

Faith of our Youth

inside...

Although the story of Jacob and Esau is familiar to many people, the root problems involved seem to be missed all too frequently when the topic is being discussed. While Jacob was without excuse in regard to his actions, the ultimate problem was in the thinking of Esau. The line of thinking that lead to his loss is one of Satan's favorite snares. This is what will be addressed in this article. I hope that it will provoke thought and be of some use to each reader.

The portion of the story that we will be dealing with is found in Gen. 25:27-34.

Consider a condensed summary of each point.

1. Although Esau was a SKILLED HUNTER, (V.27) he opted for the quick and easy way to deal with the situation instead of exerting himself and using what he had.

2. His view of reality was warped and distorted. Was he ACTUALLY about to die?? (V. 32) It's doubtful. Quite possibly this was the way he felt, but it was nowhere near the case.

3. Esau acted in a short-sighted

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Annoyed by Blessings?

Amy Swearingin

Not very many weeks ago I joined the thronging millions who make up the American work force. I was fresh out of college, bright-eyed, bushy tailed and as "green" as they come. I eagerly recruited two car pool companions to share the 30 minute drive to work (partly out of my environmentally conscious nature but mostly because it saves me money on gas). I can honestly say that I had never noticed (much less cared) how often a person blinks their eyes. But the most amazing thing happened to me the morning of October 10th. I was sitting in the back seat of a small two door car while one of my car pool companions drove (did I mention that the car was small?). I was sitting in just the right position to see his eyes in the rear view mirror. At first I did not notice what would soon consume my entire trip that morning. It wasn't long, however, until I fixated on the number of times the

unassuming driver was blinking. The more I watched, the more annoyed I became. He blinked his eyes every 3-4 seconds during the entire ride to work. I started comparing the number of his eye blinks to mine and realized that he blinked, on average, 2-3 times more often than I did. Now, I have no idea why this began to annoy me so much.

Perhaps I was concerned that he could not focus on the road between his rapid eye blinking. Maybe my eyes became sympathetically tired watching him blink so often. Or it could be (and probably was because) I was looking for something that I would allow to irritate me

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Do You Fear God?

Abby Woody

The Fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge, but fools despise wisdom and instruction"

—Proverbs 1:7—

What exactly does it mean to "fear" the Lord? In Webster's New World Dictionary, fear is referred to with such words as fright, awe, and reverence. Can we as Christians, truly say we are frightened of the Lord? Do we truly hold the Lord in reverence?

In Proverbs 3:7 it states *"Do not be wise in your own eyes; fear the Lord and depart from evil"*. In thinking we are wise in our own eyes we are not fearing and being reverent to the one and only true God. Only the foolish are full of pride, so let us depart from all evil foolishness. Being boastful before the Lord can be no more than a hindrance to us all.

Pertaining to wisdom and knowledge, Proverbs 3:13 reads; *"Happy is the man who finds wisdom and the man who gains understanding"*. We may all gain happiness in the fear of the Lord, because fear is the beginning of knowledge. By studying His Holy Scripture and singing praises and praying to Him, we gain knowledge.

In conclusion, my thoughts are summed up in Ecclesiastes 12:13; *"Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God and keep His commandments for this is the whole duty of Man."*

Abby Woody lives in Brighton, IL. She is in the eighth grade and plays on the basketball team. She is a member of the Lord's church at Prince Road in Alton, IL.

"Jacob" (Continued from page 1)

manner. In his immediate hunger he placed a bowl of soup above his most prized possessions and later regretted his hasty actions.

4. Esau despised his birthright. Rather than placing importance and honor on the gift that had been given to him, he lowered it to a level that made it of no practical importance.

