

Family portrait

Genesis 25:24-34; 27:1-45

Isaac and Rebekah should have suspected from the start that there wasn't going to be a whole lot of brotherly love between their twins, Esau and Jacob. Before they were born, Rebekah could feel them jostling each other inside of her. Then the Lord told Rebekah that the older would serve the younger (usually just the opposite was true in ancient cultures). Finally, when the twins were born, the younger one came out grasping the heel of his brother. Family life in Isaac and Rebekah's household went downhill from there.

The Bible paints a sad picture of selfishness, favoritism, deception, and alienation in describing Isaac's family.

► Read about this family in Genesis 25:24-34; 27:1-45

- From the start, Esau and Jacob weren't anything alike. Describe some of their differences, including appearances and interests.
- Read Genesis 25:28. What's the problem this verse describes? How do you think it affected Esau and Jacob? What about Isaac and Rebekah?
- Scan today's Scripture text and list things members of Isaac's family did that you think were harmful—whether to themselves or another person.
- What advice would you give to Isaac and his family about getting along?

Genesis 25:24-34; 27:1-45

^{25:27} The boys grew up, and Esau became a skillful hunter, a man of the open country, while Jacob was content to stay at home among the tents. ²⁸Isaac, who had a taste for wild game, loved Esau, but Rebekah loved Jacob.

^{27:4} Rebekah said to her son Jacob, "Look, I overheard your father say to your brother Esau, 'Bring me some game and prepare me some tasty food to eat, so that I may give you my blessing in the presence of the Lord before I die.' Now, my son, listen carefully and do what I tell you: 'Go out to the flock and bring me two choice young goats, so I can prepare some tasty food for your father, just the way he likes it. 'Then take it to your father to eat, so that he may give you his blessing before he dies.'"

³⁰After Isaac finished blessing him and Jacob had scarcely left his father's presence, his brother Esau came in from hunting. ³¹He too prepared some tasty food and brought it to his father. Then he said to him, "My father, please sit up and eat some of my game, so that you may give me your blessing."

³²His father Isaac asked him, "Who are you?" "I am your son," he answered, "your firstborn, Esau."

³³Isaac trembled violently and said, "Who was it, then, that hunted game and brought it to me? I ate it just before you came and I blessed him—and indeed he will be blessed!"

³⁴Esau held a grudge against Jacob because of the blessing his father had given him. He said to himself, "The days of mourning for my father are near; then I will kill my brother Jacob."

⁴²When Rebekah was told what her older son Esau had said, she sent for her younger son Jacob and said to him, "Your brother Esau is planning to avenge himself by killing you. Now then, my son, do what I say: Flee at once to my brother Laban in Haran. Stay with him for a while until your brother's fury subsides. When your brother is no longer angry with you and forgets what you did to him, I'll send word for you to come back from there. Why should I lose both of you in one day?"

devos daily faith

»mon

Being selfish comes naturally to us. Ask God to do something *supernatural* in you and to help you be less selfish at home.

»tues

Considering others above ourselves doesn't mean putting ourselves down, but changing that "me-first" attitude. Pray for ways you can put your family's interests before yours.

»wed

We always want our parents to understand *us*. Thank God for your parents and ask Him to help you understand how *they* might be feeling.

»thurs

Do something loving for a family member today, but keep it between you and God. Thank God for each member of your family.

»fri

Jesus said that He came to serve, not to be served. With God's help, follow Jesus' example in your family.

»sat

Many times it's the people we love who can hurt us the most. Ask the Lord for the eyes to see His goodness in them.

Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves.

— Philippians 2:3

LOVE each other

Single, blended, or traditional. It's hard to define "family" these days. Today's households may choose to have children or remain childless. They may choose to adopt children from overseas or to raise foster children. Family might mean step brothers and sisters or grandparents raising their grandchildren. And it's not uncommon for more than one family to live together or for extended family to live in one home.

What is family? Simply put, a Christian family is one that places God at its head and heart. A family that does not have God as its foundation cannot experience spiritual connection with Him. Read Psalm 127 and 128 to gain a sense of the importance God places on the family. Furthermore, the Bible tells us not to neglect our families, to honor them, to care for their physical and spiritual growth. What is family? Family is a blessing, one of God's greatest resources. This includes our immediate family as well as our brothers and sisters in the world—our spiritual family.

Jesus dealt with the family of humankind in

surprising ways. He was kind and helpful toward people with problems (Matt. 4:23-24). He rebuked hypocrites who claimed to love God while misinterpreting Scripture for their own benefit (Matt. 22:15-22). He recognized when a person was behaving under the influence of demons (Mark 1:21-27). He practiced "tough love" (Matt. 16:21-23) and offered humbling forgiveness (John 21:15-19). He was compassionate, yet He never compromised fulfilling His Father's will (Luke 19:1-10). At its core, Jesus' love is family-driven—that is, He longs for each of us to join His holy family. When we abide in Him we're family.

Jesus commanded: Love each other as I have loved you" (John 15:12). He demonstrated the depth of His love by laying down His life for us all (John 15:13). Reflect upon Jesus' deep love for His mother when with His dying breaths He made sure that she would be taken care of after His crucifixion (John 19:25-27). What better proof than this, that the Son of God lovingly practiced what He preached.





DIFFERENT IS NOT WRONG

Differences in people can sometimes cause friction, especially in families. Knowing what these differences are can help people get along with each other. Different is not wrong—people can react to the same things in different but still acceptable ways.

The following activity is a way to help you understand how people in your family approach different situations. After each characteristic, write the initials of those family members, including yourself, who fit that trait. If someone's initials show up more than three times in a column, write that person's name down.

Be careful here—putting labels on people is always dangerous. Just when you think you've got them figured out, they step out of the box in which you've put them. There are as many different personalities in the world as there are people. (This is not a personality test; such tests should only be given by trained professionals.) This activity is just to help you see the way people in your family tend to act.



When working on a project, “Bookers” will want to follow the instructions, while “Hunchers” want to “wing it.” Bookers may seem too materialistic and literal-minded to Hunchers; Hunchers may seem like fickle, impractical dreamers to Bookers.

"BY THE BOOK" PEOPLE LIKE TO . . .

- _____ do the detail work.
- _____ live in the here and now.
- _____ handle practical matters.
- _____ deal with things that are definite and measurable.
- _____ start at the beginning, taking one step at a time.
- _____ read instructions.
- _____ follow set procedures and established routines.

"HUNCH" PEOPLE LIKE TO . . .

- _____ see how all the details are related.
- _____ look toward the future, anticipating what might be.
- _____ imagine possibilities.
- _____ be inventive.
- _____ jump in anywhere; leap over steps.
- _____ skip directions; follow a gut feeling.
- _____ experience change and variety.

THINKERS . . .

- _____ decide with their heads.
- _____ do the logical thing.
- _____ are mostly concerned for truth and justice.
- _____ see things from the viewpoint of a spectator.
- _____ view things from a distance.
- _____ tend to be critical.
- _____ are good at analyzing plans.

FEELERS . . .

- _____ decide with the heart.
- _____ go by personal convictions.
- _____ are mostly concerned for relationships and harmony.
- _____ see things from the viewpoint of a participant.
- _____ take an immediate and personal view.
- _____ tend to be appreciative.
- _____ are good at understanding people.

For Instance:



In an argument, **Thinkers** will focus on right and wrong, while **Feelers** concentrate on the people involved. **Thinkers** may seem cold and condescending to **Feelers**; **Feelers** may seem fuzzy-minded and emotional to **Thinkers**.