

A DECEIVER

GENESIS 27:18-30

(Prepared by Gene Thompson using LifeWay's ETB materials.)

1. How many of you remember the song by Frank Sinatra titled "I Did It My Way"?
2. What is the gist of the song? (He had lived his whole life doing things his way. One phrase says "I planned each charted course, each careful step along the byway. And more, much more than this, I did it my way.")
3. Have you ever taken matters in your own hands and did it your way?
4. What happens in our spiritual lives when we try to do it our way?
5. What are some character flaws that hold us back from reaching our potential? (Selfishness; pride; deceit; etc.)

As we will see in today's text, deceit is an egregious sin and will always come with consequences. Nevertheless, God is able to accomplish His purposes through flawed—and even deceitful—people.

6. Can you name some people God has used for His kingdom that weren't flawed? (The only person without flaws is Jesus!)
7. How should knowing that God is able to accomplish His purposes through flawed people impact us? (We should be encouraged because He can use us!)

Since the events in last week's study Rebekah has conceived twins by Isaac. They were at "war" with each other, even in the womb. Esau was the first to be born and Jacob came out holding Esau's heel. Esau was Isaac's favorite and was very hairy and very much an outdoorsman. Jacob was Rebekah's favorite and was a "Mama's boy." We might call him a sissy today.

Isaac was getting old and was virtually blind. He wanted to give Esau the Family Blessing before he died. Rebekah overheard Isaac talking to Esau and devised a scheme to have the blessing given to Jacob.

It is important to note that the "Birthright" and "The Blessing" were two distinct things. The "Birthright" had to do with physical, material, and financial aspects while "The Blessing" had a more spiritual aspect to it. Esau sold his Birthright for a single meal—see Gen. 25:27-34 and Heb. 12:16. (Tell how Isaac wanted Esau to bring him a meal of wild game and he would then give him the blessing. Rebekah prepared a meal and Jacob took it into his father and deceived him into giving him the blessing meant for Esau.)

TRAP SET! Read Genesis 27:18-20

Isaac sensed something wasn't quite right and questioned Jacob four times. With each question Jacob could have revealed his true identity, but each time he answered with a lie.

1. What did Jacob lie about? (His identity, the meal, God's help, and his appearance.)
Notice Jacob did not say "The Lord my God made it happen." He said, "the Lord your God." The voice claimed to be Esau, but the sounds and circumstances indicated he was Jacob.
2. How many times can you be caught in a lie before people lose their trust in you?
To look at this deception and think it was God's will for it to happen this way is to limit God and think that God needs our help to bring about His desired outcome! God never uses lies and deception to accomplish His will! So often we want our Bible heroes to be perfect, especially those whom God has chosen as His leaders. But the Bible constantly reminds us that God uses imperfect people.
3. Was Jacob more concerned with deceiving his father or getting caught?
4. How is that similar to the way people act today?
5. How do we try to fool others to get a blessing today? (We pretend to be someone we aren't.)
6. How do we try to include God in our schemes? (Once again, we pretend to be holier than we really are. We make people think we read our Bible more and pray more than we actually do. And other things.)

DECEPTION CARRIED OUT! Genesis 27:21-27

1. In what ways did Jacob use his father's senses to deceive him? (Isaac heard, tasted, touched, and smelled what he was looking for—Esau. Jacob was wearing Esau's clothes.)

Our senses are not always reliable. The only trustworthy confirmation is God's Word and the prompting of His Spirit.

2. How did Isaac's and Rebekah's favoritism of their sons affect their family? (It caused deep division between each other and their sons.)
3. When has a family member fooled you and how did that make you feel?
4. When is it healthy to remain skeptical about a person's claims? (When they have proven themselves not trustworthy in the past.)

Unaware that he had been deceived, Isaac continued the blessing he had started in verse 23. However, he blessed the wrong son. Unhealthy favoritism set Isaac up for failure and can do the same in our lives.

BLESSING GRANTED! Read Genesis 27:28-30

1. What are the characteristics of Isaac's blessing? (Prosperity, Power, Prominence and Protection.) Isaac blessed Jacob, making him master over his relatives and repeating part of the covenant issued by Yahweh to Abraham. See Gen. 12:1-3. The son who received this blessing would become the heir of the covenant that one day would see the arrival of the Messiah, Jesus Christ.
2. What are the consequences of getting ahead of God? (Chaos, tragedy, missed blessings, broken fellowship with God and broken relationships with others.)
3. How could Jacob have handled the situation in a more God honoring way? (He could have resisted his mother's encouragement to deceive his father and waited for God's timing, just as David did in waiting for the kingship to be taken from Saul and given to him.)

We can trust God to bring His purpose to pass in every situation.

4. How can you express your gratitude to God for all the blessings He has brought in your life? (Live your life committed to doing His will. Share His blessings with others. After all we are blessed to be a blessing to others!)

Once the blessing was given it could not be revoked or altered. Echoing God's promise to Abraham, Isaac pronounced a blessing on those who blessed Jacob and a curse on those who tried to mistreat him.

5. What painful consequences did Jacob and Rebekah suffer as a result of their actions? (They were separated and there is no mention of Rebekah after this passage.)

Jacob had no more than closed the door that Esau entered with his meal to receive his blessing. When he and Isaac realized what had happened Esau cried out and Isaac "trembled uncontrollably." Esau vowed to kill Jacob after their father died. Like so many people say today, Esau said, "**I don't get mad, I get even!**" So, Rebekah sent Jacob off to her brother, Laban.

CHALLENGE!

1. Who was wrong in our text today? (Everybody! The parents played favorites; Esau had intermarried with the Canaanites and despised his birthright; and Jacob is a liar!)
2. What are some occasions in which God has accomplished His purposes in your life despite your sinful conduct?
3. In what areas of your life do you need to exercise integrity and trust in the Lord?
4. Are there some areas of your life where you are trying to get ahead of God's plan?

Trust and integrity go hand in hand. When we trust the Lord to handle our situations, we do not need to take matters into our own hands through lies and deception.