

When It Comes to Eating, Don't Be Like Esau

After I wrote "What Eve Believed," I was intrigued by others who made wrong choices about food in the Bible. Why did they make the wrong choice?

For instance, the Esau Bible story in Genesis 25:29-34 is another great warning about how *not* to respond to eating temptations. You can learn from other biblical stories so that you can make the right choices and achieve better weight loss results.

Who was Esau? He was Abraham's grandson, Isaac's son and Jacob's fraternal twin brother. Esau's food problem happened when he was caught in a vulnerable moment.

But he wouldn't have made the wrong choice if he valued what he had from the beginning.

Here's the story:

"Now Jacob cooked a stew; and Esau came in from the field and he was famished. So Esau said to Jacob, 'Please feed me some of that red stew, for I am famished.' Therefore his name was called Edom. Then Jacob said, 'First sell me your birthright.' Esau said, 'Look, I am about to die; of what use is the birthright to me?' Then Jacob said, 'Swear to me this day.' So he swore to him, and he sold his birthright to Jacob. Then Jacob gave Esau bread and lentil stew. Then he ate and drank, arose, and went his way. Thus Esau despised his birthright" (Gen. 25:29-34).

Let's examine Esau's descent:

- He was tired and hungry.
- He minimized his future blessing.

- He magnified his current condition.
- He decided that satisfying his flesh now was more important than receiving a natural and spiritual blessing later.

A common saying is that you shouldn't make important decisions when you are hungry, angry, lonely or tired. In Esau's case, he was both tired and hungry.

Jacob, his brother, took advantage of Esau's weakness. He asked for Esau's birthright.

What was the birthright? In the Israelite law (written later in the Scriptures), the firstborn son's birthright was to receive a double portion of what His father had. Even though they were twins, Esau was the firstborn. Isaac had received Abraham's blessing and Esau was next in line.

The Lord's blessings upon Abraham were to:

- Make him a great nation
- Make his name great
- Make him a blessing
- Bless those who blessed him and curse those who cursed him
- Bless all the families of the earth through him

So Jacob was asking Esau to trade all of those permanent blessings in exchange for a temporary bowl of stew. I say temporary because food:

- Gives your tongue a taste
- Fills your stomach, taking away hunger feelings
- Goes through your digestive system so nutrients are extracted for the body's use
- Exits your body when the nonuseful matter is eliminated as feces

When you weigh the end results of food against the end results of the birthright, what was most important and lasting? The

birthright, of course.

What was Esau left with? The food would be eliminated eventually (leaving him hungry again) and his birthright would be gone.

Esau probably never took the time to think about his birthright and the benefits of it. He probably never saw himself taking possession of it. He likely never considered what possessing the birthright would ultimately mean for his family's future.

Instead, Esau played a mental trick on himself because he was only thinking about satisfying his own flesh at the moment. He minimized the importance of the birthright by saying that the birthright did not matter because he was going to die.

Now, was Esau really going to die if he didn't eat that bowl of stew right then? No. Esau was strong and healthy enough to have been working in the field moments before. So he couldn't have been about to die, could he?

Instead of taking Jacob's bad trade, Esau probably could have:

- Eaten a piece of fruit or a vegetable to get some quick nourishment
- Made his own stew
- Ask someone else to make him something to eat

He had alternatives. Since other people lived with them, including their mother and father, none of them would have let him starve to death.

So Esau told himself a lie because he valued pleasures he could get now (the stew) above pleasure he could get later (the blessing). If he had valued his blessing, Esau would not have given it away so easily and cheaply. What Esau did is called "delay discounting" in modern terms.

Researchers once did a study of people who overeat regularly

versus people exercised self-control with food. They found only one difference to separate the two groups:

The overeating people diminished the benefits of waiting on future benefits, like Esau. In contrast, the people who exercised self-control valued future benefits above temporary gain.

When it comes to health and weight loss, here are some future benefits that may await you. God's will for you is stated in 3 John 1:2: "Beloved, I pray that all may go well with you and that you may be in good health, even as your soul is well."

These benefits are included in your health birthright:

- Boosted energy
- Increased confidence
- Improved quality of sleep
- Greater mental focus
- Enhanced shape and muscle tone
- Increased muscle strength
- Improved flexibility
- Better mood control
- Added glow to your skin
- Enhanced balance and coordination
- Improved endurance
- Reduced depression
- Increased ability to handle stress
- Improved circulation
- Clearer skin
- Freer breathing
- Increased optimism about life
- Amplified desire to tackle other life goals

Take a moment to consider if you are making an "Esau" mistake:

- Are you trading your health birthright in exchange for poor food choices?

How often do you think about your health birthright and the benefits of it? Do you often imagine the feelings you would have when you take possession of it? Do you consider what possessing the health birthright would ultimately mean for your family's future?

If not, take a few moments to do that everyday. This will help you make wiser choices when the enemy offers you a bad trade.

Imagine possessing your health birthright fully. What will you be able to do, have, and share having it? See it and feel it in your body! If you can't see it, then ask the Lord to open your Spiritual eyes so that you may see.

Ask the Lord for wisdom as to what you can do to make wiser choices in your health. Then listen for the inner promptings of the Holy Spirit. When He tells you to do something that will change your health for the better, do it immediately.

The more you ignore the Holy Spirit's effort to help, the more it will be harder for you to hear Him later.

But when you cooperate with Him, your whole life will start to change for the better. You will be blessed and take full possession of your health birthright.

Remember, this Earth is ultimately not our home. All who name the name of Christ has an assignment from Jesus: "And He said to them, 'Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature'" (Mark 16:15).

Whether you are a formal minister or not, you have a responsibility to share the Good News with those God has brought into your life. People pay far more attention to what you do than what you say.

May our choices be wise ones to accurately reflect the wisdom of our God!

Are you ready to take full possession of your health

birthright? Check out the Take Back Your Temple program to learn how you can release excess weight and feel better than ever before.

*Once 240 pounds and a size 22, **Kimberly Taylor** can testify of God's healing power to end binge eating. She is an author and the creator of the Christian weight loss website . Visit today for inspirational health and weight-loss tips.*

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