

INTERACTIVE TEACHING/LEARNING GUIDE
Week 10

SESSION TITLE: "Blessing: What Is Of Lasting Value"
FOCAL PASSAGE: (Genesis 25:20-34)

Central Teaching/Learning Aim: To help the learner commit to living life claiming the blessings of his/her spiritual birthright making eternal contributions.

I. Creating Interest in the Series (Hook)

A. Display the following question:

"What is of lasting value?"

Share the following information:

This past week the 77th annual Academy Awards were held. All of the celebrities dress up in their finest clothes to make an appearance at this grand event. Emotional speeches are given and you would think that some of the winners had done something as significant as finding a cure for cancer. The truth is they have just made a movie which has little or no impact on the future of the world.

State – Let me give you a small trivia test to see what lasting value these things possess.

1. What movie won best picture not this year but in 2003?
(“Lord of the Rings: The Return of the King”)
2. Who won best actor in 2003?
(Sean Penn in Mystic River)
3. Who won best supporting actress in 2003?
(Renee’ Zellweger in Cold Mountain)

Another area where participants and fans act like the outcome is of some lasting significance is sports, try to answer these sports trivia questions.

1. What team won the college national championship in 2003?
(USC)
2. What team won the NBA championship in 2003?
(Spurs)
3. What team won the major league baseball championship in 2003?
(Marlins)

State – If we went many years back very few people would remember who won the Academy Awards or sports championships. Go back to the first question: “What is of lasting value?” Allow time for responses.

In today's lesson we see where Esau gave up his birthright (blessing), something of lasting value, for a bowl of soup. We will discuss how we may put more emphasis on the temporal over the eternal.

B. Optional Method – Movie Clip “A Beautiful Mind”

Start: 2:08:00

Stop: 2:38:00

Synopsis: This movie traces the life of genius and Nobel Prize winner John Nash, Jr. who is tortured by paranoid schizophrenia. Nash had many trying episodes in his life. His wife even had to have him committed to an institution. He was determined to get out and resume his teaching at Princeton.

In this scene a member from the Nobel Committee meets with Nash to assess his mental state. In their conversation he admits he still sees things in his mind but, “like a diet of the mind, I just choose not to indulge certain appetites.”

Read – (Genesis 25:29-34)

Ask – What did Esau forfeit when he indulged his appetite? What temporal things do people give into that could have eternal significance?

State – Today we will discuss how to focus on the eternal and not give into the temporal.

II. Book

A. **Utilize** the discussion guide to examine the Scripture passages.

III. Look

A. **Share** the following quote about developing your soul from an unlikely source, Madonna.

Money is like everything. Money is like sex. It's like food. They're all manifestations of God. They're blessings that we get, but they're not what's going to make us happy.

They're not real. They don't last. There's only one thing that lasts, and that's your soul. And if you don't work on that, and you don't pay attention to that, then all the money in the world is not going to help you.

David K. Li, "Again Like A Virgin," NYPost.com (10-07-02)

(Unfortunately Madonna is searching to fill the hole in her soul through a religion of Hebrew mysticism.)

Madonna's comment does have validity. We must concentrate on our spiritual birthright.

Ask – How much time in a given week do you focus on your spiritual blessings compared to earthly indulgences?

Distribute the handout "Living in the Blessing" and guide members to complete it. (Note: This would be an excellent group activity.)

IV. Took

- A. **Display** a picture and share the following information. "The Gates, Central Park, 1979-2005."

The Gates are the creation of artists Christo and Jeanne-Claude. They were only displayed from Feb. 12-28, '05. It took the couple 25-years to get the project approved and completed.

Look at the incredible statistics that went into the project.

- 7500 gates
- 15,000 steel bases
- 315,491 linear feet of saffron colored vinyl tubing
- 1,092,200 square feet of saffron colored rip-stop nylon
- 165,000 matching bolts
- \$20,000,000 what the artist spent

All of this went into something lasting 16 short days.

Ask – Was it worth it? Will anyone remember it 6 months or a year from now?

How can you utilize the blessings of your spiritual birthright this week to invest in the eternal? Where can you make an eternal difference?

- B. **Optional Method - Share** the following letter.

This letter was written by Southern Baptist Missionary to Iraq, Karen Watson, prior to leaving for the Middle East. The letter was dated March 7, 2003. Karen was killed, along with four other missionaries, on March 15, 2004.

Dear Pastor Phil and Pastor Roger:

You should only be opening this letter in the event of my death.

When God calls there are no regrets. I tried to share my heart with you as much as possible, my heart for the nations. I wasn't called to a place. I was called to

him. To obey was my objective, to suffer was expected, his glory my reward, his glory my reward.