Even though we should learn from mistakes, most of us will never (hopefully) have the time to make them all and, therefore, should learn from the mistakes of others. The spiritual applications to this story are

quite possibly endless. Temptations are sometimes like the hunger that Esau felt. Although we have a way to deal with them effectively through God's help, (1Cor 10:13—*There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man; but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it.*), the tendency is to want a quick and easy way out. When this happens we all too often don't try to find God's way out just as Esau failed to try to find food. Our reality can become distorted and warped and to prevent this we have to redirect our focus.

"I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God."

—Rom. 12:1-2—

Everything starts to look a whole lot better when we realize that our faith is much more than a nice (but empty) idea to pacify us and God almighty is more than that. We can never lose reality, only our illusions of it. This is because the truth of God's reality is constant. When our attitudes and thoughts begin to coincide with those of Christ we can begin to see clearly. We must never forget that although we WILL have tests and temptations they are either for our ultimate good or because of our lust. *"My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations; Knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience. But let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing."*

—James 1:2-4—

Faith in action is quite often realizing that God is the ultimate controller and has given us a gift beyond any physical birthright. This line of thought can enable the Christian to escape the trap of short-sighted thinking and have hope in the ultimate prize.

Last, but absolutely not least, we must hold the GIFT of Christ in higher esteem than anything else. Period. As long as the thought of crucifying Christ again (Heb. 6:4-8) for the sake of something (a temporary pleasure or a quick fix) despicable and filthy horrifies us, temptation will be bearable if not easy. We have become brothers to Christ (Heb. 2:9-18) because of his willingness to give himself. Will we give that up for a bowl of soup?

John Baugh lives in Cottage Hills, IL. He is currently attending Ranken Technical College in St. Louis, Mo., majoring in automotive technology. He will soon graduate and hopes to work in the automotive field while continuing his education in music. He is a member at the Prince Road church of Christ that meets in Alton, Ill.

"Only the foolish are full of pride."

"Temptations are sometimes like the hunger that Esau felt."

HERE & THERE

SMART ROAD Brandon Lee is going to Longview. Wade Stanley is at Warrensburg. Brad Bratcher went to Tan-Tara for four days as part of a music trip performing for a music educators convention. Shannon Tegtmeyer is down in Springfield going to school. Darren Tegtmeyer and Kyle Stevens are working this semester. Kevin Hobbs busted up his knee in a skiing accident. Currently he is on crutches, but he is going to need surgery.

SUMMERSVILLE Jason Greear was off lifting weights when I first tried to get him. He reports that the church has a new roof but, more importantly, they think they have the air conditioner fixed. He's working at a saw mill with his dad. Meanwhile, sister Jodie is playing volleyball and going to SMSU at West Plains. Jennifer and Jeannine Ross are at Bolivar in school. The former is thinking about nursing, and the latter is into physical therapy. She had some practical experience working for the football team. Heather Vaughn is at UMR at Rolla enrolled in the engineering program.

ITASCA Danielle Schrage's school is expanding because it's crowded. She's

getting ready to start badminton season, that will mean 3 hours a day practices and looking forward to competition with other high schools. The gangs at school are getting worst, so she stays safe by sticking with the right people. She enjoys being pen pals with Emily Rogers and hopes to visit her during spring break.

MURRAY ROAD Ben Morris is about the only teen that's left during school time. Many are away at other colleges. He's involved in debate now that the music season is finished. John and Jeremy are at SMSU in Springfield. Kathy Germann is going to cosmetology school and will be finished in Sept.

LAWRENCE Michelle Martin is applying for LPN school this fall. She's going to Johnson County Community College. Jed Spencer is at K-State. He enjoys the school life and is going into landscaping. He currently is attending a congregation that lost its minister and is interested in trying mutual ministry. Karen Spencer is at SMSU and will be doing her student teaching this fall. Chris Allen (from Nixa) is going to KU in the architectural program.

ARTICLE & SONG WRITING WORKSHOP

Date: Saturday, April 8, 1995

Time: 9:00 a.m. — 5:00 p.m.

