

Messy Life: The Story of Jacob Part 6 Deception, Defense and Despair

TALKING POINTS WALKINGPOINTS

2025-3-23



A publication of DISCIPLE, 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

- 1 What from Sunday's message interested you? ...made sense to you? ...confused you? ...intrigued you? ...upset you? ...encouraged you? ...and why?

Observation—What do I see?

- 2 From Proverbs 3:5-6 and Psalm 37:3-6, complete this chart (noting verse references for each observation):

Table with 2 columns: Commanded of us, Promised by God.

- 3 Mark (with the first letter of their names) all commands which Isaac, Rebecca, Esau or Jacob broke.

Interpretation—What does it mean?

- 4 What do the above observations tell you about their (I's, R's, E's or J's) views of God? of self? of others?
5 What sorts of dangers might result from wrong views of God? of self? of others?

Application—What do I do with this?

- 6 What is a challenge you currently face (at home, work/school, or neighborhood)?
7 Read Romans 11:33-36. What are some appropriate responses toward such a God?
8 Compare those appropriate responses to your actual responses in the midst of your current challenge.
9 In what ways are you satisfied with your response? In what ways are you dissatisfied with your response? What changes must you make? How can we as a group help you make those changes?

① Standard ice-breaker question. Don't linger too long on this one, but do take note of any particularly strong responses to the content (especially negative responses). Follow up individually as needed.

② **Proverbs 3:5–6 or Psalm 37:3–6 command us to:**

1. trust God with the totality of our volitional center (“heart”)—Proverbs 3:5 & Psalm 37:3 & 5
2. not rely on our own human intelligence or experience—Proverbs 3:5
3. relate all of my life-choices intimately to God (Hebrew: *yada*, the **same word** found in Genesis 4:1 “Adam **had relations with** his wife Eve, and she conceived and gave birth.”)—Proverbs 3:6
4. do good (rather than evil)—Psalm 37:3
5. “enjoy security” is the NT equivalent of “dwell in the land”—Psalm 37:3
6. “be identified by/with the quality of faithfulness” is the NT equivalent—Psalm 37:3
7. make the covenant-making and keeping God, Yahweh, what delights you—Psalm 37:4
8. “roll with/flow with” Yahweh in all your life-choices (“commit your way”)—Psalm 37:5

If we obey the commands stipulated in Proverbs 3:5–6 or Psalm 37:3–6 God promises to:

9. make will make the outcome of our life-choices “straight/smooth/right”—Proverbs 3:6 & Psalm 37:5b
10. say “yes” to your prayers (which are shaped by your delight in God)—Psalm 37:4
11. will absolve you of all blame/guilt of wrong-doing—Psalm 37:6

③ 1. **I, R, E and J!** 2. **I, R, E and J!** 3. **I, R, E and J!** 4. **I, R, E and J!**
 5. **I, R, E and J!** 6. **I, R, E and J!** 7. **I, R, E and J!** 8. **I, R, E and J!**

④ **Their view of God was that** he either he was not serious about his commands, he was not as righteous as he said, or that he could be disobeyed now and appeased later. **Their view of self was that** their own personal preferences took priority over God's commands and others' rights or happiness. Also, that they were smart enough to know a better way than did God, and that they could escape consequences (or deal with them) later. **Their view of others was that** they are not as important as I am.

⑤ **The dangers which could result from wrong views of God include:** eternal condemnation in hell and temporal opposition from Almighty God.
The dangers which could result from wrong views of self include: ignorance of one's own capacity for self-deception; the assumption that “God and I are OK” when we're not; and over-confidence in one's own ability to “get myself out of tight spots I've put myself in”
The dangers which could result from wrong views of others include: retaliation from them, or even that God will take up their cause against you (Jeremiah 50:34 and Proverbs 24:17–20)!

⑥ Hear from several group members, then choose one of them for the group to discuss.

- ⑦ • Don't doubt his wisdom and knowledge—or think that you're his intellectual equal (or superior!)
• Don't wear yourself out trying to fathom his decisions—they're beyond us!
• Don't ever think that God needs your advice or that he owes you anything!
• Don't ever think that you're the “star of the show”—God is! We exist for him.

⑥

⑧ Allow the “donor” of that story from to go first in critiquing his own responses—and then make sure that any others who make critiques are charitable in their assessment!
We **all** have feet of clay!

⑨ Ditto.

Sermon Summary Genesis 27:1–45

We continue to see the story unfold in five scenes in 27:1-45. It is interesting to note that in these scenes, the whole family is never together. In four out of five scenes we find the parent paired with their favorite son. Esau was Isaac's favorite, and Jacob was favored by his mom. Such parental favoritism contributes to the dysfunctionality of this family.

I. We introduce destructive and unnecessary tensions when we attempt to set aside God's will for our will (v. 1-4). Isaac's eyes were bad and his favorite son, Esau, just happened to be a hunter, rather than a herdsman like Jacob (25:28). So an aging Isaac recognizes that it's time to pass along the family blessing to one of his sons, and Esau is his choice. Now we know that Esau was not God's choice, and I think Isaac knew it. But Isaac wanted what he wanted, and as we sometimes do, he embarked on a plan to coronate his will in this matter over God's will. You ever ignore God's will to stubbornly pursue your own? In exchange for his favorite meal, Jacob is willing to wrongly award the birthright, and all that went along with it, to his favorite son Esau. This is eerily parallel to what Esau did earlier when he agreed to surrender his birthright to Jacob for the price of a bowl of soup (25:29-34). Both Isaac and Esau were willing to sacrifice a long-term national blessing to pacify their short-term hunger. They valued the sensual over the spiritual - the temporal over the eternal.