One of the most important things to remember right now is to preserve the work....I am writing this as if I am still working with my people group.

I thank you all so much for your prayers and support. Surely your reward in heaven will be great. Thank you for investing in my life and spiritual well-being. Keep sending missionaries out. Keep raising up fine young pastors.

In regards to any service, keep it small and simple. Yes, simply, just preach the gospel....Be bold and preach the life-saving, life-changing, forever-eternal gospel. Give glory and honor to our Father.

The Missionary Heart:

Care more than some think is wise.

Risk more than some think is safe.

Dream more than some think is practical.

Expect more than some think is possible.

I was called not to comfort or success but to obedience....There is no joy outside of knowing Jesus and serving him. I love you two and my church family.

In his care,

Salaam,

Karen

"Keep Sending Missionaries," *Baptist Press* (3-24-04)

State – Karen was truly a person who understood her spiritual birthright. She was willing to "live on the edge" for the cause of Christ.

Ask – How willing are you to get involved or more involved in eternal activities? What can you do this week to make a difference?

DISCUSSION GUIDE
(Teacher's Copy)

1. What is the significance of Rebekah's children struggling even in her womb? (Gen. 25:22-23)
(It signifies the struggle of 2 nations that would come from the twins.)
2. How is this struggle evident today?
3. Which nation would be stronger than the other, Jacob or Esau? (v. 23)
(The older shall serve the younger, Esau was the elder son.)
4. Where did the twin boys get their names?
 - a. Esau – (His appearance – red and hairy)
 - b. Jacob – (His activity – grasping the heel of Esau)
5. What were the characteristics of the two sons and why is this significant?
 - a. Esau – He was a skillful hunter who loved the open country. He would settle his people there eventually.
 - b. Jacob - He liked community. He was more of a city boy.
6. In giving up his birthright, how did Esau choose the temporal indulgence of his appetite over eternal significance?
7. How does the "live for today" attitude affect our society today?
8. Are there areas in your life where you have chosen instant gratification over lasting significance?
9. Jacob lived a life of constrained accountability appealing to the spiritual appetite, what if anything needs to change in your life to focus on spiritual blessings?
10. Are you a good steward of the blessings of your spiritual birthright or have you squandered them?

DISCUSSION GUIDE
(Student's Copy)

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"Living in the Blessings"

Search the following scripture references to discover how blessed your life is and how you should live in these blessings.

1. Ephesians 1:6 *Blessing* _____
How does this blessing give me confidence?

2. 1 Peter 1:3-5 *Blessing* _____
How does this blessing give me hope?

3. 2 Corinthians 1:10 *Blessing* _____
How does this blessing strengthen my faith?

4. John 15:11 *Blessing* _____
How can I be joyful through all circumstances?

5. Ephesians 2:13 *Blessing* _____
When do I feel close to Christ?

6. John 14:27 *Blessing* _____
When do I need the peace of Christ?

7. 2 Corinthians 5:21 *Blessing* _____
What type of steward am I with the righteousness of God?

8. Hebrews 5:9 *Blessing* _____
How does eternal salvation impact my life?

THE Word For The Week

Genesis 27:1-29,41

“Deception: When the End Does Not Justify the Means”

Monday – Read Genesis 27:1-4

- Did Isaac and Rebekah treat their sons equally? (see Genesis 25:28)
- Do you find it difficult to treat those in your family fairly and equally?
- Why do you think Isaac asks Esau to prepare him a special meal?
- What meaning did Isaac’s blessing have for Esau and his inheritance?

Tuesday – Read Genesis 27:5-10

- What do you think motivated Rebekah to betray Isaac and Esau?
- Do you think it is possible for a child to come between parents?
- What were the details of her plan of deception?
- Do you think Rebekah had been formulating this plan for months or do you think it was an impulsive decision?
- In your life, have you been contemplating an act of disobedience? Ask God to cleanse your mind and to give you a pure heart.

Wednesday – Read Genesis 27:11-13

- What is Jacob’s response to his mother’s suggestion?
- How does Rebekah respond to Jacob’s concerns?
- What kind of lesson is Rebekah teaching her son?
- What kind of responsibility do we have as parents to teach our children and lead by example?
- Have you been a positive influence for the children in your life? Ask God to give you strength to live a godly life in front of the moldable minds that are watching.

Thursday – Read Genesis 27:14-29

- How did Jacob’s actions escalate from deceptive behavior to blatant lies? (see vs.24)
- Deception has a ripple effect on many. How did Jacob and Rebekah’s lie affect Isaac? (see vs. 30-33)
- Do you see any similarities between Jacob’s betrayal of Esau and Judas’ betrayal of Jesus? (see Luke 22:47-28)
- Why do you think the people who are closest to us often betray us?

