who look up to us or are close to us – co-workers, friends, younger siblings, relationships where you have authority. Think of opportunities you have to make appropriate blessings.

[Question 8] The Bible is written for a specific place and time but is also living and active for us today. Let God's Word speak to you – and be willing to discuss that with your group as God leads you.