

ESAU

Making the Bible Come Alive

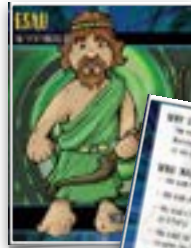
The spontaneous one

WHO WAS THIS PERSON?

- Esau was the first born son of Isaac and Rebekah.
- Esau had a twin brother: Jacob.
- Isaac preferred Esau, because he liked game, while Rebekah preferred Jacob.
- His grandfather was Abraham and his grandmother Sarah.
- Esau liked hunting and the outdoors. He was hairy and red-haired (Genesis 25:20-28).
- Esau was born first. Usually the firstborn received the birthright blessing from his father. For Esau, the birthright meant that he would be the head of the family and would have more land and animals to help him take care of his family. But Esau cared more about himself than his family, and he disobeyed his parents and the Lord (Genesis 25:25, 32; 26:34-35).
- At the age of 40, Esau married two women from the land of Canaan. Isaac and Rebekah were very unhappy about this, because these women did not worship God.
- The Edomites were Esau's descendants.

WHAT IS THIS PERSON KNOWN FOR?

- Esau, being born first, was to receive the blessing of the birthright from his father. This meant that Esau would be the head of the family and would have more land and animals to help him take care of his family. But Esau cared more about himself than his family and disobeyed his parents and the Lord (Genesis 25:25, 32; 26:34-35).
- One day, when he returned from hunting, he was very hungry and begged Jacob for a plate of lentils. Jacob asked Esau to exchange the birthright for the lentil dish. Esau agreed, giving up his birthright to Jacob (Genesis 25:23, 29-34; Hebrews 11:20).
- Then, when it was time for Esau to receive the birthright from his father Isaac, he went hunting to prepare his favorite meal. Then Jacob dressed up like Esau and brought a meal to his father. Isaac then gave Jacob the blessing of the birthright. When Esau returned from the hunt, he was very angry with Jacob, so much so that he



talked about killing him. But the birthright was given to Jacob (Genesis 27:18-29). It was too late.



WHY DO YOU THINK THIS PERSON HAS BEEN INCLUDED IN GOD'S STORY?

- **Our mistakes and imperfections do not disqualify us from God's plan or prevent us from serving him.** The people in the Bible were not all perfect and God needed each of them, even if they were imperfect, to accomplish his plan. Despite his error, God's salvation came through Jacob.
- **God restores everything.** It is striking how forgiveness took place between these brothers. As Jacob returned to the land to see Esau (Genesis 33), we saw a change in his heart. Jacob was no longer focused on his personal gain. As he prepared to meet Esau, Jacob prayed, "I am not worthy of all the unfailing love and faithfulness you have shown to me, your servant. ...I am afraid that he is coming to attack me, along with my wives and children." (Genesis 32:10-12). God had trained Jacob to be a repentant man who cared about his family. We could see the change in Esau as well. After losing his blessing, Esau had threatened to kill his brother. That's why Jacob was afraid to see him again. Yet the Bible says, "Then Esau ran to meet him and embraced him, threw his arms around his neck, and kissed him. And they both wept." (Genesis 33:4).
- **We see how God can redeem even the messiest situations in our lives.** Even if we think it was impossible to forgive, God is able to work out the hardest of hearts and bring reconciliation between family members or friends. Under God's loving hand, forgiveness and redemption are always possible.
- **God works against the grain.** By choosing to establish the plan of redemption through Jacob, the youngest brother, God went against what the world said. Jacob was not a hero, nor were Moses, David, Rahab, Ruth, Peter and Paul. God chooses the weak in the eyes of the world to glorify himself. Salvation does not happen by our strength or means, but by responding to the invitation, through the Holy Spirit, of Jesus who died for us. By seeing how God acted in the life of Jacob, imperfect as he was, we can see how God can still be there in all the trials and adventures

of our lives. We see in the true story of Jacob, how God can work beyond our expectations.

- **A man must have control over his hunger.** What caused Esau to lose his father's blessing was that he had sold his birthright to Jacob (Genesis 25:29-34). Jacob said, "but trade me your rights as the firstborn son." And Esau said, "Look, I'm dying of starvation!" "What good is my birthright to me now?" And Jacob said, "First you must swear that your birthright is mine." So Esau swore an oath, thereby selling all his rights as the firstborn to his brother, Jacob. Then Jacob gave Esau some bread and lentil stew. Esau ate the meal, then got up and left. He showed contempt for his rights as the firstborn." Because of his hunger, Esau lost the awareness that he was the firstborn. He just wanted to fill his stomach because he was hungry. A man must have self-control over his stomach. Hunger should not control a man. In Galatians 5:22, we see that self-control is part of the fruit of the Spirit and we must value the things God gives us before our own. Putting God first even if it means eating after others.

- **Blessing is not without its struggles.** We may think that the life of blessing is easy and trouble-free. But that's not what we see with Jacob, nor with other heroes of the faith. Jacob's life was filled with struggles or trials. The blessing he received from Isaac, came with threats of murder and a separation from his family. He immediately had to move away from his family because he feared for his life. God's blessings do not mean that we will not have difficulties, but Jesus promises to be with us through every moment of our lives. God's blessing reminds us that God is there in our lives. As Jacob discovered at Bethel, "Surely the Lord is in this place" (Genesis 28:16). To be blessed by God is to know that our lives are under God's redemptive work. Despite the rivalry, favouritism, deceit, anger and bickering, the true story of Jacob and Esau shows us a God who works in people's lives. God was present in the lives of the twins. As imperfect as we may be, or like Jacob, make poor choices, we can trust God's love for us.

LIFE APPLICATION QUESTIONS:

Pose the following two questions to your children, one at a time. Allow for interaction and discussion, letting them share their thoughts while you guide the conversation.

- What life lessons can I learn from this Bible character about how I should and should not live?





- Based on what I have learned from this Bible character, how can I live in a way that is pleasing to God.

MORE IN GOD'S WORD

Challenge yourself to find five minutes each day for a week, to quiet your spirit, finding a spot where you are not distracted, and practice just listening to God and being in tune with Him. Take your Bible to that quiet place. Use some of that time to pray, and some time to just meditate on His Word. Keep your ears and your heart open to what God is wanting to say to you. It's not a matter of IF He wants to talk to you. He does want to speak. But, He also wants you to be ready and positioned for listening, so you can actually hear in your heart what He is saying. Then, respond in obedience with a heart that is open to what God would have you to do. God called Samuel three times. How many times is He calling you? The more you spend time in His presence, the less He will have to try calling you over and over again. Maybe you will hear His voice the very first time He calls!