

SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSON

Genesis

JACOB AND THE BIRTHRIGHT

Genesis 25:19-34

Elementary Lesson

Year One, Quarter One, Lesson Twelve

[0120]

AIM: to teach my students that they ought to want God's best for their lives

OBJECTS TO HAVE: A special gift that was passed down to you; or,
A piece of jewelry and a pocketknife
A piece of paper rolled up with a ribbon around it
A bowl of soup (you may want to role-play this story with two students, giving one the birthright, and the other the bowl of soup)
Your Bible

POINT OF CONTACT: (Teacher, the best illustration that you can use to make this point is a personal illustration. But if you have none, you can do it this way). All of us like to receive gifts, don't we? But some of the most precious gifts that you will ever receive will probably not be the ones that cost the most money. The gifts that will mean the most to you in your lifetime will be the ones that cause you to remember the person who gave the gifts to you. For example, many times a mom or a dad will give to their child something that is special to them, something that the child will keep for the rest of his life. And often, when that child gets older and has children, that special gift is **passed down** to his children.

Many times, a lady will **pass down** to her daughter a very special piece of jewelry, maybe something that she has had since she was a little girl.

Maybe a dad will **pass down** his son a knife that he has carried with him for many years.

These gifts may not be worth hundreds of dollars, but because they were **passed down** from your parents, you would not sell them for a million dollars. They are very special to you, and you are very happy to have them.

There is a story in the Bible about a dad who **passed down** a very special gift to his son. But something very strange happened with that gift. Let me tell you about it.

STORY: Last week I told you how God provided a bride for Isaac. That bride's name was Rebekah. Isaac and Rebekah were married soon after they met. After they were married, Rebekah gave birth to twin boys. How many of you know some kids who are twins—brothers and sisters who were born on the same day? Isaac's twins were named *Esau* and *Jacob*.

Now, even though twins are born on the same day, one of them is always born before the other. So one of them is always a tiny bit older than the other one. Since Esau was born before Jacob, Esau was a little bit older than Jacob. Esau and Jacob's father, Isaac, had a very special gift to **pass down** to one of his sons. That gift was called a *birthright*.

Do you remember all of those special promises that God had made to Abraham? Remember that God said, "I will make a great nation out of you; by you shall all the families of the earth be blessed; I will bless those who bless you, and I will curse you who curse you"? Remember all of those promises that I told you about several weeks ago? Those promises were given from God to Abraham. Then Abraham **passed them down** to his son Isaac. And now, Isaac was going to **pass them down** to one of his sons. And that special gift, those special promises, were called the **birthright**. It was a very special gift for a son to receive. We're going to let this piece of paper represent the birthright this morning.

But which son should receive that gift - - Esau or Jacob? Well, the birthright was customarily **passed down** to the oldest son, and since Esau was born moments before Jacob, Esau was to receive the birthright.

As Esau grew up, he knew that he would some day receive the birthright. Everybody around him knew that Esau would receive this special gift, the birthright.

This really bothered Jacob. Jacob wanted to do big things with his life. Jacob didn't want to settle for second-best. But he felt that he was missing out. He thought every day, "My brother Esau has the birthright that I want." It made

him mad that all Esau had done to get the birthright was to be born a few minutes before Jacob was born. What made Jacob even angrier was that Esau did not really seem to care about receiving the birthright. When someone would say, “Esau, you’re getting the birthright!” Esau would yawn and say, “Yes...that’s nice.” And Jacob would think, “Boy...I wish I could get that birthright!!” Jacob was hungry for the best things, but Esau didn’t really care.

Jacob and Esau got older. They became young men. One day Esau was out working in the field. Jacob was in the house cooking. Esau came in from the field. He had worked very hard. He was hot and tired. His strength was gone. And Esau thought, “If I don’t get something to eat I think I might die.” The only thing to eat in the whole house was the soup that Jacob had made. So Esau said, “Jacob, let me have some of your soup.”

Jacob said, “No.”

Esau said, “Please! I’m so hungry! I might pass out! Please, give me some soup!”

Jacob said, “No.”

Esau said, “Jacob, I’ll do anything. I’ll pay any price. I must have some soup.”

Jacob thought for a second. This was the chance he had been waiting for. Jacob said, “You’d give anything for a bowl of soup?”

Esau said, “Yes, I would! I’m going to starve to death!”

Jacob said, “I’ll make you a deal: you give me your birthright...and I’ll give you some soup.”

Esau didn’t even stop to think. He said, “OK, anything you want.” Esau promised to give Jacob the birthright; and Jacob gave Esau a bowl of his soup. Esau ate the soup, and Jacob took the birthright.

