



March 3/4, 2012
Genesis 27:1-40
"A Web of Deception"
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This week's study is basically part two of the account of the family of Isaac, Rebekah, and their twin sons, Jacob and Esau. [Genesis 27:1-40](#), can be summarized by the popular quote of the famous Scottish novelist of the 19th Century, Sir Walter Scott, who said, "Oh what a tangled web we weave, when first we practice to deceive!" ¹

Isaac deceived one son by trying to secretly bless the other son. Mom, on the other hand, is deceived Dad by making a pot of fake stew and dressing Jacob, her favorite son, in goatskin! Jacob is deceiving his father by pretending to be Esau, and Esau is deceiving Isaac by misrepresenting Jacob. The entire family needed major counseling help because of their maneuvering and manipulating, dishonesty, and deception. They were trying their best to hinder God's plan and hasten what God had predetermined.

Speaking of intervention, it's true that God could have intervened in this mess at any time; however, it was his will to allow things to play out. It's likely he did this so we would have a textbook case to learn more lessons from a flawed family.

Don't Rely On Your Senses For Decisions That Should Be Made In The Spirit

1. [Genesis 27:1](#) - *"...Isaac was old and his eyes were so weak that he could no longer see..."*
 - a. Most Bible scholars calculate Isaac to be somewhere between 130 and 137 years old.

¹ http://www.quotationspage.com/quotes/Sir_Walter_Scott/

- b. Isaac lived to be 180 years old, so he's still got a long way to go, even though he's already up there in age.
 - c. From [Genesis 25:26](#), we learn that Isaac was 60 years old when Jacob and Esau were born, so if Isaac was 130 years old, that would mean the twins were 70 years old when this incident occurred!
 - d. [Genesis 26:34-35](#)² tells us Esau married when he was 40 years old.³
 - e. Even though Isaac was old and blind, he still had his other senses.
2. Rather than seeing this account as being about a man of the Spirit, who prayed, worshipped and sought God regarding God's will, we see this as a story about a man who used his senses (he still had use of his hearing, taste, touch and smell) to determine what *he* wanted.
- a. Isaac wanted his favorite son, Esau, to keep his birthright and blessing, and to remain as the child of the promise, instead of Jacob.
 - b. Isaac was sinning because he went against what God had already announced.⁴
 - c. You can tell that Isaac knew exactly what he was doing because he wanted to meet privately with Esau.
 - i. It was the practice at this time for a father to give his blessing in a formal setting.
 - ii. Typically, the father would gather his family to his bedside when he was nearing death, to give his blessing, starting with the oldest son first.
 - d. [Genesis 27:1-5a](#) tells us that Rebekah was eavesdropping on Isaac and Esau's conversation.
 - e. Isaac's senses failed him in seeing through the conspiracy of Rebekah and Jacob.
 - i. To Isaac's ears, this son sounds like Jacob, but he feels like Esau; he smells like Esau, and the stew tastes like Esau's stew, so this son must be Esau. ([Genesis 27:21-27a](#))
 - ii. Isaac didn't pray.
 - iii. Isaac didn't seek the Lord.
 - iv. Isaac didn't rely on the Spirit.
 - v. Isaac only relied on his senses, which can obviously be unreliable and deceiving.

² "When Esau was forty years old, he married Judith daughter of Beerli the Hittite, and also Basemath daughter of Elon the Hittite. They were a source of grief to Isaac and Rebekah."

³ Jacob wasn't married at this time.

⁴ [Genesis 25:23](#) - "The Lord said to her [Rebekah], '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.'"

- vi. Another example of the disaster of relying on the senses is found in [Joshua 9](#), which tells how the Israelites were deceived by the Gibeonites, because they did not seek the Lord.⁵
 - vii. If Isaac had prayed and sought the Lord, the Lord would have no doubt spoken to him and reminded him that Jacob was his choice.
3. It is a grave mistake to trade the wisdom on God for what you feel or what you think or what you sense.
 4. Christians should never make decisions based on what they've heard or what situations/circumstances look like.
 5. It's always best to pray and discern the will of God by the Spirit of God.

Don't Try To "Right A Wrong" With Another Wrong

6. When Rebekah spoke with Jacob, and she was basically saying, "I overheard your father about to give the blessing to your brother! We can't allow this to happen because, after all, we both know you are the child of the promise, not Esau. So, while he is out hunting, we need to move quickly. I need you to go and get two goats from the flock. I'll take one and make it into a tasty stew for your father. You're going to take the stew in to him and your father will think you're Esau. If you follow my instructions you're sure to get the blessing." ([Genesis 27:5-10](#))
7. In [Genesis 27:11-12](#), Jacob's told his mother that her plan will give the appearance of tricking Isaac, and it won't work because Isaac will know that he's being tricked when he smells him and touches him.
 - a. Jacob's real concern is that while he doesn't mind being a deceiver, he just doesn't want to get caught.
8. [Genesis 27:13](#) - *"His mother said to him [Jacob], 'My son, let the curse fall on me. Just do what I say...'"*
 - a. Rebekah's comments demonstrate she's about as brazen as you can be!
 - b. It is one thing to do something wrong and have no awareness of it; it's another thing altogether when you do something wrong and you're fully aware of what you're doing.
 - c. Rebekah is a willing participant in deliberate sin, just like her husband, Isaac.

