

Calvary Assembly Life Group

Week of September 22-28

Focus

Regret seems to inhibit our ability to enjoy the present. It also steals hope that things will ever change. You are just as likely to have regrets for things you haven't done as you are to have regrets for things you have done.

Prep

Your Life Group will look at an interesting story in Genesis. Esau and Jacob were twin brothers. Jacob took advantage of a time when Esau was very hungry. The price Jacob required was the birthright (inheritance) of the oldest son. That inheritance was significant. Esau made a choice in the moment he regretted for the rest of his life.

This is your first meeting of the Fall season. Make sure to introduce or reintroduce everyone to each other in the group. Look for ways to help new members feel welcome and comfortable.

Video

Show the video that was prepared for this lesson. It is less than four minutes and will help to set up the conversation for your group.

Scripture

Genesis 25: ²¹ Isaac prayed to the Lord on behalf of his wife, because she was childless. The Lord answered his prayer, and his wife Rebekah became pregnant. ²² The babies jostled each other within her, and she said, "Why is this happening to me?" So she went to inquire of the Lord.

²³ The Lord said to her,

"Two nations are in your womb,
and two peoples from within you will be separated;
one people will be stronger than the other,
and the older will serve the younger."

²⁴ When the time came for her to give birth, there were twin boys in her womb. ²⁵ The first to come out was red, and his whole body was like a hairy garment; so they named him Esau. ²⁶ After this, his brother came out, with his hand grasping Esau's heel; so he was named Jacob. Isaac was sixty years old when Rebekah gave birth to them.

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²⁷ The boys grew up, and Esau became a skillful hunter, a man of the open country, while Jacob was content to stay at home among the tents. ²⁸ Isaac, who had a taste for wild game, loved Esau, but Rebekah loved Jacob.

²⁹ Once when Jacob was cooking some stew, Esau came in from the open country, famished. ³⁰ He said to Jacob, "Quick, let me have some of that red stew! I'm famished!" (That is why he was also called Edom.)

³¹ Jacob replied, "First sell me your birthright."

³² "Look, I am about to die," Esau said. "What good is the birthright to me?"

³³ But Jacob said, "Swear to me first." So he swore an oath to him, selling his birthright to Jacob.

³⁴ Then Jacob gave Esau some bread and some lentil stew. He ate and drank, and then got up and left.

So Esau despised his birthright.

Hebrews 12: ¹⁴ Make every effort to live in peace with everyone and to be holy; without holiness no one will see the Lord. ¹⁵ See to it that no one falls short of the grace of God and that no bitter root grows up to cause trouble and defile many. ¹⁶ See that no one is sexually immoral, or is godless like Esau, who for a single meal sold his inheritance rights as the oldest son. ¹⁷ Afterward, as you know, when he wanted to inherit this blessing, he was rejected. Even though he sought the blessing with tears, he could not change what he had done.

Reflection Time

We recommend providing 4 to 5 minutes for the group to silently reflect on the passage you just read together.

- Just before the reflection time, encourage your group to use the time to identify questions that come to their minds.
- What thoughts do you have about characters in the story?
- What do you think could have been some of the motives for decisions made?
- What did you notice about how the story played out?
- What do you think this passage is saying to you?

Questions for Discussion

Observation: The term birthright simply means the inheritance due the older son.

- In ancient culture, the oldest son received a minimum two thirds of the father's wealth.
- Since Isaac, Esau and Jacob's father, was very wealthy, there was a lot at stake.

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Question: When you read the story of selling the birthright, which character bothers you more?

- Esau for not properly valuing his birthright or Jacob for taking advantage of the situation?
- Which character do you feel drawn to and why?

Question: If you were giving advice to either Esau or Jacob, what would you say and why would you say it?

Question: Esau and Jacob seemed to be very different and yet very competitive.

- If you have siblings, how would you describe the differences between you?
- Did you feel you were in competition with them?
- What were you competing for?

Question: We know from Hebrews 12 how much Esau regretted his choice.

- What do you think he regretted?
- Why do you think it bothered him so much?

Question: Which do you think people regret more?

- Things they have done or things they have not done? Why?
- Do you think your regrets change as you get older? How?

Observation: Regrets will take control of our life unless we:

- Experience **forgiveness**
- Learn valuable **lessons** from our action or our inaction

Question: What lessons, if any, do you think Esau learned from his experience?

Question: Moving past regret requires the ability to forgive yourself.

- Do you think it is more difficult to forgive yourself or someone else? Why?

Question: Scripture assures us of God's forgiveness when we are willing to acknowledge our mistakes.

- Why do you think some people can accept God's forgiveness easier than other people?

Question: Is there a lesson you learned from a regret in your life?

- If so, how has it changed your responses in your life?

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Question: Esau didn't seem to access any spiritual resources in dealing with his regret.

- What resources do you think God makes available to us?
- How do you think God uses community, honesty, generosity, and vulnerability in our lives to share the resources of His grace with us?

Prayer

Some Life Group members may share some personal regrets. It is a great opportunity to support them in prayer.

- Learning to let go of the past is key to taking hold of the future.
- This is a great opportunity to pray for the faith to believe the future can be better than anything we have experienced so far.