

SMALL GROUPS

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Spring Semester - Week 5

Remember, these questions are just tools for discussion. You don't need to 'get through them all'. Use the questions that are helpful, skip the ones that are not, and let the conversation flow naturally.

OPTIONAL ICEBREAKER(S)

- a) Do you like superhero movies? Do you have a favourite? If not, what movie/genre do you enjoy?
- b) Who is your favourite 'villain' of all time?

PASSAGE AND DISCUSSION

Read Genesis 26:34-27:40

- a) What stands out to you upon first reading of this passage?
- b) Read **v34**. Would you say that Esau is a 'victim' or a 'villain' in this text? Discuss your thoughts.
- c) Discuss Isaac's choice to give his entire blessing to only one of his two sons. How is his choice to bless only Esau deceptive and disobedient?
- d) Compare and contrast the 2 blessings (curse?) given by Isaac to his sons (**v27-29, v39-40**).
- e) Do you think Isaac's favouritism of Esau (**Genesis 25:28, 27:24**) blinded him from remembering God's prophetic word that Rebekah received before giving birth (**Genesis 25:23**)? How can we protect ourselves from making decisions with 'blindness' on?
- f) Do you think Rebekah's manipulation was righteous or unrighteous? Why or why not? How do her actions reflect a lack of faith?
- g) Read **v34**. Esau was in despair when he learned that Jacob received his blessing, but he had already sold his birthright and responsibilities for a meal (**Genesis 25:33-34**). Do you sometimes have the mindset that you just want to be blessed by God, but aren't willing to follow Him wholeheartedly and walk in the responsibilities He entrusts to His followers?
- h) Read **Acts 17:25** and **Proverbs 19:21**. Do you ever feel you have to intervene to make sure God's plans happen, like Rebekah did in this story? What would have happened if Rebekah had not intervened?

- i) **C.S. Lewis** wrote: “Integrity is doing the right thing even when no one is watching.” How do Jacob’s lies demonstrate a lack of integrity?
- j) How is God’s love for sinners demonstrated through His faithfulness to all the ‘villains’ in this story?
- k) Have you ‘moved’ from one column (bad guy) to the other (good guy) according to God’s righteous standard, by receiving the forgiveness of your sins through Christ Jesus? If not, is there something that is keeping you from receiving this gift?
- l) Read and discuss this quote by **R. Kent Hughes**:

*“But in and above this [this messy account] is something of immense beauty and grandeur—the invincible determination of God to keep his word despite the prevailing unbelief and unfaithfulness of his people. God fulfilled his word despite Isaac’s opposition, despite Rebekah and Jacob’s manipulation, and despite Esau’s indifference. The invincible determination of God will see to it that his people are sanctified. Here the figurative earthquake in Isaac’s life called him back to a life of faith. And Jacob was further pushed along the path that would result in his becoming Israel, a prince of God. Fellow believers, amidst **our** sins and **our** stupidities, the invincible determination of God is set to bring us to completion—even when we resist it.”*

- m) Do you often see yourself as ‘the hero’ in different situations? How does **Ephesians 2:1-7** help us to see ourselves rightly? Who is the only real hero?

TAKE IT HOME (OPTIONAL IDEAS FOR RESPONSE THIS WEEK)

- a) Take time to reflect on your inner motivation to avoid sin. Pray and ask God to show you if your heart is in the right place, and for Him to reveal to you if it isn’t (**Psalm 139:23-24**). Ask God to help you and renew your heart and mind (**Psalm 51:10, Romans 12:1-2**).
- b) Encourage your family members this week. Send a nice text or card, letting them know that they are loved.

OPTIONAL IDEAS FOR PRAYER TIME

- a) Take time to pray for each other’s families, that God would fill your families with His love, grace, and forgiveness. Pray for integrity, and that you can bless one another by being Christ’s ambassadors as peacemakers.
- b) Pray for the Young Adults Missions Team who is returning this week from Thailand.