Place: Church of Christ, Ozark, Missouri

Instructors/Topics:

James Baysinger: Development of material for tracts or short newspaper articles that grab attention.

Lewis Garbi: Song writing techniques (lyrics and music) for new hymns and spiritual songs.

Glen Owens: Hands on development of a short article for a church bulletin.

Tom Woody: Effective writing for the communication of the "Gospel Message". What an editor looks for in a good article for publication.

The congregation will provide lunch and dinner. If you plan to attend, it is important you sent a note of registration to help make arrangements.

Writing Workshop, % Dwain Stoops
401 E. Mt. Vernon, Nixa, Missouri 65714

Young Christians—

—For making "FOOY" an edifying and encouraging medium for sharing faith, truth, and news. The response has been great from writers/reporters to readers. The mailing list is up to near 250 and growing. We encourage others to submit articles and reports for the June issue.

"JOURNAL OF FAITH"

A book of timely sermons by nine Evangelist & preachers with over 400 years of aggregate experience and wisdom in the Faith, is scheduled for publication in mid-1995. Young and old alike will greatly benefit from these "lessons for tomorrow". More info will be forthcoming.....

*Thank
You!*

**Coming
Soon!**

"Annoyed" (Continued from page 1)

that day. Have you ever done that? Unconsciously, but intentionally, looked for something to bother you. Something you could "gripe about" for the day.

It is amazing (and always disappointing) how many of life's little things I let bother me. Slow traffic, driver's who don't use their turn signal, people who pick their nose in public, socks lost (seemingly miraculously) from my laundry, misplaced car keys, constant telephone calls...the list goes on and on. Have you ever noticed how many of our irritants come from our abundance of blessings? We would never be bothered by slow traffic, misplaced car keys and absence of turn signals if we did not have a car. I would not know there was any other way to rid myself of nasal discharge if there were no such thing as Kleenex! All in all it is safe to say that most of my annoyances come from my blessings. That sounds strange, doesn't it? How about you? Where do most of your annoyances come from? Think about it.

Let's consider Christ. I wonder what bothered Him? Slow camel traffic? A lack of Kleenex in someone's pocket? I doubt it. How about disciples who could never quite figure it all out despite His constant teaching? How about multitudes who saw nothing more than His ability to feed and heal them while ignoring His divinity? How about a rebellious nation who He knew would eventually put Him to death? Have you ever had any of these "bothers" in your life? Can you imagine healing the very person who would chant for the authorities to kill you? Have you ever stopped to think that some of the very people Christ healed were among the crowd who shouted for His death?

As humans it can sometimes be all too tempting to let the world annoy us to the point that we actually don't care if they go to hell. I thank God daily that Christ's attitude wasn't like mine at times. What is our attitude to be? I Co. 2:16 says we are to "have the mind of Christ." *"For who hath known the mind of the Lord, that he may instruct him? But we have the mind of Christ."*

Paul gives us the perfect remedy for our attitude problems in Phil. 4: 8.

IN HIS SERVICE

In a recent survey of 3,795 "Christian" young people, 74 % said they were looking for answers! I don't know if you would fit into that category, but I remember times (and even to this moment) when I could have used some answers. I do realize that I haven't always stood firm with the truth. I have played a game with the world called "That may be right/wrong for you, but what has that to do with me." I didn't play this game intentionally. It was a sneaky game. One that I found myself playing unaware most of the time that the game had even started. I would like to take a moment of your time to explain the truth about the truth!

The Psalmist calls God the "God of Truth." Truth is a part of God's nature. He brought truth to this world in the form of his Son. Jesus claimed, "I am the way, the truth, and the life." (Jn. 14:6) Jesus promised his apostles that He would send the Spirit of truth as their helper (Jn. 14:16-17). Paul later tells us that we have the Spirit within us (Rom. 8:9), and that the Spirit is a seal of His ownership (2 Cor. 1:21,22).

