

TWO PEOPLES WILL COME FROM YOU

MAIN POINT.

Jealousy and **pride**
lead us to make
selfish decisions.



CHRIST CONNECTION

Isaac and his family proved themselves to be sinners by their selfish and self-centered actions. This is the natural way of humanity. But God was sovereignly orchestrating events and redeeming this family's sin to fulfill His promise to Abraham. God would still make Abraham into a great nation through Isaac and Jacob, which would ultimately lead to Jesus, who fulfilled humanity's need for salvation from sin.



DECEPTION

— LACK OF FAITH

This week, we're covering the passages and main points below. But we encourage you to read all of the content on the timeline as you prepare to teach.

Genesis 25

Genesis 28

JEALOUSY LEADS TO SIN

GENESIS 25:21-26

21 And Isaac prayed to the LORD for his wife, because she was barren. And the LORD granted his prayer, and Rebekah his wife conceived. 22 The children struggled together within her, and she said, "If it is thus, why is this happening to me?" So she went to inquire of the LORD. 23 And the LORD said to her, "Two nations are in your womb, and two peoples from within you shall be divided; the one shall be stronger than the other, the older shall serve the younger." 24 When her days to give birth were completed, behold, there were twins in her womb. 25 The first came out red, all his body like a hairy cloak, so they called his name Esau. 26 Afterward his brother came out with his hand holding Esau's heel, so his name was called Jacob. Isaac was sixty years old when she bore them.

SIN LEADS US TO DECEIVE OTHERS

GENESIS 25:27-34

27 When the boys grew up, Esau was a skillful hunter, a man of the field, while Jacob was a quiet man, dwelling in tents. 28 Isaac loved Esau because he ate of his game, but Rebekah loved Jacob. 29 Once when Jacob was cooking stew, Esau came in from the field, and he was exhausted. 30 And Esau said to Jacob, "Let me eat some of that red stew, for I am exhausted!" (Therefore his name was called Edom.) 31 Jacob said, "Sell me your birthright now." 32 Esau said, "I am about to die; of what use is a birthright to me?" 33 Jacob said, "Swear to me now." So he swore to him and sold his birthright to Jacob. 34 Then Jacob gave Esau bread and lentil stew, and he ate and drank and rose and went his way. Thus Esau despised his birthright.

GENESIS 27:6-10,18-19

6 Rebekah said to her son Jacob, "I heard your father speak to your brother Esau, 7 'Bring me game and prepare for me delicious food, that I may eat it and bless you before the LORD before I die.' 8 Now therefore, my son, obey my voice as I command you. 9 Go to the flock and bring me two good young goats, so that I may prepare from them delicious food for your father, such as he loves. 10 And you shall bring it to your father to eat, so that he may bless you before he dies." . . . 18 So he went in to his father and said, "My father." And he said, "Here I am. Who are you, my son?" 19 Jacob said to his father, "I am Esau your firstborn. I have done as you told me; now sit up and eat of my game, that your soul may bless me."

BEFORE YOU TEACH

MAIN POINT.

Leaders: Thank you for preparing to teach God's Word. As you do, may He teach you new and wonderful truths (Ps. 119:18).

Jealousy and pride lead us to make selfish decisions.

BIBLICAL COMMENTARY

JEALOUSY LEADS TO SIN

GENESIS 25:21

"Now we learn that Isaac was forty when the wedding took place but sixty when the twins were born. Like Abraham, Isaac struggled with the problem of bearing children. But unlike Abraham, he rested in God's promise until the Lord answered his prayer. The Bible emphasizes that the promised line of the Messiah came about only through God's intervention, not by human effort."¹

