

The Story Begins



DailyLife
Five Oaks Church

Week 10: November 12–18, 2016

Day 1

November 14



Pray / Ask God to help you find comfort in his plans for you.

GOD'S WILL AND PLANS cannot be thwarted, and he will work out his plans, even through our dysfunction.

No family is perfect. Every family has its temptations and challenges, but the good news is that God loves all families, even the dysfunctional. He pours out his mercy on the broken. We see this truth in Isaac's family this week as we continue the story of Isaac and Rebekah and their sons, Esau and Jacob. God is committed to his plan and promise to redeem people from all the nations through this family, even through their dysfunction, jealousy, and deception.



Read / Genesis 27:1-4



Reflect / Choose one or more of the following for reflection.

Through this story over the next few days, we will see how the selfish and quick choices we make to determine our own future can go wrong, and despite our greatest desires, God is still able to accomplish his plans. Reflect on a time that you were on a path toward accomplishing a goal, only to have it completely ruined. Looking back now, how did God use these ruined plans for another purpose or blessing in your life?

Reflect on this statement: How can we really expect the blessings from God when we refuse to include him in our decisions?

In what ways does the dysfunction in your life or family discourage you from engaging in God's plan and mission for you? Reflect on what God may be prompting you to do differently.

Day 2

November 15



Pray / Ask God to help you have full trust in him and his Word.

IF THE END is good, and the actions to get there are bad, the result is in no way justifiable.

How we handle ethical and moral dilemmas expose our true hearts and motives. Often we are more worried about getting caught than about doing what is right. In today's passage, Jacob doesn't seem concerned about the deceitfulness of his mother's plan. Instead he is afraid of getting in trouble for carrying it out. If you are worried about getting caught for an action, then more than likely you are participating in something that is less than honest.



Read / Genesis 27:5–17



Reflect / Choose one or more of the following for reflection.

When have you had a goal that has not gone according to plan and found yourself lying and deceiving to get what you want? How do you think the long-term effect of your deception would have changed if you let God be in control?

Rebekah may have been spiritually in the right in the sense that God had promised that her older son would serve her younger son. But she failed in her actions when she tried to ensure this by sinning instead of letting God take control. When have you ever used “this is what God wants” as a justification for your actions?

Jacob could have refused to go along with his mother’s plot to deceive his father, but he didn’t. He hesitated because he was afraid of getting caught and not concerned about the fact that he was doing something wrong. When in your life have you been more concerned about getting caught for your sin rather than whom you might hurt along the way?

Day 3

November 16



Pray / Ask God to help you be honest in all of your actions.

CHANGING OUR ACTIONS and correcting ourselves in the middle of doing something wrong may bring embarrassment, hurt, and disappointment, but it will also bring freedom from the control that sin has over us.

Jacob schemed and lied to get what he wanted: his father's blessing. He had numerous opportunities to tell the truth, but he was so blinded by what he wanted that he continued to deceive his father. We are oftentimes no different from Jacob. In situations where we find ourselves lying, it is usually because of an end result, something we want. God cares as much about the attitude and the motivation behind our actions as he does about what happens in the end.



Read / Genesis 27:18–24



Reflect / Choose one or more of the following for reflection.

Jacob's lying was never justified. He should have trusted God to work out the problem. Instead, his first lie led to several more lies. In what kind of situations do you find it easiest to lie? What do those situations tell you about the condition of your heart?

How can you change the desires of your heart from worldly items and the approval of others to wanting and desiring God's plan for you, no matter what you would have to give up?

Are you focused on something in your life right now that you feel just needs to be accomplished, no matter what lies you tell or whom you hurt or deceive along the way?

Day 4
November 17



Pray / Ask God to give you the confidence to be truly honest with him.

GOD HAS PERFECT vision and clarity for who we truly are. He knows every thought and motive we approach him with. We cannot pretend who we truly are and try to deceive God. Isaac was blind and questioned the true identity of his son. He wanted so badly to bless Esau that he didn't take the necessary precautions to ensure that he was doing the right thing. Instead he ended up blessing Jacob. The words of the blessing that Isaac gave to Jacob were really a repeat of God's promise to Abraham. Isaac asked that God's blessings would be given to those nations that bless Jacob. God's redeeming plan would go through Jacob to all nations of the earth.



Read / Genesis 27:25–29



Reflect / Choose one or more of the following for reflection.

It's easy to treat God like Jacob treated his father Isaac. We try going before him by disguising ourselves from who we really are, searching for blessings that we do not deserve. When have you been less than honest with God? How does it make you feel, knowing that God knows your true intentions?

Isaac was deceived by Jacob because he was blind, and even though he suspected something wasn't quite right, he trusted his senses rather than asking for confirmation from God. When have you wanted something so badly that you trusted someone other than God? What was the result?

Because of Jacob's deceit, Isaac ended up giving his blessing to Jacob, not Esau as he had planned. This was God's plan all along. What hope does it give you to know that God works, even through our deceit and sinfulness to accomplish his plan?

Day 5

November 18



Pray / Commit yourself and your family to serving God.

GOD IS SOVEREIGN over all life, and he will work out his plan of redemption. Esau was careless and let his appetite get ahead of his good judgment. He gave up his birthright, but out of greed he still wanted the wealth he would receive as the firstborn. Jacob's deception crushed Esau and left him without the blessing of God. Despite the terrible circumstances, God was working to bring about his plan to redeem the world.

According to the promises made to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob they would bless and rule over the nations. We are called to carry on God's promises through the Great Commission. We need to get over our selfishness and dysfunction to go with confidence and boldness to all people and share our faith and love for God.



Read / Genesis 27:30–40



Reflect / Choose one or more of the following for reflection.

Esau was in despair when he found out that Jacob had received the blessing that he thought he was entitled to. When have you thought that you were entitled to receive something, but it was given to someone else? How did you handle the situation?

What are some ways that you as an individual can engage in God's mission to bless all peoples of the earth?

Oftentimes we need to be reminded that what we want for our lives is not always what God's plan is. How does knowing that God's plan is always at work help you face the surprises, disappointments, and hardships of your daily life?

Portions of this study were adapted from The Gospel Project Chronological: The Story Begins, Vol. 1, Adult Personal Study Guide ESV (Nashville, TN: LifeWay Christian Resources, 2015). Used by permission.

Unless indicated otherwise, all Scripture quotations are taken from the Holy Bible, English Standard Version® (ESV®), copyright © 2001 by Crossway Bibles, a publishing ministry of Good News Publishers. All rights reserved.