⁵ [Joshua 9:14](#) - *"The men of Israel sampled their provisions but did not inquire of the Lord."*

9. **Genesis 27:18-20** – *“He went to his father and said, ‘My father.’ ‘Yes, my son,’ he answered. ‘Who is it?’ Jacob said to his father, ‘I am Esau your firstborn. I have done as you told me. Please sit up and eat some of my game so that you may give me your blessing.’ Isaac asked his son, ‘How did you find it so quickly, my son?’ ‘The Lord your God gave me success,’ he replied.”*
- a. The only thing that’s worse than deceiving someone is doing it in the name of the Lord!
 - b. Jacob brought God into the deception, which makes him appear to be super-spiritual.
 - c. There’s no doubt that what Isaac did was wrong, but when Rebekah overheard Isaac and Esau talking, she should have appealed to her husband first, and if he wouldn’t listen to her, she should then appeal to God.
 - d. Instead, she plotted with her favorite son to make right her husband’s wrong.
 - e. The old saying, “Two wrongs don’t make a right,” fits this situation.
 - f. Rebekah and Jacob conspired to do wrong and thought they were justified because “the ends justify the means,” which is never the thing to do, because God wants to be Lord of both the means and the ends.
 - g. In fact, God always rewards right behavior over desirable outcome.
 - i. King Saul’s sin concerning God’s instructions about the Amalekites is one example of man’s attempt to justify actions that are anything but the clear direction/instruction of the Lord.
 - ii. God told Samuel the prophet to tell Saul that he was to slaughter every living creature, including the livestock.
 - iii. Saul’s army, however, kept the best of the flock as plunder and they allowed King Agag to live.
 - iv. Saul told Samuel that he saved the best of the flock to sacrifice to the Lord, *“But Samuel replied: ‘Does the Lord delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices as much as in obeying the voice of the Lord? To obey is better than sacrifice, and to heed is better than the fat of rams. For rebellion is like the sin of divination, and arrogance like the evil of idolatry.’ ”* (**1 Samuel 15:22-23**)
 - h. **Genesis 27:30-35** indicates that it wasn’t long after Isaac prayed a blessing over Jacob, and bestowed the birthright, that Esau came in from the field.
 - i. Isaac was wrong when he told Esau that Jacob stole Esau’s blessing, because God had already decided that Esau was not to have the birthright and blessing.
 - ii. Esau was wrong when he declared that Jacob deceived him two times (the birthright for a bowl of stew and now the blessing).

1. Remember, Esau willingly sold his birthright to Jacob, so Esau's complaint would be like someone who gets angry over selling their house for \$100.00, and then complaining that they were cheated.
- iii. Esau wept loudly, but his tears came from remorse, not repentance.
- iv. [Hebrews 12:16-17](#) - *"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. Afterward, as you know, when he wanted to inherit this blessing, he was rejected. He could bring about no change of mind, though he sought the blessing with tears."*
- v. [Hebrews 12:17](#) - *"For ye know how that afterward, when he would have inherited the blessing, he was rejected: for he found no place of repentance, though he sought it carefully with tears."* (KJV)

Don't Have Remorse Without Repentance

10. [Genesis 25](#): Esau didn't weep over his sin, he just wept over his loss.
11. He didn't have repentance; he just had regret.
12. Sometimes, when people sin, they are more sorry about getting caught or sorry about what they lost or about the way things didn't work out, than they are over breaking God's heart.
13. Repentance is feeling sorry for what you've done, wanting God's forgiveness, and walking away from sin.
14. [2 Corinthians 7:10](#) - *"Godly sorrow brings repentance that leads to salvation and leaves no regret, but worldly sorrow brings death."*

Discussion Questions

1. Review the introduction to the study guide with your group to provide the appropriate background.
2. Read [Genesis 27:1-40](#) to provide an overview for this study.
3. Spend time sharing stories about times when: you've had the "phantom buzz" from your cell phone in your pocket; you thought someone in another room in

the house was calling you; you witnessed an event with someone and the two of you had different observations.

4. What have you learned from the experiences you've had being caught in or weaving a "tangled web"?
5. Spend time sharing experiences when you knew exactly what you were doing, and you knew what you were doing was wrong.
 - a. How did the Lord use this situation to teach you a lesson?
6. Read and discuss [Joshua 9:1-27](#).
7. Allow the people in your group to share their experiences about times when someone deceived them.
 - a. What were the short-term and long-term consequences?
8. Have you eavesdropped on someone's conversation and used what you heard to your advantage?
9. How have your senses failed you when you used them to try to figure out the will of God?
10. When you did things God's way, having prayed and sought his leading/guidance/direction, how did he reveal his will to you?
11. Was there a time in your life when you brazenly disobeyed the Lord without regard for the consequences or God's displeasure? ([Genesis 27:13](#))
12. Read and discuss [1 Samuel 15:22-23](#).
 - a. Share examples of times when you've justified yourself in such a way that you've made it appear that there wasn't anything wrong with your words/actions.
13. Discuss Pastor Gary's comment that "God always rewards right behavior over desirable outcome."
14. Read and discuss [Hebrews 12:17](#).
 - a. In this Scripture Esau is used as an example of what not to do.
 - b. Is there someone's story of godlessness that serves as an example to you?
 - c. What is it about this person's life that made/makes them godless?

15. Share examples of times in your life when you were “caught,” but you only had regrets over being caught, instead of being repentant over your sin.
 - a. Read and discuss [2 Corinthians 7:10](#).

16. Close your time in prayer by asking the Holy Spirit to help each person: choose not to rely on their senses and the circumstances surrounding a person/situation to determine God’s will or leading; remember that you can’t right a wrong with another wrong; choose to repent and come clean with the Lord when they come under the convincing and convicting work of the Holy Spirit.

* Unless noted, all Scriptures quoted are from the New International Version (NIV 1984).