SIN LEADS US TO DECEIVE OTHERS

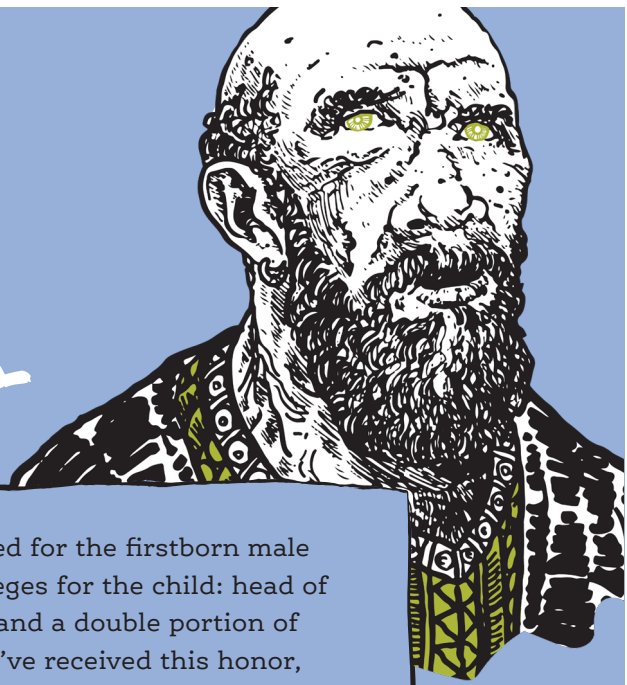
GENESIS 27:6-10

"On the surface it appeared that Rebekah and Jacob had won. They got what they went after. But they gained nothing from it that God would not have given to them anyway. Instead, they lost a good deal in the way that they went about things. Jacob would have to flee for his life from the land he thought he had won, and Rebekah would never see him again."²

GENESIS 27:6-10,18-19

"This makes all four participants in the present scene almost equally at fault. Isaac, whether he knew of the sale or not, knew God's birth-oracle of 25:23, yet set himself to use God's power to thwart it (see verse 29). This is the outlook of magic, not religion. Esau, in agreeing to the plan, broke his own oath of 25:33. Rebekah and Jacob, with a just cause, made no approach to God or man, no gesture of faith or love, and reaped the appropriate fruit of hatred."³

CONTEXT



In ancient Hebrew culture, the birthright was reserved for the firstborn male in each family. This birthright secured several privileges for the child: head of household status, inheritance of the father's estate, and a double portion of everything passed down. Esau, the older son, should've received this honor, but it was prophesied to Rebekah that the second son, Jacob, would rule over the old brother. This set up a situation for immediate feuding between the brothers, and it even led Rebekah and Isaac to choose favorites. The blessing, which the father thoughtfully crafted, could be given to any son, regardless of birth order. It usually revealed the father's last will, but it also was a means of revealing God's will for that child.

THEOLOGY CONNECTION

sin as selfishness

When we sin, we are acting out of a selfish attitude and mindset that assumes our action will lead us to more happiness than if we were to obey God. Because sin is manifested in our tendency to be **“curved inward” toward self**, it is the **opposite of love**. Love looks outward to place others before oneself, operating from the mindset that others are more important (Phil. 2:3). Where sin selfishly seeks **personal gratification and happiness**, love works for the joy of others in the hopes of making others happy in God.

LEADER'S PRAYER

LORD, THANK YOU FOR STILL USING US EVEN
WHEN WE MAKE SINFUL CHOICES. HELP US
TO TRUST YOU INSTEAD.



KICK STARTER

DID YOU KNOW?

Wellington Burt left his fortune of at least \$110 million to people he never even knew! No one knows exactly why, but Burt demanded that the funds should sit in an account until twenty-one years after the death of his last surviving grandchild!⁴

These optional activities are designed to help your students interact. You'll find a Discussion Activity and a Cultural Connection, which touches on a relevant topic in today's teen culture. Each group is different, so adapt these activities to fit your group's needs. The goal is for students to connect more to the lesson as they connect to the topic and to one another.

1

GREAT INHERITANCE

SUPPLIES LIST: NONE

Ask the following questions, allowing time for students to share responses.

- **WHAT IS SOMETHING YOU HOPE TO INHERIT ONE DAY?**
- **HOW WOULD YOU FEEL IF THIS WAS GIVEN TO SOMEONE ELSE INSTEAD?**
- **WHAT DO YOU HOPE TO PASS ON TO YOUR CHILDREN OR FAMILY MEMBERS?**

Inheritance is a big deal for some of us. You may stand to inherit money, land, a home, or a sentimental object. If that inheritance passed over you to someone else, you'd probably feel hurt, angry, and bitter. In today's lesson, we'll see a family struggle with this issue when God surprised them with a plan they didn't expect.

2

CULTURAL CONNECTION

Is lying really that big of a deal? What if deceiving someone leads to something good? Our culture downplays the seriousness of lying. In fact, it sometimes celebrates doing whatever it takes to get what we want out of life. It teaches us to categorize lies into big ones and small ones. It tells us that lies are harmless if they don't affect others. But Scripture shows us a very different picture: It presents us with many situations in which a lie always affects more people than the liar intends. The lie reaches into future generations, causing division and bitterness; and it divides families and kingdoms. Here's the truth about lies, big or small: They typically stem from a lack of faith or an unrepentant heart. We tell lies and deceive people because we think there's no other way to make something happen. And we speak untruth as a way to escape consequences, failing to realize that a lie only heaps more of them on our shoulders.