Esau had God’s best, but he gave it up for one bowl of soup. Esau regretted that decision for the rest of his life. But Jacob went on to be the father of the nation of Israel, God’s people. In fact, God changed Jacob’s name to Israel. Because of that birthright, Jacob had the opportunity to change the world. Jacob’s grandsons and great grandsons and great-great grandsons, and so on, were the men who wrote the entire Bible. And one of Jacob’s descendants was Jesus, who died for the sins of the whole world. Through that birthright, Jacob got the chance to change the whole world forever. And Esau got a bowl of soup.

The fact is, Jacob played a dirty trick on his brother. He should not have been so deceitful. Later in life, Jacob paid for the way he had been deceitful. But the good thing about Jacob is that he was hungry for God to do big things with his life, and the bad thing about Esau is that Esau didn’t really care.

Kids, if I could wish anything in the whole world for you today, I would wish that you would always be hungry for God’s best for your life. You see, God has a plan for you to accomplish big things with your life. God has a purpose for you to fulfill. God has a husband/wife with whom you are to spend the rest of your life. God has a big important job for you to do with your life. God has many, many very exciting things for you to enjoy in your lifetime. No matter who you are, God has great plans for your life. No matter what you could dream up or plan for yourself, it would never be as exciting as what God has planned for you. But you must say, “I am hungry for God’s best,” like Jacob did. You cannot say, “I don’t really care,” like Esau did.

If you will say, “I want God’s best,” like Jacob did, you’ll make good grades in school, and you will succeed; but if you say, “I don’t really care,” like Esau did, then you will get in trouble, you will fail, and your life will be miserable. If you will say, “I want God’s best at home,” like Jacob did, then you will obey your parents, and make your parents very proud of you, and you will enjoy being with your family; but if you say, “I don’t really care,” like Esau did, then you will be miserable.

I want you to be hungry for God’s best. Be hungry for God’s best in what you want to be when you grow up. Be hungry for God’s best about who you are going to marry some day. Be hungry for God’s best about where you are going to live some day. Don’t be like Esau, who said, “I don’t really care;” be like Jacob, who said, “I am hungry for the best things that God has planned for my life.”

How many of you want to be like Jacob and say, “I want God’s best!”? That’s wonderful; because if you say, “I don’t care,” like Esau, you will miss out on the wonderful things that God has for you.

Let’s learn our memory verse: **Psalm 37:4 – *Delight thyself also in the Lord; and he shall give thee the desires of thine heart.***

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Genesis 25:19-34

Teen and Adult Lesson

Year One, Quarter One, Lesson Twelve

[0120]

Teacher, choose one of the following truths to expand upon in teaching this portion of Scripture to your teen/adult class. Teach and apply the truth that you choose using statements and illustrations that are most helpful and applicable to your students.

- I. YOUR SUCCESSES AND FAILURES IN LIFE ARE THE RESULT OF THE CHOICES YOU MAKE. Esau comes out of this story a great failure, and Jacob comes away with the opportunity for great success. It was not because Jacob was God's favorite. It was not because Jacob was lucky. It was because Jacob made a right choice, and Esau made a wrong choice. It is your choices that will make you or break you. If you blame your failures on anything but your own decisions, you will never succeed. If you wait for other people to bring you success, instead of depending upon your own right choices, you will never succeed.
- II. YOU WILL FAIL IF YOU TAKE LIGHTLY THE OPPORTUNITIES GOD HAS PROVIDED FOR YOU. *Esau despised his birthright.* Gen. 25:34. "Despised" means that he did not hold it in high enough regard. His birthright would have brought him many eternal blessings, such as, God's nation being named for him, his sons being the heads of the tribes of Israel, his descendants being the writers of God's Word, and His offspring being Jesus Christ, the Saviour of the world. But Esau did not take his God-given opportunity seriously enough; therefore, God took his opportunities away from him.
- III. YOU WILL SUCCEED IF YOU WILL STAY HUNGRY FOR GOD'S BEST. Jacob was hungry for God's best; therefore, God rewarded him with His best. Jacob had many weaknesses and shortcomings; but his hunger for God's best helped him to overcome them.
- IV. DO NOT TAKE FOR GRANTED THE GOOD THINGS IN YOUR LIFE THAT OTHER PEOPLE WOULD GIVE ANYTHING TO HAVE. Jacob longed every day for what Esau had, while Esau did not really appreciate what he had been blessed with. Consider the blessings in your life, things that you might even forget to list as blessings, that others would pay any price to have. If you have a strong family life, many people your age would love to have that. Can you see, hear, walk, talk, work, etc.? How many blind, deaf, crippled, and otherwise handicapped people crave what you take for granted? Do not feel guilty because God has blessed you; but do be sure that you feel gratitude for what God has blessed you with.
- V. DO NOT TRADE ETERNAL RICHES FOR TEMPORARY PLEASURES. How long did that bowl of soup last for Esau? 15 minutes? 30 minutes? Esau took 30 minutes of indulgence, and an eternity of regret. If you regard highly enough what you have, you will not make that kind of foolish trade so flippantly.

