


**Messy Life:
The Story of Jacob**
Part 2
Let's Make a Deal!

TALKING POINTS WALKINGPOINTS

Leader's Guide

2025-2-23



A publication of  the adult discipleship ministry of Triangle Community Church.

Talk together about the glory of God's kingdom. –Psalm 145:11
Love the Lord your God and **walk** in all his ways. –Joshua 22:5

Questions for Reflection or Discussion

Observation—*What do I see?*

- 1 We're learning that Jacob had character flaws, but how does Hebrews 12:15–16 describe Esau?
- 2 Read Genesis 25:29–34. Esau traded his birthright for a bowl of stew, "thus he 'despised' his birthright." Look up "despise" at <WebstersDictionary1828.com>. Is that too harsh of an assessment? Explain.
- 3 In one moment's decision, Esau changed the direction of his family forever. For short-term gain, he forfeited long-term blessing. His **immediate** response was to "eat, drink, rise and go away" (v. 34), but according to Hebrews 12:17, how was his **later** response described? Fill in these blanks:
"Afterwards, when Esau _____ to inherit the blessing, he was _____,
for he found no place for _____, though he sought for it with _____."

Interpretation—*What does it mean?*

- 4 Read Proverbs 1:20-32. What insights into Esau's character do you find in this passage?
- 5 Hebrews 12:17 said that Esau wept plenty—but "found no place for repentance." Again, going to <WebstersDictionary1828.com>, notice the distinction between "legal repentance" (definition #2) and "evangelical repentance" (definition #3). Where do you see Esau in these descriptions?
- 6 According to Genesis 47:3, what **occupation** had the Jews pursued—and **for how long**? Pastor Doug made the fascinating observation that Esau essentially spent his days on his **hobby**—hunting—rather than contributing to the family's livelihood: shepherding (Genesis 25:27–29 & 27:1–4). What additional nuance does this observation add to the picture of Esau's character?

Application—*What do I do with this?*

- 7 **Honesty time!** What elements of Esau's character have plagued you in the past? How and when did you recognize them? What brought you to repentance?
- 8 Which elements of Esau's character continue to tempt you today?
- 9 Turn again to Hebrews 12:15–17. Notice that the commands of v. 15-16a are **not** directed toward the Esau-like characters. **To whom** are they directed? What is the significance of this observation?

- ① Hebrews 12:15–16 describes Esau as:
 - missing out on God’s grace
 - bitter, thus “causing trouble” and “defiling” others
 - immoral and godless

- ② To “despise” is to “have the lowest opinion of something”. Esau shows his low opinion of birthright by:
 - he was “famished” (literally “faint/weary”) from unsuccessful hunting—he **wasn’t** at death’s door!
 - yet he exaggerated (aka: “lied”), claiming to be “about to die” (v. 32)
 - he asked “**of what use** is the birthright to me”—he viewed this important, God-given status in purely utilitarian terms (v. 32)
 - he “ate, drank, rose and went on his way” (v. 34)—there’s **no hint** that anything important had just happened. He cavalierly traded away God’s blessing for a single meal. So sad!

- ③ Afterwards [ie. when the memory of that single bowl of stew had long been lost among thousands of other meals] Esau desired to inherit the blessing [ie, he wanted **the current thing** that was the object of his desire. Earlier he wanted stew. Now that stew is ancient history. **Now** what I want is God’s blessing] he was rejected [God said, “Nope—no blessing for you. You didn’t care about it when it was yours. You made a conscious decision to throw it away for a bowl of soup.]. Esau found no place for repentance [ie, no godly sorrow over his worldliness—he only regretted the consequences of his previous choice], though he sought for it with tears [tears over his own loss, not over the glory of God]. etc.

- ④ **NOTE!** In this passage, **wisdom** is being personified. God is **not** saying that **he himself** is calloused to foolish suffering. Ezekiel 33:11 proves otherwise. Proverbs here is teaching that consequences follow our choices—the law of sowing and reaping (Galatians 6:7-8)—**not** that God himself is unconcerned. The fact that God wrote this passage proves that he’s trying to help us wise-up and avoid these outcomes!
 - (v. 2-22) Naivete **is** excusable in the inexperienced, but Esau **loved** staying ignorant. This was a **conscious choice**.
 - (v. 23-25) God **reached out** with an offer of wisdom, but **Esau didn’t want it**.
 - (v. 26-32) These verse are analogous to the person who, after 40 years of smoking (and being fully aware of the risks)—and now, finding that he has cancer—now, all of a sudden, he blames God for it. But it was a simple consequence of knowingly rejecting the Surgeon General’s warning all those years.

- ⑤ Esau had “legal repentance” (he regretted the consequences of his choice) but he lacked “evangelical repentance” (he had no contrition for his sin as offensive to God). In the words of 2 Corinthians 7:7-11, Esau had “worldly sorrow” rather than “godly sorrow”.

- ⑥ We and “our fathers”—ie, for multiple generations—have been shepherds. Shepherding is hard, dangerous work (see 1 Samuel 17:34–35). Esau preferred to hike and hunt, even though he often contributed nothing to the family’s thriving, while others labored in the family business.

- ⑦ Be ready with your own answers—you’ll likely need to “prime the pump” on this one. Be brutally honest—no vague generalities!