DISCUSSION

MAIN POINT.

JEALOUSY LEADS TO SIN READ GENESIS 25:21-26

Jealousy and pride
lead us to make
selfish decisions.

HOW DOES INHERITANCE USUALLY WORK? SHOULD IT BE EQUAL AMONG CHILDREN? EXPLAIN.

Share the context about birthrights and blessings. Even in today's culture, the oldest child is somewhat set apart. Sometimes the firstborn gets a choice at inheritance before other siblings. In our culture, though, parents often try to make inheritances equal among children, even setting up a will that outlines fair distribution. **When the inheritance isn't fair, it usually leads to jealousy, bitterness, and hurt feelings.**



THE NAME JACOB MEANS "HE GRASPS THE HEEL" OR "HE DECEIVES." WHAT DOES THIS SHOW YOU JACOB MIGHT DO?

Names were important in ancient culture: They reflected a person's character. **Jacob's name implied that he would struggle with deception, specifically with his brother.** He would constantly reach and strive for what Esau possessed, especially concerning his inheritance and his relationship with his parents.

WHAT DID VERSE 23 SAY WOULD HAPPEN? COULD THIS LEAD TO ANY ISSUES? EXPLAIN.

God doesn't always play by culture's rules; He isn't bound by them. **To accomplish His will, God sometimes does what's countercultural.** Genesis 25:23 says that the younger son would rule over the older son. This was unheard of in ancient culture. The oldest son had the privilege of the birthright: It was his right to inherit the role as head of household and even a double portion of the inheritance. In a sense, he would rule the family. But God had other plans for Isaac's sons. Jacob, the younger son, would rule instead. Of course, this would lead to feelings of jealousy, pride, and bitterness. Knowing this prophecy would even push Jacob to take matters into his own hands to ensure that he received what God promised. It would test the limits of brotherly love and lead to disagreement and separation.

SIN LEADS US TO DECEIVE OTHERS

READ GENESIS 25:27-34; 27:1-19

WHO WAS MOST AT FAULT IN THIS STORY? WHY?

Isaac potentially knew about the prophecy and chose to ignore it, giving Esau the birthright. Rebekah took matters in her own hands, or “played God” as some might call it. She manipulated her son to ensure the prophecy would come true. Esau was careless with his birthright and ignored its spiritual significance. Jacob blindly followed his mother and deceived his father and brother because “the end justified the means.” Clearly, they were all at fault. **Their actions revealed they didn’t have enough faith in God to do what He said He would do. When we don’t trust God, we take matters into our own hands as a way to control the outcome.**

WHEN HAVE YOU BEEN LIKE JACOB—WILLING TO JUSTIFY SIN AND DECEPTION TO GET WHAT YOU WANT INSTEAD OF LETTING GOD WORK?

When we allow jealousy, pride, or doubt to take root, it leads us to sin. And often, it leads us to deceive others to get what we want. This can look like bragging and puffing ourselves up to receive accolades we don’t deserve. It can even look like exaggerating a situation to gain support or sympathy. **We really can trust God to do what He says; we really can trust Him instead of grabbing for control.**



WHAT DOES THIS STORY SHOW US ABOUT THE TYPE OF PEOPLE GOD CHOOSES TO USE?

God doesn’t depend on us to accomplish His will; He is in total control. But in His kindness, God still chooses to use us. Isaac’s family is proof. **Despite their sin, God used them to continue the promise, which included the Messiah coming through their lineage.** God can redeem our poor choices and use us to further His kingdom.

WRAP-UP

HOW CAN YOU PRACTICE FAITH INSTEAD OF TAKING MATTERS INTO YOUR OWN HANDS?

It can be really difficult to trust the Lord when it doesn’t look like He’s moving—when it doesn’t look like He’s in control. We see unbelievers succeeding and seemingly flourishing, and it can often look like their way is better. Easier. So, we take matters in our own hands to achieve for ourselves what we feel God isn’t achieving for us. We attempt to force our way into beneficial situations. We force relationships that aren’t good for us so we won’t be lonely. We settle for the logical next step in life instead of seeking God’s plans for our future. And along the way, we potentially miss opportunities for our faith to grow. **When we release control and stop manipulating situations, we experience God’s faithfulness and witness His perfect sovereignty.**