Jacob and the Birthright

Genesis 25:19-34

[0120]

Isaac's Twins' Pursuit of the Family Legacy

I. GENESIS 25:19-21 Rebekah is Barren

19-20 Isaac marries Rebekah when he is 40

21a Rebekah cannot have children, so Isaac prays

21b God enables Rebekah to conceive

II. GENESIS 25:22-28 Twins are Born

22-23 Rebekah will have twins, and the younger will be the leader

24-26 Esau and Jacob are born when Isaac is 60 years old

27-28 Esau becomes Isaac's favorite, Jacob is Rebekah's favorite

III. GENESIS 25:29-34 A Deal is Made

29-30 Esau is hungry, and asks Jacob for some chili

31 Jacob proposes a bowl of chili in exchange for Abraham's legacy

32 Esau reveals his great shallowness

33 Esau swears his future to Jacob

34 Esau eats the chili, and disregards God's best for his life

Psalm 37:4

Delight thyself also in the Lord; and he shall give thee the desires of thine heart.

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[0120]

Search the puzzle below to find the ten words in the wordlist from today's story.

Words may be vertical, horizontal, or diagonal. Circle each word that you find.

J	A	K	O	W	D	P	T	R	D	I	H
T	Y	E	P	I	R	W	R	U	K	T	O
B	R	W	P	Q	E	S	A	U	G	W	H
H	I	T	O	Y	U	O	D	P	A	I	Y
R	S	R	R	D	G	U	E	J	K	N	W
A	L	Z	T	E	I	P	X	B	C	S	O
J	V	B	U	H	B	S	N	M	O	L	I
A	Q	W	N	E	R	E	A	R	T	W	T
C	Y	P	I	A	S	I	K	A	B	V	L
O	C	N	T	H	Y	R	G	A	C	B	D
B	L	I	Y	C	S	J	K	H	H	U	N
N	S	T	R	W	B	I	O	K	T	Y	M

WORDLIST:

ISAAC

BIRTHRIGHT

REBEKAH

OPPORTUNITY

TWINS

TRADE

ESAU

BOWL

JACOB

SOUP

*Delight thyself also in the Lord; and he shall give thee
the desires of thine heart.*

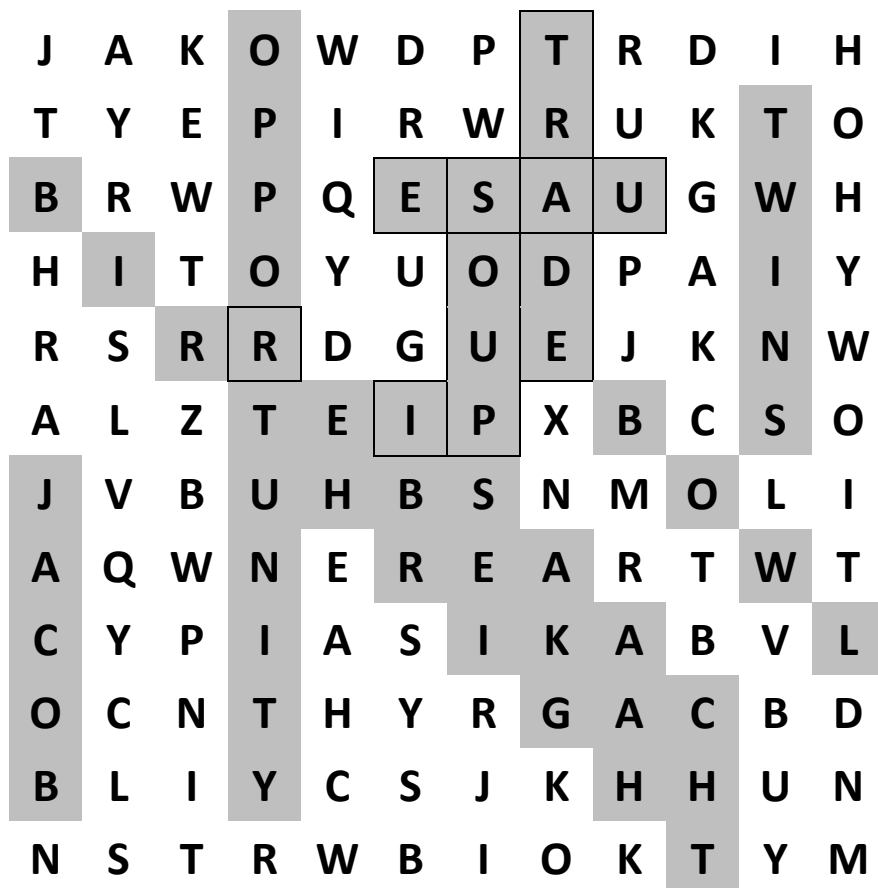
Psalm 37:4

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The answers to today's puzzle



WORDLIST:

ISAAC

BIRTHRIGHT

REBEKAH

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ESAU

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JACOB

SOUP