

1. Jacob's early life.

1) Jacob had a twin brother, named Esau.

Isaac pleaded with the LORD on behalf of his wife, [Rebekah] because she was unable to have children. The LORD answered Isaac's prayer, and Rebekah became pregnant with twins. But the two children struggled with each other in her womb. So she went to ask the LORD about it. 'Why is this happening to me?' she asked. And the LORD told her, 'The sons in your womb will become two nations. From the very beginning, the two nations will be rivals. One nation will be stronger than the other; and your older son will serve your younger son.' (Genesis 25:21-23, New Living Translation 2nd Ed.)

2) Jacob and Esau were very different.

And when the time came to give birth, Rebekah discovered that she did indeed have twins! The first one was very red at birth and covered with thick hair like a fur coat. So they named him Esau. Then the other twin was born with his hand grasping Esau's heel. So they named him Jacob. Isaac was sixty years old when the twins were born. (Genesis 25:24-26, NLT2)

As the boys grew up, Esau became a skillful hunter. He was an outdoorsman, but Jacob had a quiet temperament, preferring to stay at home. (Genesis 25:27, NLT2)

Make sure that no one is immoral or godless like Esau. (Hebrews 12:16, NLT2)

At the age of forty, Esau married two Hittite wives Esau's wives made life miserable for Isaac and Rebekah. (Genesis 26:34-35, NLT2)

I have loved Jacob, but I have hated Esau. (Romans 9:13, Holman Christian Standard Bible)

2. Jacob decided to do a good thing in a bad way.

[The father] must recognize the rights of his oldest son by giving him a double portion [of his estate]. He is the first son of his father's virility, and the rights of the firstborn belong to him. (Deuteronomy 21:17, NLT2)

Esau said to Jacob, 'I'm starved! Give me some of that red stew!' 'All right,' Jacob replied, 'but trade me your rights as the firstborn son.' 'Look, I'm dying of starvation!' said Esau. 'What good is my birthright to me now?' But 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. (Genesis 25:28-34, NLT2)

May God give you plenty of rain and good soil so that you will have plenty of grain and new wine. May nations serve you and peoples bow down to you. May you be master over your brothers, and may your mother's sons bow down to you. May everyone who curses you be cursed, and may everyone who blesses you be blessed. (Genesis 27:28-29, New Century Version)

Esau exclaimed, 'No wonder his name is Jacob, for now he has cheated me twice. First he took my rights as the firstborn, and now he has stolen my blessing. Oh, haven't you saved even one blessing for me?' Isaac said to Esau, 'I have made Jacob your master and have declared that all his brothers will be his servants. I have guaranteed him an abundance of grain and wine—what is left for me to give you, my son?' Esau pleaded, 'But do you have only one blessing? Oh my father, bless me, too!' Then Esau broke down and wept. (Genesis 27:36-38, NLT2)

From that time on, Esau hated Jacob because their father had given Jacob the blessing. And Esau began to scheme: "I will soon be mourning my father's death. Then I will kill my brother, Jacob. (Genesis 27:41, NLT2)

Go . . . and marry one of your uncle Laban's daughters. (Genesis 28:2, NLT2)

3. Jacob suffered for the rest of his life because he lied to his father.

Do not deceive yourselves You will reap exactly what you plant. (Galatians 6:7, Today's English Version)

Jacob answered, 'My life of wandering has lasted a hundred and thirty years. Those years have been few and difficult, unlike the long years of my ancestors in their wanderings.' (Genesis 47:9, TEV)

FOUR TIMELESS TRUTHS

- 1. When you are facing a huge decision – purpose to tell the truth.**
- 2. When you are facing a huge opportunity – treat everyone honorably. If you want to receive mercy when you fail, be merciful to others when they fail. If you want others to be generous to you, you be generous to them.**
- 3. Decide today: I will NOT do what's wrong – even for a good cause.**

The person who plants selfishness, ignoring the needs of others—ignoring God!—harvests a crop of weeds. All he'll have to show for his life is weeds! But the one who plants in response to God, letting God's Spirit do the growth work in him, harvests a crop of real life, eternal life. (Galatians 6:7-8, The Message)

- 4. If you will make amends for your bad choices, God will make the consequences work for good. Amends - Admit. Ask for forgiveness.**