There are times these days when one is not sure about truth or its application in our lives. God and his Son are truth and they sent the Spirit of truth to reside within you as their promise of always being with you. There are lessons of truth that can be found all through the Word. You may be thinking that the Bible is pretty old, so it might not be very current with today's problems. Remember, truth is always truth. The truth of gravity doesn't change just because it's been around a long time. God's truth doesn't change either. If you want the truth about sex, honesty, family relationships, love, justice, mercy, respect, self-control, and many more issues, God's word will lay it out for you when you're ready to hear. If you want some answers about the issues of life look into the Truth.

Thanks for your faith young people. Stay strong and grow.

Dan Green

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"Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable - if anything is excellent or praiseworthy - think about such things."

—Phil. 4: 8—

Amy Swearingin, Ozark, MO

"MUSIC" (Continued from page 6)

It occurred to me that their singing without the help of an instrument was just a carried-over "country" custom based on ignorance of cultural change or lack of funds to buy an instrument. The increased spiritual aspect of singing unaccompanied had not occurred to me, although I recalled how thrilling it had been to sing with an a cappella choir when in college. As I became better acquainted with the church members, I found them to be highly intelligent and far from the "country" classification. The lessons given were intellectual, thoughtful, thought-provoking, which certainly could not have risen from ignorance of the world of today. My respect for their sincerity in their worship grew.

During their study of music in the church several members took part in the discussion. One person remarked that instrumental music had an emotional rather than a spiritual appeal. While thinking about this I came to realize that the words were the spiritual part of a hymn, not the music. More thought about this convinced me to admit to myself that the pieces I had played on the organ for church services had been deliberately chosen for their emotional appeal, not for spiritual depth. Music I had chosen for choirs which I directed had been chosen for its dramatic, emotional, or entertaining appeal to the congregation. My "house of cards" was beginning to collapse! The conclusion that I had been guilty of entertaining the congregation really shook me.

I had always felt that God had given me this musical talent and that I was using it to glorify Him. But when I thought honestly about it I remembered how pleasant it was to have people compliment me on the music I had played or the music the choir had sung. How proud I was to "perform" a difficult Bach Prelude and Fugue! I had not been glorifying God; I had been glorifying myself! Actually I had presented a theatrical performance of organ music. My "house of cards" tumbled down further.

Thinking about the choirs I had directed brought back memories of how people in the denominational churches would complain to me as "Minister of Music" about this choir member's fancy hair-do, or that choir member's dangling earrings, or one choir member's trying to "steal the show" by singing too loud and drowning out the rest of the choir, or a choir member who looked over the congregation to see who was in attendance and what they were wearing or several choir members whispering to each other during the service. All these complaints were true and proved to me that a choir was a distraction to worship, not a contribution to the spiritual atmosphere of a worship service.

When a soloist "performed" in a worship service, the congregation who listened were judging the color and quality of his or her voice, the physical appearance or mannerisms of the soloist. The spiritual import of the words or message of the song were just incidental. Remarks made to me by members of the congregation after these solos showed some soloists to be star entertainers, and other soloists disliked for one reason or another. Again I realized that the choir's part in the worship service had been a theatrical performance with very little spiritual impact.

When hymns were sung by the congregation accompanied by the organ, which was supposed to support and make the congregational singing better, the singing was half-hearted with scarce attention given to the meaning of the words. Some members stood with open books, closed mouths, watching and listening to others who participated. Any member brave enough to sing loudly and whole-heartedly was the recipient of stares and smiles from other members of the "audience". The idea of worshipping God with the potent of the words of the hymn was definitely overlooked. To me, now, the message in the words of a hymn are more meaningful without the instrumental accompaniment. Congregational singing in all churches of Christ which I have attended far surpasses that of any church I had been associated with which used instrumental accompaniment. The emotional impact of the words of the hymn is sincere worship and all members participate from their hearts in the churches of Christ.

