

## **GOING DEEPER STUDY NOTES** (May 21, 2023)

FOR PERSONAL OR GROUP STUDY

Have you ever agreed to buy, or sell, something only to regret your decision soon after the deal went through? Here are two I regret: both involving cars.

Example 1: I gave my mom's 1967 VW Bug to a family member. Instead of saving it, fixing it, and driving it, he sold it for a song. I offered it, he sold it, the deal was done. I liked that little ol' Bug and wished I had never given it away. The value of those old VW's continues to climb.

Example 2. After graduating from college, I needed a car. Someone suggested I buy a car that looked good on the outside but needed an engine. I paid for the car before fully checking it out. Bad decision. After paying I realized it was not the kind of car I wanted. I regretted my decision immediately. I got the car running and drove it for a couple of years. One day I drove it to a junkyard and handed over the keys. That day was a better day than the day I bought the car.

Abraham's son Isaac, and Isaac's wife Rebekah, had two boys. Although raised in the same house, by the same parents, these brothers couldn't have been more different. If one liked this, the other liked that. If one wanted this, the other wanted that. One lived in the outdoors under the stars, the other preferred living in a tent. One was rough, the other quiet. One was favored by their father, the other by their mother.

One day, the older of the two, exhausted and hungry after a long day working the field, made a rash decision. He agreed to sell his birthright to his younger brother in exchange for some bread and stew. What is a birthright anyway? What good is a birthright if you feel like you're starving? Esau made a rash decision he regretted as soon as he made it.

His brother took advantage of him ... and Esau knew it. For years he would despise what he had traded away, and he would despise his brother too. Each of us has a God-given birthright. The question is ... what is our birthright and what will we do with it? Decide carefully.

### **The Price of a Birthright** (Genesis 25:27-34)

<sup>25:27</sup> When the boys grew up, Esau was a skillful hunter, a man of the field, while Jacob was a quiet man, dwelling in tents. <sup>28</sup> Isaac loved Esau because he ate of his game, but Rebekah loved Jacob.

<sup>29</sup> Once when Jacob was cooking stew, Esau came in from the field, and he was exhausted. <sup>30</sup> And Esau said to Jacob, 'Let me eat some of that red stew, for I am exhausted!' (Therefore his name was called

Edom.) <sup>31</sup> Jacob said, 'Sell me your birthright now.' <sup>32</sup> Esau said, 'I am about to die; of what use is a birthright to me?' <sup>33</sup> Jacob said, 'Swear to me now.' So he swore to him and sold his birthright to Jacob. <sup>34</sup> Then Jacob gave Esau bread and lentil stew, and he ate and drank and rose and went his way. Thus Esau despised his birthright."

### **WHAT DOES IT SAY?**

1. What does this passage tell us about Esau? About Jacob? About their relationship with each other? Read a few verses earlier (25:19-26) to learn more about these two brothers.
2. Why would Jacob want his brother's birthright?

### **WHAT DOES IT MEAN?**

3. What does it mean that Esau "sold his birthright"?
4. What does it mean that Esau "despised his birthright"?

### **WHAT IS GOD SAYING TO YOU?**

5. Do you, or did you, have brothers and/or sisters? If yes, how were they different from you? How were they similar to you? Did you ever take disagree or take advantage of each other?
6. How would you define your birthright? Who gave you your birthright? What is the value of your birthright?
7. Think of two decisions you've made that were rash and you wish you could "un-make". Discuss.
8. Have you ever taken advantage of someone? If yes, why did you do it? How do you feel about that now? If you're able ... are you willing to take steps to fix what you did?
9. What is one way you can appreciate, rather than despise, your birthright?

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As you spend time praying remember that prayer is meant to be the most natural, and empowering, part of your day. Prayer is a conversation: talking to God and listening to God. Ask God to help you understand the importance of your birthright. Pray that you do not, and will not want to, take advantage of others. Pray for forgiveness for the times you've taken advantage of others. God will help you because He cares about you and He loves you.