



A MATTER OF FAITH

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Jacob and his twin brother, Esau, were born to Isaac and Rebecca. When their mom Rebecca gave birth to them, Esau emerged red and hairy all over, with his heel grasped by his brother Jacob. From birth, the two were in constant struggle with each other.

Jacob and Esau were very different as they grew up. Esau became a hunter, a man of the field, but Jacob was a simple man, who preferred to be a home body. Jacob spent all his time at home, engaged in study with his father and grandfather Abraham.

Esau, however, resorted to countless tricks to avoid studying, and spent most of his time in the fields. He

enjoyed hunting and killing, and was often absent from his home for many days.

The attitudes of their parents toward them were different. Isaac loved Esau because he was a rugged

The Choice

“man’s man,” but Rebecca loved Jacob.

Esau’s birthright was a sacred privilege enjoyed by the first-born son. This privilege made the first-born the real heir and successor to his father, as the head of the family. It brought with it the lion share of the father’s wealth.

There was also a great deal of responsibility that came with the birthright. The first-born son was to be devoted to the service of God and to the sacred traditions of the family.

Esau did not want this responsibility, preferring a carefree life as a hunter and to live in the outdoors. Jacob wanted the birthright and despised his brother because he did not think Esau appreciated it and was not worthy of it.

When Abraham (Jacob and Esau’s grandfather) died, Jacob prepared a lentil stew as a traditional mourner’s meal for his father, Isaac. Esau, returning extremely hungry from working in the fields, begged Jacob to give him some of the stew. Jacob offered to give Esau a bowl of stew in exchange for his birthright (the right to be recognized as firstborn), and Esau agreed to Jacob’s offer.

Such an incredible gift

is caused is almost irreparable. Is it really worth it? Has the cost ever really been considered?

A spouse is left to take on all the responsibilities of raising the kids and handling all the work that is a part of the day to day of family life. They are left feeling alone and rejected. The kids are abandoned by one of their parents and the hurt that is caused is deep. The wake of this tragedy

will ripple out for years and years. Esau could not have imagined that his ridiculous choice thousands of years ago would be told over and over again. He did not take the time to really think about the repercussions of his very poor decision. He was hungry so he ate. Within hours of devouring the very costly stew, he grew hungry again.

The responsibility of being a parent and a spouse is too much so they walk away for a simpler more carefree life. They give up the gift that they have been given, a family, for the freedom they think will come in no longer being attached or accountable to the people God has placed closest to them.

We do not live as separate entities. Our choices directly affect those around us. The pain that is caused by someone walking away from a family is tremendous. The devastation that

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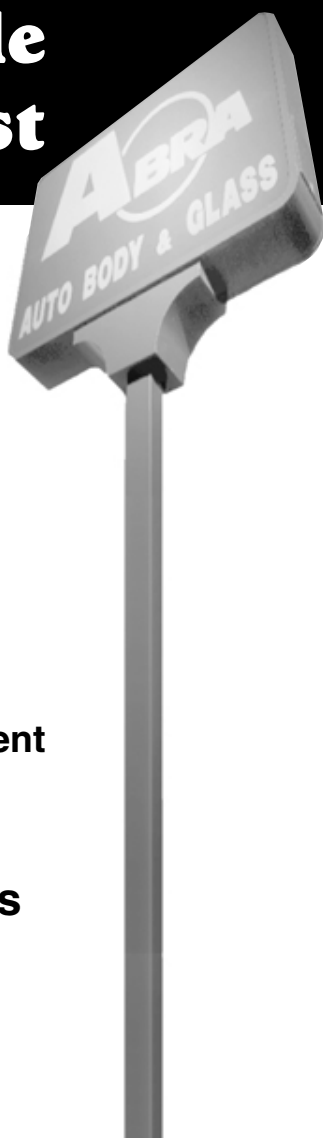
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