Friday – Read Genesis 27:41

- How did Esau respond to his brother’s betrayal?
- Have you ever been betrayed by someone? How did you respond?
- How do grudges affect our lives?
- Are you holding a grudge that is affecting your walk with God? Ask God to free you from bitterness and to give you a heart of forgiveness.

"Blessing: What is of Lasting Value"
Genesis 25:19-34

(Exegetical . . . What it meant to Israel back THEN)
YHWH'S ORACLE [PROMISE] TO REBEKAH,
(that her older twin son, "Red,"
would serve the younger son, "Grasper,")
FOLLOWING HER DIVINELY ORDAINED CONCEPTION,
BECAME PARTIALLY FULFILLED WHEN
ESAU DESPISED HIS BIRTHRIGHT [BLESSING]
(trading it for a bowl of stew!).

- I. The naming of Esau and Jacob, following Isaac's prayer for conception and Rebekah's inquiry for an oracle which foreshadowed the destiny of the twins and the nations they established, acknowledged Isaac and Rebekah's faith in YHWH (Israel's Lord), (19-26).
 - A. Superscription/Title: "This is what became of Isaac" (and his descendants), (19a).
 - B. Prologue: Abraham's son of promise, Isaac's age at the time of his marriage to Rebekah, a relative from his father Abraham's homeland, was forty, (19b-20).
 - C. The result of Isaac's prayer to YHWH on behalf of his wife Rebekah's Barrenness was YHWH's answering and enabling Rebekah to conceive, (21).
 1. Isaac's response to Rebekah's barrenness was to pray to YHWH, (21a).
 2. The cause of Isaac's prayer was Rebekah's barrenness, (21b).
 3. The result of Isaac's prayer was YHWH's answering and enabling Rebekah to conceive, (21c).
 - D. The result of Rebekah's inquiry to YHWH because of the jostling in her womb was YHWH's oracle of revelation that her twin sons, like the two separate nations that would descend from them, would struggle against one another, with the elder serving the younger, (22-23).
 1. Rebekah's response to her concern over the jostling in her womb was to inquire of YHWH, (22).
 - a. The cause of Rebekah's concern was the jostling in her womb, (22a).
 - b. The concern of Rebekah caused her to wonder, "What's happening?" (22b).
 - c. Rebekah's response to her concern was to inquire of YHWH, (22c).
 2. YHWH's answer to Rebekah's inquiry was an oracle of revelation that her twin sons, like the two separate nations that would descend from them, would struggle against one another, with the elder serving the younger, (23).
 - a. YHWH's oracle revealed that Rebekah carried two nations, (23a).
 - b. YHWH's oracle revealed that the two nations would be separate, (23b).
 - c. YHWH's oracle revealed that the two brothers/nations would struggle, with one dominating the other, (23c).
 - d. YHWH's oracle revealed that the elder brother/nation would serve the younger, (23d).

- e. The naming of the twin boys, Esau (because of his appearance) and Jacob (because of his activity), acknowledged Isaac and Rebekah's faith in the oracle of YHWH, (24-26b).
 - 1. The birth of the twin boys supernaturally fulfilled YHWH's promise/oracle, (24).
 - 2. The naming of the twin boys acknowledged Isaac and Rebekah's faith in the oracle of YHWH, (25-26b).
 - a. The reason for Esau's name was his red and hairy appearance, (25).
 - b. The reason for Jacob's name was his heel-grasping activity, (26a).
 - c. The naming of the twins acknowledged their parent's faith in YHWH.
 - f. Epilogue: Isaac's age at the time of Rebekah's giving birth to the twin sons was sixty, (26b).
- II. Though a skillful hunter in the wild, Esau's selling of the birthright he despised to his brother Jacob, the dependable nomad, for a meal of red stew revealed his character as a profane man of the earth, (27-34).
 - A. Background: The physical growth of Esau and Jacob revealed their distinct characters as "skillful hunter out in the open country" and "dependable nomad among the community" with the result that Isaac, who had a taste for wild game, favored Esau and Rebekah [who remembered YHWH's oracle?] favored Jacob, (27-28).
 - 1. The physical growth of Esau and Jacob revealed their distinct characters as "skillful hunter out in the open country" and "dependable nomad among the community," (27).
 - 2. The revelation of Esau and Jacob's distinct characters resulted in Isaac's (because he had a taste for wild game) favoring Esau, and Rebekah's [because she remembered YHWH's oracle?] favoring Jacob, (28).
 - B. Setting: Jacob's cooking of some stew coincided with Esau's coming in from the field both tired and hungry, (29).
 - C. Conflict: Jacob's demand of Esau was that he swear to surrender his birthright in exchange for some stew, (30-33).
 - 1. Esau's impetuous character, along with his famished physical condition caused him to instruct Jacob to give him some "red stuff, to gulp down, (30a).
 - 2. (Because of Esau's impulsive act in this instance his descendants, who shared his nature, were also called Edom, i.e. "red," (30b).
 - 3. Jacob's response to Esau's instruction was, "Sell me your birthright first (before I give you the stew)," (31).
 - 4. Esau's reply of resignation was, "I am dying of hunger so what good is a birthright to me?" (32).
 - 5. Jacob's further demand was that Esau swear to the fact that he surrendered his birthright to Jacob that day, (33a).
 - D. Resolution: Esau's swearing to give up his birthright, selling it to Jacob that day, resulted in Jacob's giving Esau bread and lentil stew, (33b-34a).
 - E. Esau's response was to eat, drink, get up, and leave, (34b).
 - F. Conclusion: Esau's selling his birthright for some red stew demonstrated that he despised the birthright (and the blessing it represented), (34c).