We succumb to the same kind of temptations, don't we? Our choices often reveal misaligned values. We are sometimes guilty of sacrificing long term blessing for short term gratification. But sympathizing with the temptation doesn't make it right. Anytime we set aside God's will to pursue our own, we introduce tensions that we could otherwise avoid. We unnecessarily invite trouble. Isaac was determined to bless Esau with all his resources – including the Abrahamic Covenant (12:1-3).

Here we have:

1. The promise of a national land (12:1; 13:14-15,17).
2. The promise of redemption, national and universal (12:3; 22:18; Galatians 3:16).
3. The promise of numerous descendants to form a great nation (12:2; 13:16; 17:2-6).

There is a lot at stake here, as Isaac conspires with Esau to pass along the family blessing. Moving on to Scene Two...

II. God's people are often guilty of trying to ensure God's plan and blessing through deceptive, manipulative measures (27:5-17). This scene illustrates a common weakness among God's people. We try to acquire God's blessing through deception and manipulation. We try to help God out. On his own, He might mess this thing up, so we come to his rescue. Rebecca figures desperate situations demand desperate measures. So, she springs into action, and concocts a plan of deception, lying and trickery to right a potential wrong. Furthermore, she engages Jacob, her favorite son, as her accomplice. What if Rebecca had done nothing and let things play out? We can only speculate, but since God had declared that the blessing would flow through Jacob, I believe that had she done nothing, God would have intervened to bring about his revealed will, just as he intervened with Balaam. (Numbers 22-24).

The risks were great. In his quest for the blessing, Jacob knew that he would be conducting himself in a manner that deserved a curse. But despite the risks involved, Jacob went along with the plan. Have you ever consented to go along with a plan that you knew in your heart to be wrong? That is what Jacob is doing. In a lot of ways, Jacob is everyman. Whenever you find yourself facing such a moral dilemma, ask yourself this question, "What course of action most honors God? Is God honored through deception and lying?" If forced to choose, we should always choose to obey God over man. That brings us to Scene Three and the theft of the blessing with Isaac and Jacob.

III. Sometimes it appears as though success is achieved through manipulative measures (27:18-29). [Pragmatism] Jacob went through with the ruse. Twice he was forced to tell a direct lie. Once he even went so far as to claim God's help in the quick acquisition of the wild game (verse 20). In this way, Jacob received the blessing intended for his brother. This blessing was so far-reaching that it left nothing of importance for Esau. That is why Esau's return is so heart-rending, both for him and for his father. That brings us to Scene Four – Isaac and Esau.

IV. God's people eventually realize the futility of supplanting God's will with ours through deception and manipulation (27:30-40). Jacob got it all. A prosperous business, supremacy in the family as well as in international affairs, all insured by divine blessing on his allies and a divine curse on his enemies. All that was left for Esau was an anti-blessing. A blessing that would reiterate that the real blessing went to Jacob, for as Isaac said, "I have made him your master."

In the end, consistent with his name, Jacob did supplant his brother Esau—though the means he used cannot be commended. Both Jacob and his mother Rebecca failed to trust God to bring about his sovereign purposes in His own way. They sought to secure, by trickery, what God had already ordained. It appears that their deception was rewarded and, in a way, I guess it was, but not without consequences for both of them. We are all free to do whatever we choose, but we are not free to choose the consequences of those decisions. That brings us to our fifth and final scene - Rebecca and Jacob

Digging Deeper in Your Daily Quiet Time

Proverbs has so much to say about honesty and deception.

Let's use the "Five Question Bible Study" method to learn to seek one and avoid the other...

Monday— Study Proverbs 11:17–21.

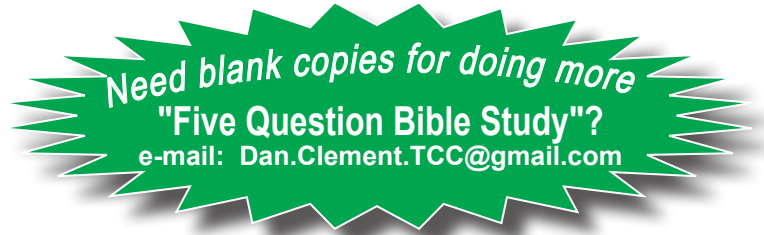
Tuesday— Study Proverbs 23:1–8.

Wednesday— Study Proverbs 30:7–9.

Thursday— Study Proverbs 12:13–17.

Friday— Study Proverbs 12:19–22.

Saturday— Study Proverbs 19:1–5.



Bible Text: _____

Date: _____



What idea particularly strikes me from this text? [Note in which verse(s) it is found.]



What question does this text raise in my mind—and how would **this text** answer it?



What about Jesus Christ—his character and/or his redemption—relates to this text?



What action must I take as a result of this text? Be concrete and specific.



With whom will I share what I learned from this text? [and what was their response?]