- ⑧ ditto

- ⑨ The commands of Hebrews 12:15–17 are directed toward the entire congregation—to those who are **not** godless—with the hope that (at least) no more people will be influenced by the ungodliness of a few (see 1 Corinthians 5:6–13). We **are** our brother’s keeper!

Sermon Summary Genesis 25:27-34

Sometimes we make decisions in the moment which have future impacts that we can't change. Our decisions, good or bad, rarely only affect ourselves. We always reap what we sow, but too often, others reap what we sow. (Luke 6:40) Our actions have future consequences, not just for us, but for those we influence. It is critical that we understand this.

We must be careful about the messages we send to our children. The parents, whose own commitment to God was nurtured and cemented through a childhood of never-miss attendance, are not passing on to their child the same habit and the same passion. Consequently, the child grows up with God on the periphery rather than at the center of their life.

Some of our "in the moment" decisions can impact the future in ways that cannot be changed. Esau and Jacob were faced with an "in the moment" decision. As one of the brothers makes the decision, he has his eye on the future. He knows his decision, made now, will affect his children, and their children, and their children. The other brother faces the same decision. But he gives no thought to what impact his decision will have on future generations. He bases his decision on immediate convenience, on what will please him at the moment. He chooses a short-term personal gain, and he forfeits a long-term family blessing.

Their differences set the stage for the decisions they will make, decisions that will move their future families in very different directions. (Gen. 25:27-28) As we will discover, one man is undisciplined and impulsive while the other is thoughtful and in control. (Gen. 25:29-34) One day these two brothers each make a decision that will change their lives and that of their children forever. (Gen. 25:29-34)

In Jacob's day the birthright was a position of leadership and privilege that was passed down to the firstborn of each generation, continuing for generation after generation. For these two brothers, the birthright not only meant honor and leadership in the family, it also meant the eternal blessing of God. In their family, God had attached his special blessing to the birthright. It involved God's promise to bring a Savior into the world through the one who received that birthright. (Gen. 12:1-3)

But in one moment's decision, Esau changes the direction of his family forever. For a short-term gain, he forfeits the long-term blessing. The way all this is written suggests that Jacob has carefully planned for this moment. (Gen. 25:29) But the reason he's scheming and manipulating this moment is because he wants the blessing that comes with the birthright. He wants his children to be blessed by God. How did Esau respond? (Gen. 25:32) He thought, "How likely are those things to happen? Not very." As far as he is concerned, it's all pretty iffy. (Gen. 23:17-20; 25:9-10) (Gen. 26:12-23) So Esau swears an oath. (Gen. 25:33-34) In doing so, he gives up the long-term blessing for the short-term gain. He surrenders his family's future for a momentary pleasure and long-term consequences. (Gen. 25:34)

The New Testament looks back on Esau and says, "Don't be like him." (Hebrews 12:16-17) God warns, "Do not be like this godless man. Don't follow his example." When a moment of decision comes to you, look into the future. Ask yourself what might follow from this decision?

- Choose the blessing of God over those fleeting things this world offers.
- Choose to make involvement in your local church a top priority for your family.
- Decide that whatever else your family spends money on, there will always be money for mission trips and church camps and activities, so that your children will fall in love with the God who sent his Son to die for them.
- Choose to faithfully support the ministries of your church.
- Choose to love your spouse through all the difficulties and hard stretches.
- Choose to build godly values into your children by being an example.
- Choose to carefully guard what your children are exposed to on television and the internet.
- Choose to love your God with your whole heart.
- Choose to keep his blessing on your kids.

Digging Deeper in Your Daily Quiet Time

Few have lived the "principled Christian life" as long—or as consistently—as Billy Graham! Following are his ten guidelines for Christian living. This week, study two guidelines per day, asking yourself the following self-assessment questions for each:

- What passage from Scripture speaks powerfully to this issue? What do I learn from it?
- Do I have a "track record" in this given area? If not, who can help me develop this habit?
- What opportunity does TCC offer to help me grow in this area?

Read your Bible daily. Do not be content to skim through a chapter merely to satisfy your conscience. Hide the Word of God in your heart. It comforts, guides, corrects, encourages – all we need is there.

Learn the secret of prayer. Prayer is communication. Every prayer will be answered—sometimes the answer will be "Yes", sometimes "No," and sometimes it is "Wait," but nevertheless it will be answered.

Rely constantly on the Holy Spirit. We know that the Holy Spirit prays for us (Romans 8), and what a comfort that should be to the weakest of us. Stand aside and let Him take over all the choices and decisions of your life.

Attend church regularly. The local church is Christ's organization upon earth. We need one another, we need to gather together to worship God and nothing can take the place of regular church attendance.

Be a witnessing Christian. We witness in two ways: by life and by word – and the two, where possible, should go hand in hand.

Let love be the ruling principle of your life. Jesus said to those who followed Him, "By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another" (John 13:35). The greatest demonstration of the fact that we are Christians is that we love one another.

Be an obedient Christian. Let Christ have first place in all the choices of your life.

Learn how to meet temptation. Temptation is not sin. It is yielding that is sin. Let Christ through the Holy Spirit do the fighting for you.

Be a wholesome Christian. Our lives and appearance should commend the Gospel and make it attractive to others.

Live above your circumstances. Don't let your circumstances get you down. Learn to live graciously within them, realizing the Lord Himself is with you.