

The Family

Week 4 – May 2, 2021

Scripture: Genesis 25:19-34 and Genesis 27

Grab your Bible and a few people to connect with. Look up the verses below and share your thoughts. It's that easy!

Share: Did you grow up with a sibling? Where there times that you loved your sibling and couldn't stand your sibling at the same time? Share a sibling story with the group.

Read Genesis 25:19-34 and Genesis 27 together: Take turns reading if you prefer. Enjoy the different Bible translations we each read.

Discuss the following context:

In week four of this family series, we are looking at the story of twin brothers, Jacob and Esau, who experienced hostility, estrangement and reconciliation. From the very beginning, tension and conflict existed between these brothers. Genesis 25:22-23 says: *"But the two children struggled with each other in her womb. So she went to ask the Lord about it. 'Why is this happening to me?' she asked. And the Lord told her, 'The sons in your womb will become two nations. From the very beginning, the two nations will be rivals. One nation will be stronger than the other; and your older son will serve your younger son.'*" It was backwards in this culture for a older brother to serve a younger brother. This story tells us that no matter how broken and difficult this relationship may be, there is hope, and with God's help we can move towards peace and wholeness.

Share your thoughts about following questions:

1. Esau and Jacob were very different. Esau was their father Isaac's favorite son and Jacob was the favorite son of their mother Rebekah (Genesis 25:25-28). Favoritism can happen with parents and children, teachers and students, or coaches and players.
 - a. Can you think of a time when you experienced favoritism? Share the experience.
 - b. Favoritism experienced during childhood can create ripples into adulthood. James 2:1 says *"My brothers and sisters, believers in our glorious Lord Jesus Christ must not **show** favoritism."* Discuss the difference between feeling favoritism and showing it.
2. Favoritism, comparison and competition between Esau and Jacob continues in Genesis 25:29-34 and Genesis 27. Instead of their unique skills and abilities blessing each other, the brothers rivalry reached a crisis point.
 - a. People who hear "why can't you be more like..." messages are likely to base their self-worth on how they compare with others. Comparison breeds competition. What else does comparison do?
 - b. Comparison and competition exists beyond siblings. In what ways have you seen comparison erode relationships?
 - c. Read and reflect on this: God doesn't see us the way we see one another; only He knows a person's whole story so comparison is a useless pursuit.
3. Esau and Jacob reconcile after 20 years apart (Genesis 32 and 33). Jacob assumed the worst as he prepares to meet his brother, but Esau's heart changed.
 - a. Do you have a sibling or other relationship that holds hurt from childhood?
 - b. With compassion like Jacob and courage like Esau, who could you ask the question, "What was your experience growing up?", and then simply listen?

Pray together: Ask each other to share what is on your heart today. Thank God that in Him we have hope to move from comparison and competition to connecting and celebrating. Ask Him for the opportunity to heal sibling wounds so we can be blessed by our siblings. Ask Him how to prevent favoritism, comparison and competition in our children and families.