

ESAU: TOO LATE TO CHANGE YOUR MIND!

Genesis 25-28; Hebrews 12:14-17

I am a bitter, frustrated, old man!

Can you imagine how it would feel if God chose to use *your* story as an example to future generations for the next 4,000 years of what *NOT* to do—of how not to live your life? If you were the classic bad example of wrong choices?

Oh, by the way, my name is Esau—you know—*JACOB's big brother*.

Well, sort of, actually we're twins, but I was born first.

That means I'm supposed to get the rights of the firstborn—but that scoundrel Jacob—"the deceiver"—took those away from me!

I understand the pastor told you my story from the perspective of my parents.

But I want to be sure you hear what *I* have to say about my life!

ESAU'S LIFE STORY

Before I tell you what I really want you to learn, let me tell you a few things about my life.

God's promise concerning Esau's birth and destiny Gen. 25:21-23

Before we were born, my mom wasn't able to get pregnant.

My dad remembered the story of his own birth—how God intervened so my grandmother could have a baby when he was born. [*She was 90!*]

So he prayed and God intervened in our family too!

During the pregnancy, my mom was concerned because something didn't feel right.

God told her that we were twins that would become two nations and that we would continually struggle against each other.

What I never could understand was that God also promised mom that I would become subject to my kid brother

—he was going to be the patriarch of the family!

Esau's parents' preferences Gen. 25:24-28

As we grew up, dad took me everywhere.

He taught me to fish and hunt. I loved doing things like that with my dad.

Jacob always stayed home with his mother.

He was kind of a "mommy's boy!"

It was pretty obvious that our parents had chosen favorites!

Esau's choice to sell his birthright Gen. 25:29-34

One day when I had been out hunting, I came back home *starved*.

When I was almost home, I caught a whiff of an incredible smell.

I soon realized it was my brother's stew—he made the best stew!

I couldn't wait a minute more—I had to have some of that stew!

You know what he said? I'd have to give him my birthright if I wanted some of his stew!

Well, the way I saw it, if I didn't get something to eat, I was going to die anyway! What good is your birthright, if you're *dead*?

So, rather than trust God to provide what I need, or take a chance on dying of starvation, I agreed to let him have the birthright.

It didn't seem like such a big deal at the time, but later I realized that I had made a big mistake, but *it was too late to change my mind now!*

Esau's choice to marry pagan women Gen. 26:34; 27:46; 28:6-9

About the time I turned 40, I began to think about settling down and getting married.

One day as I was walking down the street, I saw the most beautiful woman I'd ever set eyes on. *She was incredibly beautiful!* I had to have her!

It never dawned on me that I should ask God to help me find the right woman to marry—nor did I think about the fact that she was Hittite—a pagan! Dad never did talk to me about how to pick a wife.

I just knew she was really nice and really good looking—beautiful and friendly! *What more could you ask for?!!*

So I married her. Later I spotted another one.

I decided "*two's better than one!*" So I married her too.

It wasn't until years later that I realized that mom and dad didn't approve of the women I chose.

They thought God's people ought to marry godly women.

That thought never occurred to me.

So I tried to please them by finding a godly wife. When I found one, I married her too! Somehow that didn't really make them happy either.

They were never satisfied!

Esau's blessing taken by Jacob 27:30-40

Some years later, when dad was getting old, and was about to die, he called me in and told me to go out and bring back some game.

We'd have a feast and then he would give me a final blessing.

When I came back from hunting, I discovered that Jacob had already been there—that deceiver did his thing: *he stole my blessing!*

I was left with nothing—except to serve him for the rest of my life.

I wanted to kill him!

And I would have—except mom arranged to send him away.

He went to our uncle's house—supposedly to get a wife from among godly people.

WHAT LESSONS DO WE LEARN FROM ESAU'S LIFE?

It wasn't until a long time later that I learned how God viewed my life and how He wanted to use me as an object lesson to help people like you. It hurts every time I think about it—but I know that if my story can help some of you avoid my mistakes, it's worth repeating!

TWO POSITIVE COMMANDS:

Heb. 12:14

God used my life to warn Hebrew Christians who were tempted to throw in the towel to protect themselves when they were suffering persecution because of their faith.

They were hungry and out of work. They had lost their families.

They were considering giving it all up in order to meet their own needs—after all, a guy's got to eat doesn't he? [Sound familiar?]

He warns them that two things are more important than meeting our needs and satisfying our desires:

Pursue peace.

When the pressure rises, we turn our attention inward to protect ourselves.

We compete to win and get what WE need.