Again, I really began to capitulate when I had to agree that instrumental music was a "frill" added to a service of worship. Instrumental music and choirs, I realized, were really used as an attraction to get people to attend church. People had actually said to me, "I go to church to hear the music". I must confess I had done the same thing when I attended a church where my organ teacher was playing—just to hear him play. The realization had come to me that the appeal of a church should be its pervading spiritual atmosphere. This spiritual atmosphere was what had first attracted me to the church of Christ. I was hungry for the spiritual food from a serious concentrated study of God's word. I still feel like a "babe" in Christ with a "desire for the sincere milk of the word".

On February 16, 1975 a brother in this church of Christ gave a lesson on becoming a member of the Body of Christ which inspired me to take definite action and I went forward to be added to the church. Five years later, I am convinced, more than ever, that this is the true church of Christ.

In the beginning I thought, "They can't ask me to give up playing for churches. That's my profession. That's the way I make my living. Would anyone else be asked to give up his trade or vocation? It's just not fair!" Then I remembered how some fisherman, a tax collector, and a tent builder had given up their vocations to follow Jesus. The financial reward I had been receiving from playing an organ for the denominational churches became insignificant to me. I had faith to believe that all things would work out for good, that God would take care of me, which He has certainly done. My class of piano students has greatly enlarged and I am financially ahead of where I was when playing the organ for a church in the city.

The Bible study has really helped me. This had never been true of any church with which I had formerly been associated. It is wonderful to be associated with my brothers and sisters in Christ's family of the church of Christ in Ozark. They have helped me through good times and bad times. I love the church and Jesus Christ more than ever before. It is my prayer that God will continue to perfect my christian citizenship in His Kingdom.

Alta May Lumbard, M.Mus.

"I came to realize that the words were the spiritual part of a hymn, not the music".

"Instrumental music and choirs...were really used as an attraction to get people to attend church."

EDITORIAL REFLECTIONS

Why do we worship God by singing without instrumental music?

My young friends, "How do you answer this question?" "Because my parents have always worshipped that way," is not a convincing answer. With the common use of instruments in religious services today, it's not easy to convince people this is an "un-scriptural" practice. They will say, "Isn't it just an old fashion idea that hasn't kept up with the times?"

For those who struggle to answer this question, I encourage you to give thoughtful consideration to the following letter written by a devout christian woman whose personal struggle with this question provides strong testimony of the truth. The story of her journey provides a rare insight into the mind and thoughts of a sincere, truth-seeking person, whose heart God had open, as Lydia in Phillipi. Her struggle was not easy, because you see, this ladies' entire life had been dedicated to music. From her early training to teaching and performing, music was the passion and sustenance of her life. She studied music abroad under the masters, had a Masters degree in Music, and, indeed, was a maestro on the piano and organ and director of choirs. With her talent, she was the "Minister of Music" in denominational churches in the East.

At the time of her conversion, she was

supplementing her retirement income by playing the organ for various church services. All this makes her honest reasoning and unbiased arguments more convincing even to the most dedicated "instrumental" worship advocate, as she was. Her spiritual journey was, indeed, remarkable. She began as a young student of the masters and finished, upon her death, as a humble disciple of the "MASTER". — DRS—

MY JOURNEY FROM INSTRUMENTAL TO NON-INSTRUMENTAL WORSHIP

The people in this church of Christ were so warm and friendly, it made me want to understand why they worshipped without instrumental music. (It was a temptation to me to respond by going forward right away.) But I felt I would be a hypocrite to identify with them and thus show my gratitude in a false way. So I was very pleased when they began a study of music in the church. Incidentally, this study had been planned before they knew me. This was exactly what I was wanting to know—why they felt as they did about instrumental music in a worship service. At the outset I was certain that I would be able to refute any points they might bring up. I began a close search of the Bible to get my "ammunition" ready to shoot down their defense of non-instrumental music in a worship service.

(See "MUSIC" on page 5)

Faith of our Youth

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inside...

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