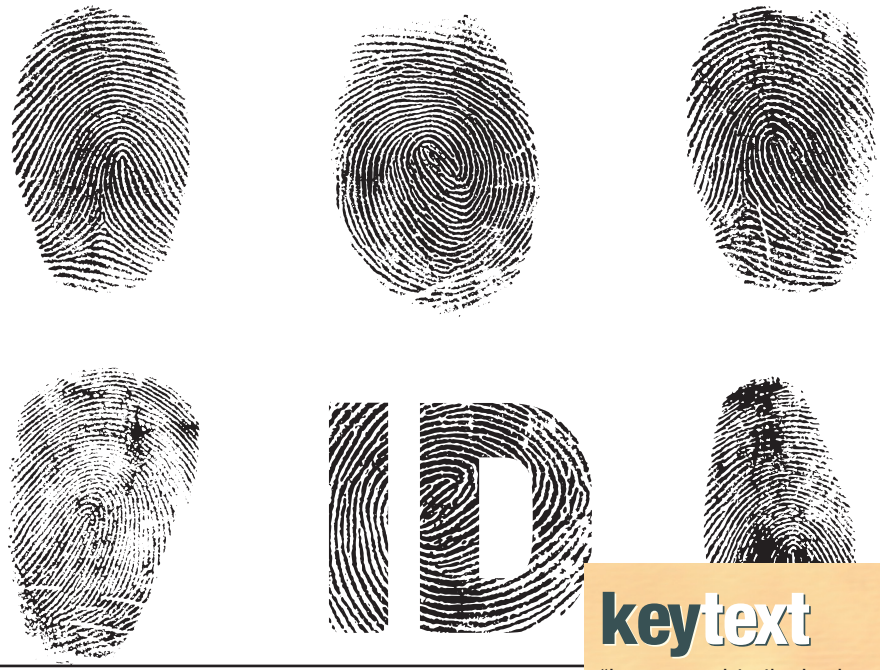
CORNERSTONE CONNECTIONS

MARCH 16 2019

Scripture Story: Genesis 25:19-34; 27.
Commentary: *Patriarchs and Prophets* (or *Beginning of the End*), chapter 16.

identity theft



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flashlight

"When, after his sin in deceiving Esau, Jacob fled from his father's home, he was weighed down with a sense of guilt. Lonely and outcast as he was, separated from all that had made life dear, the one thought that above all others pressed upon his soul was the fear that his sin had cut him off from God, that he was forsaken of Heaven. In sadness he lay down to rest. . . . As he slept, . . . the divine voice was heard in a message of comfort and hope. Thus was made known to Jacob that which met the need and longing of his soul—a Savior" (*Steps to Christ,* pp. 19, 20).

keytext

"Isaac prayed to the Lord on behalf of his wife, . . . and his wife Rebekah became pregnant. . . . The Lord said to her, 'Two nations are in your womb, and two peoples from within you will be separated; one people will be stronger than the other, and the older will serve the younger.' "

(Genesis 25:21-23, NIV)

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what do you think?

Use this code to make a generalization and classify a person from each of these occupations according to their honesty: AH (Absolutely, 100 percent honest in every way, never compromising); MH (Mostly honest, the majority of the time); OH (Occasionally honest, but not always); RH (Rarely honest).

___ A rock star
___ A pastor
___ A teacher
___ A priest
___ A veterinarian
___ A used-car salesman
___ The president of the United States
___ A pharmacist
___ A lawyer
___ A farmer
___ A police officer
___ A magician

How would you classify yourself? Where would you put Jacob on the honesty scale? What about Esau? Isaac? Rebekah?

did you know?

One of the most meaningful Jewish celebrations is the Feast of Sukkoth. It commemorates the 40 years of the Jews wandering in the wilderness. Although it was only 200 miles from Egypt to Canaan, it took God's people 40 years to make the trip!

The Feast of Sukkoth reminds us of the importance of time in spiritual life. Good things cannot be hurried. It was during the wilderness wanderings that the Israelites received the Ten Commandments, the pattern for the tabernacle, and the necessary character to enter the Promised Land. The Feast of Sukkoth reminds us that selling a long-term birthright for short-term gratification is foolish. God's blessings come to those who understand the value of delayed gratification.

INTO THE STORY

"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. Isaac, who had a taste for wild game, loved Esau, but Rebekah loved Jacob.

"Once when Jacob was cooking some stew, Esau came in from the open country, famished. He said to Jacob, 'Quick, let me have some of that red stew! I'm famished!' . . .

"Jacob replied, 'First sell me your birthright.'

" 'Look, I am about to die,' Esau said. 'What good is the birthright to me?' "

"When Isaac was old and his eyes were so weak that he could no longer see, he called for Esau his older son and said to him, . . . 'I am now an old man and don't know the day of my death. . . . Prepare me the kind of tasty food I like and bring it to me to eat, so that I may give you my blessing before I die.' "

"Rebekah said to her son Jacob, . . . '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.' "

"He went to his father and said, 'My father.'

" 'Yes, my son,' he answered. 'Who is it?'

"Jacob said to his father, 'I am Esau your firstborn. I have done as you told me.' "

"Then he said, 'My son, bring me some of your game to eat, so that I may give you my blessing.'"