God wants us to love each other, encourage one another, and seek peace with one another.

The world tells us this is dog-eat-dog world.

We have to fight and claw our way through.

We have to look out for #1!

That was my outlook on life! It didn't work for me!

Does it work for YOU?

Chasing after peace should be our active pursuit!

Pursue holiness.

A godly lifestyle requires us to be different from the world around us!

It's that godly characteristic that makes it possible for people to see the Lord in us, as well as for us to see Him.

Instead of pursuing the kinds of things I was looking for,

instead of fighting to survive, or come out on top,

we should be pursuing a unique lifestyle—to be conformed to the image of His Son, transformed by the renewing of our minds!

THREE NEGATIVE WARNINGS:

Heb. 12:15-17

He gives three warnings about the risk they are facing.

All three go together!

That's where I come into the picture!

You see, I thought that meeting my needs and satisfying my desires was the most important issue I was facing.

Rather than trusting God and experiencing His provision to supply everything I need, I had to come up with my own solution.

I set out to meet my own needs.

As a result, I missed out on what God wanted to GIVE me—by His own grace—I missed out on the grace of God.

Hebrews warns God's people to approach Him with confidence so we might receive mercy and find grace to help in our time of need.

If we try to flee from the pressure, or solve our own problems, we miss out on His grace!

Watch out so that no one misses out on God's grace.

When I set out to solve my own problem and meet my own needs, it never came out the way I thought it would.

It didn't satisfy—I didn't find what I was longing for.

So I became angry—*bitter*—now I'm a bitter old man, living with the fruit of my frustration. My life ended up a mess!

Watch out so that no bitter root rises up in you to cause trouble and corrupt many In contrast to drawing near to God, we become angry with him.

Bitterness establishes a tenacious root system, that grabs hold of everything around it, and destroys it all.

That's where my frustration ended up.

Everything and everyone around me suffered because of my bitterness. *I would have killed my brother!*

I sold myself out to meet my need for food, and my need for a wife, and

I missed out on the blessings God wanted to give me as a gift.

I left God out of the picture, and tried to live just like everybody else—sort of a “practical atheist.” I knew God exists, but I could solve my own problems and come up with my own solutions.

So I missed what God could have graciously given to me.

Watch out so that no one sells himself out for personal gratification or leaves God out of his life.

As a result I ended up with a pagan household, no birthright, and I missed out on the blessings my father wanted to give me.

Worse yet, I missed out on the blessings *God* wanted to give me!

The Bible is full of illustrations of people who suffered loss, but inherited God's blessing.

Real danger: what happened to me: I escaped the physical pain, but missed out on God's blessing!

I was hungry, so I traded spiritual blessing for a bowl of stew.

Spiritual issues weren't all that important!

"A man's got to live, doesn't he?!!"

I was focused on the physical world and my natural appetites.

As a result, I lost the blessings God wanted to give me!

FRUSTRATING CONSEQUENCES:

By the time I realized what I was missing and tried to get the blessing,

It was too late to change my mind.

There was no turning back!

When Esau decided that he wanted the blessing,

it was too late to change his mind! even though he wept bitterly!

No amount of repentance or tears could restore the blessings I had lost!

It was too late to change my mind!

In my bitterness, I blamed *Jacob* for my problems–

He deceived me!

He took my birthright!

He took my blessing!

Actually, he's not responsible for my loss, *I AM!*

It was part of God's plan, but I can't blame God.

I made the wrong choice–

I missed out on God's grace.

I became bitter.

I sold myself out for personal gratification.

I left God out of my life.

And by the time I realized how much I had lost, it was *TOO LATE!*

I couldn't fix it!

All the tears in the world wouldn't get back what I lost!

WHAT DIFFERENCE SHOULD ESAU'S EXAMPLE MAKE IN OUR LIFE?

It's not too late for you!

You may not be able to turn back the clock and change the past.

But it's never too late to start doing what's right!

We ought to pursue what God has promised to those who are faithful:

His peace and holiness–NOT the things our culture tells us are important!

We need to stop chasing after what the world's chasing after,

Lest we end up missing out on what God wants to give us graciously.

Lest we become bitter and contaminate everyone around us with our bitterness

Lest we chase after the satisfaction of our human appetites, our own comfort and contentment, and miss out on the blessings God has

promised to give us.
Scripture is filled with stories of faithful godly people, who trusted God and
lived for Him, but never found comfort in this life—*they are blessed!*
He promises that the faithful ultimately triumph,
but not on our schedule, nor even necessarily in this life.
The promised blessing is worth it!
We can trust Him!

=> Change My Heart, O God