

Sermon-Based Small Group Bible Study

Provoking Grace: Fooling, Being Fooled, Finding Grace (Genesis 27:1–45)

Open

Select one of these “ice breakers” to get the conversation going toward the study.

- Did you ever fall for a sales pitch or an advertisement and later regret it?
- What was your favorite Halloween costume as a kid (or as an adult, if you still do that kind of thing)?
- Do you have something you prize that’s been passed down to you? What is it, and why do you prize it?

Dig

This is a long story, so we will read it in parts and discuss as we go.

1. Read Genesis 27:1–17. What do you see happening in this family? What are Rebekah and Jacob risking with their conspiracy, and what do they hope to gain from it?
2. Read Genesis 27:18–29. As the story is told, when do you see Jacob having an opportunity to “come clean” about his deception? What do you sense of the atmosphere in this scene?
3. Look at the words of Isaac’s blessing in verses 27–29. What does this show Isaac wants for his favored son? For his other son? What might be different here if Isaac recognized God’s promise and blessing aren’t in short supply?
4. Read Genesis 27:30–40. What do you see here that confirms the depth of Jacob’s deception? That confirms the extent of Isaac’s greedy favoritism for Esau?
5. Read Genesis 27:41–45. What has now happened to this family? Does it appear Jacob has obtained a blessing or forfeited a blessing?

Summary: Jacob and Rebekah’s conspiracy to deceive Isaac reflects poorly on everyone in the story. All go astray because they believe God’s blessing is limited, that if one has more, the other has less. They cannot yet conceive of a God who can provide for all, and so they try to take God’s blessing into their own hands. God had promised Abraham, Isaac’s father, that God would through Abraham’s seed bless all nations. Isaac and family knew the power and grace of God from the story of that blessing, from Isaac’s birth to elderly, childless parents, and from God’s provision of a ram in place of Isaac for sacrifice. Their greed, conniving, and vindictiveness all ignore God’s grace. But God’s grace isn’t finished. God will pursue them. His grace will provoke them. We need to stay tuned.

Reflect

Use any of these prompts to encourage group members to apply the text to their own experiences.

- Have you learned a lesson about God’s grace “the hard way”? If you’re comfortable, share it.
- What do you tend to “scheme for” that God has promised to provide? How would things be different for you if you rested in that promise?
- Have you ever seen interpersonal relationships improve because someone was living with trust in God’s grace? What was that like?

Pray

Invite the group to pray together using any of these suggestions.

- What needs have you heard from others in the group that we can pray about?
- Is there an area of life in which you need to scheme less and trust more? Can we pray about that with you?
- Are there some relationships that need repairing? Can we pray about that with you?