"After Isaac finished blessing him and Jacob had scarcely left his father's presence, his brother Esau came in from hunting."

"Isaac 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!'

"When Esau heard his father's words, he burst out with a loud and bitter cry and said to his father, 'Bless me—me too, my father!'

"But he said, 'Your brother came deceitfully and took your blessing.' "

(Genesis 25:27-32; 27:1-4, 6-10, 18, 19, 25, 30, 33-35, NIV)

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OUT OF THE STORY

Read the entire story and reflect on the spiritual lessons that occur to you.

Circle the phrases in the story that are new to you.

What are the primary emotions of the story? *Underline* the phrases in the text that capture these emotions.

What does this story teach us about integrity?

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What does the story teach us about delayed gratification? (See also 2 Peter 1:5-7; Ps. 27:14; Heb. 6:15)

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Besides the importance of integrity and delayed gratification, what other lessons emerge from this story?

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What do you think is the key verse in the story? Why?

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punch lines

"Fixing our eyes on Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of faith. For the joy set before him he endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. Consider him who endured such opposition from sinners, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart. In your struggle against sin, you have not yet resisted to the point of shedding your blood" **(Hebrews 12:2-4, NIV).**

"The integrity of the upright guides them, but the unfaithful are destroyed by their duplicity" **(Proverbs 11:3, NIV).**

"Listen, my son, and be wise, and set your heart on the right path" **(Proverbs 23:19, NIV).**

"So God led the people around by the desert road" **(Exodus 13:18, NIV).**

further insight

"There is danger in amusement that is sought merely for self-gratification. . . . These are not necessarily things sinful in themselves, but something that is made first instead of the kingdom of God. Whatever attracts the mind from God, whatever draws the affections away from Christ, is an enemy to the soul."—Ellen G. White, *Christ's Object Lessons,* p. 54.

connectingtolife

Sabbath

Read Proverbs 11:3.

Complete the *What Do You Think?* activity at the beginning of the lesson and reflect on the experiences you have had personally or have witnessed from a distance that prompted you to generalize the way you did. Which occupation was the easiest to generalize about? Which was the most difficult to generalize?

After today's reading, where would you rank on the scale of personal integrity? Think about the different experiences you have had in your life in which you chose the path of integrity as opposed to the path of compromise. How did you feel about your choices? Why do you think a life of integrity is often so hard to live?

Sunday

Read Proverbs 23:19.

Read the *Into the Story* section about the ethical drama between Jacob and Esau and answer the study questions provided in *Out of the Story.* As you read this story, what elements emerge that you had not thought of before? What do you think God is trying to say to you about your life today in this story?

Monday

Read Isaiah 14:27.

Read the *Key Text* found in Genesis 25:21-23 and commit this passage to memory or write it down and place it someplace where you will see it on a daily basis. Have you ever wondered about the awesome truth that God knows what is ahead and is ultimately in control of the big events of history? Talk to God today specifically about His will for your life and convey your willingness to trust in His will, no matter what compromises might confront you.

Tuesday

Read 1 John 1:9; Psalm 103:12.

Read the quote in the *Flashlight* section and reflect on the weight of Jacob's sin and how it burdened him with guilt. What did Jacob need to see? What did he finally see in this season of guilt and shame? In what way are you like Jacob wrestling with guilt? Do you see your need of a Savior, or do you simply get overwhelmed with remorse? Who do you know who responds to their mistakes in life with a deep gratitude for their Savior, Jesus Christ? How have they modeled true repentance to you in the way they respond to shortcomings?

Wednesday

Read carefully and thoughtfully through the *Punch Lines* provided in this week's lesson and choose one verse that speaks pointedly to your life today. Why does this passage stand out to you now? Think of the people you have influence with (friends, younger siblings, or younger people at church) and consider how you could share this passage with them in a way that will deepen their commitment to God. List them by name and invite God to lead you to them this week.

Thursday

Read Hebrews 12:16, 17.

Take some time today to read chapter 16 in *Patriarchs and Prophets*, noting the insights the prophetic eye reveals. What does Ellen White say about integrity and delayed gratification? What Bible passages does she highlight or lead you to study? What principle emerges from this chapter that will apply to any generation, any season in the journey of life? Write that principle out in your own words below.

Principle:

Friday

The author of the book of Hebrews had it right in saying, "Fixing our eyes on Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of faith. For the joy set before him he endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. Consider him who endured such opposition from sinners, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart. In your struggle against sin, you have not yet resisted to the point of shedding your blood" (Hebrews 12:2-4, NIV).

The point of this passage captures Jacob's experience well. How does it capture your experience? When you look at Jacob's journey (dishonesty and mistakes; struggles with guilt, shame, God, and repentance), where are you in your journey? What is the next step for you that moves you closer to God?

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this week's reading*

Patriarchs and Prophets (or *Beginning of the End*), chapter 16.

**Beginning of the End* is a special adaptation of *Patriarchs and Prophets*, created for you by the Ellen G. White Estate and Pacific Press. Get more information about it at www.cornerstoneconnections.net/article/191/about-us/conflict-of-the-ages-companion-books#.URlhF1rBO9s. By following the weekly reading plan, you will read at least one book of the Conflict of the Ages series each year.

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