(Theological . . . What it means to believers ALWAYS)
**THE UNRESTRAINED APPETITE OF THE PROFANE PERSON
FAILS TO ACKNOWLEDGE GOD'S SOVEREIGN PLAN
AND SURRENDERS LASTING SPIRITUAL BENEFITS.**

- I. Acknowledging God's sovereign intervention accompanies the realization of his promised blessing, (19-26).
 - A. God's promise of blessing finds supernatural fulfillment through prayer, (19-21).
 - B. The reception of God's blessing arrives through his sovereign election, (22-23).
 - C. Faithful recipients of God's blessing acknowledge the outworking of His sovereign plan, (24-26).
- II. **Profane people with worldly appetites surrender lasting spiritual benefits, (27-34).**
 - A. The character of the profane gravitates toward life without restraint, (27-28).
 - B. The choices/actions of the profane seek to gratify their natural appetites, (29-34a).
 - C. The values of the profane depreciate the spiritual blessings of God, (34b).

(Pedagogical . . . What it means to us NOW)
**ACKNOWLEDGE GOD'S GRACE IN YOUR LIFE
AS YOU VALUE YOUR SPIRITUAL BIRTHRIGHT.**

- I. Acknowledge God's grace in your life, (20-26).
 - A. We Worship The God Who Makes and Keeps Promises, (19-20).
 1. God Created Us and Blessed Us, (Genesis 1 & 2).
 2. We Rebelled Against God's Control, (Genesis 3).
 3. God Still Promised to Bless Us, (Genesis 3-12).
 4. God's Plan Set Apart Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob . . . David, & Jesus.
 5. Isaac, Abraham's Son was Ready to Advance the Seed of Promise.
 - B. Circumstances Seem to Jeopardize God's Faithfulness.
 1. Rebekah was Barren for Twenty Years After Her Marriage, (21a).
 2. The Twins Seemed About to Kill Their Mother, (22a).
 3. Thinks Look Bad for Us All Too Often.
(God Knows How to Develop Our Faith . . . a la Abraham's Life)
 - C. Seeking God in Confidence Unleashes His Grace.
 1. Isaac Prayed and God Gave a Sovereign Conception, (21).
 2. Rebekah Inquired and God Gave a Sovereign Revelation, (22b-23).
 3. When We Humbly Submit Ourselves to God's Sovereign Plan in Patient and Dependent Prayer, He Blesses Us.
 - D. Acknowledge God's Grace in Your Life.
 1. Isaac and Rebekah Named Their Twin Boys in Acknowledgment of Their Exceptional Births, (24-26).
 2. Acknowledge God's Grace in Your Life.
- II. Value your spiritual birthright.
 - A. Your lifestyle reveals your character.

1. Esau lived a life of unrestrained "freedom", appealing to the natural appetites, (27a & 28a).
 2. Jacob lived a life of constrained accountability, appealing to the spiritual appetite, (27b & 28b).
 3. Your life reveals the appetites of your character . . . profane or spiritual.
- B. Your choices/actions aim to satisfy your appetites.
1. Esau disregarded his spiritual birthright to gratify his impulsive, physical appetite, (27-34a).
 2. Jacob regarded the spiritual birthright, but manipulated Esau to satisfy his spiritual appetite, (27-34a).
 3. Your choices/actions satisfy both natural and spiritual appetites.
- C. Value your spiritual birthright.
1. Esau despised his spiritual birthright, (34b). (see Hebrews 12:16-17)
 2. Jacob valued the spiritual birthright, (31).
 3. Value your spiritual birthright.