

Life Lesson 14  
*Jacob and Esau*  
Text: Genesis 25:19-34; 27

Introduction

Do you ever fight with your brother? If you have a brother, more than likely there are times when you don't get along. Our story today is about two brothers who had a lot of trouble with one another. Their names were Jacob and Esau.

The Story

In our last story, Abraham's son Isaac married Rebekah. They loved each other very much, and God blessed them with two sons. They were twins. The oldest they named Esau, and the second twin they named Jacob.

Jacob and Esau were never very much alike. Even when they were just boys they had different interests. Esau liked to hunt better than anything else, and he was a good hunter. He liked to spend his days outside in the fields. His father, Isaac, was proud of him, and I'm sorry to say, he loved him the best. It's not right for parents to love one child more than another, is it? But Isaac loved Esau most.

Jacob was different. He was a smart boy, and could often outwit his brother. He didn't care so much about hunting, but liked to stay around the house. His mother, Rebekah, loved Jacob the best. Maybe it was because God had told her before the boys were born that she would have twins, and the older boy would one day serve the younger one. Maybe it was because Jacob liked to stay around the house and help her. For whatever reason, she, too, should have loved both children the same.

One day Esau was out hunting. He was so intent on the chase that he forgot to stop for his meals. Maybe he stayed away so long, that he ran out of supplies before he got home. At any rate, by the time he got home he was very hungry. As he came near the tent he smelled a delicious aroma. It was the smell of Jacob's stew he was cooking. Esau was so hungry that he felt like he *must* have some of that stew.

"Let me have some of your stew," Esau said.

"I'll give you some if you give me what I want," Jacob replied.

"I'm so hungry I'm about to faint," Esau moaned. "What do you want?"

The birthright was a very important thing to the people of that country in those days. The oldest son of the family had many special privileges. To take the birthright was to take away his standing in the family.

"If I don't get something to eat soon I will die," Esau said. "The birthright won't do me any good if I'm dead. All right, I'll sell it to you."

So Esau sold his birthright for a bowl of stew. Afterwards he was very angry with Jacob for taking advantage of him when he was hungry. It was his own fault, though, in a way. He didn't hold his birthright as very important. It was more important to him to have his physical hunger satisfied.

Sometimes it's easy for us to think most about our physical needs. We are always concerned about being fed and being comfortable, and having what other kids have. When we're like that we are being like Esau. We should spend more time thinking about important things, like serving the Lord and telling others about Him.

More years past, and Isaac was very old. He couldn't get around much and he could hardly see. One day he called Esau to him.

"Son," he said, "I am very old and might die any day now. I want you to go out and kill a deer and cook it for me. You know just how I like it. Then I will give you my blessing."

Rebekah heard Isaac telling Esau this, and she didn't like it. Jacob was still her favorite son, and she wanted him to have the best. She knew that Isaac loved Esau best, and would give him the best blessing. She thought of a way to trick him.

"Go out and get a couple of baby goats," she told him. "I'll make a dinner from them, and you can pretend you are Esau bringing it to him."

"My father will know right away that I'm not Esau," Jacob objected. "Esau is a hairy man, and I'm not. My father will know I'm not Esau as soon as he touches me. Then he'll give me a curse, not a blessing."

"Just do what I tell you," his mother said. "I have a plan."

So Jacob went out and killed two kids and brought them to his mother. She cooked them and then took their skins and put them on Jacob's hands and on his neck.

He took the meat and carried it in to his father.

"Father," he said.

"Which son are you?" he asked.

"I'm Esau," Jacob lied. "I did as you said and now you can eat the venison and bless me."

Is it right to tell lies? No, it's never right to lie. God hates lies--and they can only lead to trouble.

"You don't sound like Esau," Isaac said. "Come here and let me touch you."

When he felt the goat hair he was reassured.

"You sound like Jacob, but your hands are Esau's." He ate the venison and then blessed him.

"God give thee of the dew of heaven, and the fatness of the earth, and plenty of corn and wine. Let people serve thee, and nations bow down to thee. Be lord over thy brethren, and let thy mother's sons bow down to thee. Cursed be every one that curseth thee, and blessed be he that blesseth thee."

Jacob had just received this blessing and left his father when Esau came home. He fixed his meat and brought it to his father.

"Who are you?" Isaac asked.

"I'm Esau," he replied. "Here is your dinner I fixed for you. Now you can bless me."

Isaac trembled as he said, "If you are Esau, who did I just bless, and yes, he will receive that blessing!"

Esau was furious with his brother. first he had stolen his birthright and now his blessing.

"After my father dies, I'm going to kill Jacob," he said.

When Rebekah heard this, she was worried. She sent Jacob off on a long trip to see her brother, Laban, far away in Padanaram, so that he would be safe from his brother.

### The Life Lesson

It's a sad thing for brothers to be enemies isn't it? Both brothers were selfish, wanting the best for themselves. That's what causes most troubles between people--selfishness. If we do as Jesus told us and treat others just like we want to be treated, we'll get along with others much better--even with our brothers and sisters!

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## Review Questions

What were the names of Isaac and Rebekah's twins?

*Jacob and Esau*

What did Esau like to do best?

*He liked to hunt.*

What did Jacob like to do?

*He liked to cook and help his mother.*

Which son did Isaac love best?

*Esau*

Which son did Rebekah love best?

*Jacob*

For what did Esau sell his birthright to Jacob?

*For a bowl of stew.*

How did Jacob trick Isaac into giving him the best blessing?

*He pretended to be Esau.*

Why couldn't Isaac tell the difference between the two boys?

*Because Isaac was blind, and Jacob put on goatskin so he would seem to be hairy like Esau.*