

Bible Devotions: Lock Stock & Barrel
Devotional Reading for Outdoorsmen
(Old Testament)

Genesis 25:27-34

Soup Beans and Cornbread

So the boys grew. And Esau was a skilled hunter, a man of the field; but Jacob was a mild man, dwelling in tents. And Isaac loved Esau because he ate of his game, but Rebekah loved Jacob. Now Jacob cooked a stew; and Esau came in from the field, and he was weary. And Esau said to Jacob, "Please feed me with that same red stew, for I am weary." Therefore his name was called Edom. But Jacob said, "Sell me your birthright as of this day." And Esau said, "Look, I am about to die; so what profit shall this birthright be to me?" Then Jacob said, "Swear to me as of this day." So he swore to him, and sold his birthright to Jacob. And Jacob gave Esau bread and stew of lentils; then he ate and drank, arose, and went his way. Thus Esau despised his birthright.

Selling his birthright for a bite to eat tells us something about Esau's character. Although he later despised his decision, he was bound by the words of the Lord before his birth to serve his younger brother (Genesis 24:23). If Esau had done some soul-searching when he smelled the soup, he might have acted differently. On the other hand, if there's nothing in one's soul to search, little good does it do.

Esau was a man of the field. The Bible describes him as a skilled or cunning hunter capable of living off of the land. His skills certainly had to be special since there are few hunters mentioned in scripture. In fact, Nimrod and Esau are the only hunters mentioned by name.

Imagine for a moment what hunters were like in Biblical days. Their physical limitations were tested to the max. Knowledge of animals and habitat determined whether or not one survived or starved. Foraging wild plants for food was part of the lifestyle. Hunger pangs were common if game was scarce. There were probably long intervals of time between meals or fresh water. One had to be hardy, well-disciplined, and a good cook.

Enter Esau, coming in from the field hungry, thirsty, and tired. It's very likely that he faced similar circumstances during his many adventures outdoors. Oh, but how good the soup beans and cornbread smelled! Esau might have been a good hunter and a decent chef, but he was careless with his self-discipline. In the face of temptation, his choice was the easy way out.

Sometimes our way out is to simply give in to temptation, too. The problem with temptation is that it entices us to sell out the essence of our Christian character for something temporal and earthly – soup beans and cornbread instead of grit and determination, spiritually speaking of course.

The skills we need to be men of God are not found in lentils, dough, water, books, or any other physical amenity. Several characteristics that build formidable Christian manhood come to my mind:

Senses. Hebrews 5:14 says, *"But solid food belongs to those who are of full age, that is, those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil."*

Strength. Psalm 27:1 says, *"The Lord is my light and salvation; whom shall I fear? The Lord is the strength of my life, of whom shall I be afraid?"*

Speed. Another Psalm says, *"I made haste, and did not delay to keep Your commandments"* (Psalm 119:60).

Stamina. Isaiah 40:31 says, *"But those who wait on the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings like eagles, they shall run and not be weary, they shall walk and not faint."*

Soup beans and cornbread can sustain one's body but these do not constitute the stuff of one's soul that makes it worth searching. Only a resurrected Savior can give us the sustenance we need so we can say like Paul, *"I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith"* (II Timothy 4:7).

If Esau's story can teach us anything at all it is this: there's something richer and more rewarding on the other side of the bean pot and bread pan. A disciplined Christian life will find it in spite of hunger, thirst, or weariness.

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Bible Devotions: Hook Line & Sinker (study guide)

Genesis 25:27-34
Soup Beans and Cornbread

HOOK

1. What kind of beans do you like to eat? How do you like them prepared?

2. Write a recipe for homemade cornbread. If you don't know, take a guess!

3. List three outdoor skills that you think every outdoorsman should know.

LINE

Sometimes our way out is to simply give in to temptation, too. The problem with temptation is that it entices us to sell out the essence of our Christian character for something temporal and earthly – soup beans and cornbread instead of grit and determination, spiritually speaking of course.

The skills we need to be men of God are not found in lentils, dough, water, books, or any other physical amenity. Several characteristics that build formidable Christian manhood come to mind: Senses, Strength, Speed, Stamina. Only a resurrected Savior can give us this sustenance. We can then say like Paul, *"I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith"* (II Timothy 4:7).

If Esau's story can teach us anything at all it is this: there's something richer and more rewarding on the other side of the bean pot and bread pan. A disciplined Christian life will find it in spite of hunger, thirst, or weariness.

What is your strongest self-discipline and how do you use it? What is your weakest and how will you improve it?

List three characteristics of "formidable Christian manhood" and explain why you think each one should be part of the character of a Christian man or boy.

SINKER

Take a few minutes to write your thoughts on this devotional. Reflect on your own experiences.

Key words: manhood temptation self-discipline
