

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

Genesis 27:3-5, 27
What We Do Best

(Isaac) Now therefore, please take your weapons, your quiver and your bow, and go out to the field and hunt game for me. And make me savory food, such as I love, and bring it to me that I may eat, that my soul may bless you before I die. ...And Esau went to the field to hunt game and to bring it.

And he (Jacob) came near and kissed him (Isaac); and he smelled the smell of his clothing, and blessed him and said: Surely, the smell of my son is like the smell of a field which the Lord has blessed."

In Genesis 27, we read that Isaac realized his death was near. In keeping with the custom of that day, he was ready to bestow the family blessing on his oldest son. However, Jacob and his mother, Rebekah, deceitfully plotted to steal away the blessing from Esau. As the story goes, it worked.

This event should not tempt us to use deceit to get our own way. That would obviously be wrong for anyone, especially believers. There are, however, three truths that every Christian outdoorsman can practice in his daily living for Jesus.

First, Esau was a hunter. Isaac requested that his son take his weapons and do what he did best: hunt. In this case, arrows and a bow were the weapons Esau used for taking game. We read that Esau did as his father asked and succeeded at what he did best. Later, in Genesis 27:40, Isaac told Esau that other weapons, weapons of war, would be the things by which he would live.

Likewise, we must practice what we do best. It could be prayer, teaching, administration, proclamation, or any number of spiritual gifts, but whatever it is, our walk with Jesus requires us to do our best. As we do so, we thankfully discover that each believer contributes to the body of Christ in a unique way. Paul spoke about this cooperative effort when he said, "*For in fact the body is not one member but many*" (I Corinthians 12:14).

Second, Esau was a good cook. That might be a skill most of us wished we had on our last campout! The Bible says that Esau could prepare a tasty meal, something that Isaac loved. This might challenge some of us to learn how to better dress and prepare our game. It's part of the stewardship we should practice over our natural resources. There's honor and respect in that.

Even if we don't consume the meat ourselves, there are alternatives. Some people hunt or fish only to give away what they harvest. Food pantry ministries, especially among deer hunters, benefit from this charitable practice. One of the things I like to do is designate a portion of my hunt as the main dish for dinners of special occasion. This mostly consists of roast deer or wild turkey shepherd's pies. For others, it might be a more specialized entrée (for example: smoked salmon or wild boar chili).

There was nothing special about Jacob and Rebekah substituting goat for wild game. It was the only way their scheming would work since Jacob was not a hunter. I'm reminded of the times I've tried to serve wild game disguised in name as some common domestic dish. This has prompted my daughter, Emily, to ask at every meal, "Is that deer meat?"

Third, Esau spent so much time in the field that he smelled like he belonged there. In Genesis 27:27, Jacob, in Esau's clothes, came near to his father. Isaac smelled the outdoorsy aroma on the clothing and, believing it was Esau, blessed him. As outdoorsmen, we can relate to this as we discern the earthy, gamy odors on us and around us. As keen hunters, we manage those odors to our advantage.

As a believer, we need to smell like a Christian. We might call that an 'aura.' On several occasions, I've been around strangers who had that Christian way about them. Eventually, we discovered our mutual faith in Jesus. Sometimes it was the way we talked. Mostly, it was simply the Christian demeanor that hinted at the walk we have in Christ. It's a strange phenomenon but that's the way the Spirit of God works.

The story of Esau and Jacob shows us how God moves in the lives of men in spite of their actions, right or wrong. When we look beyond the action of deceit, we find a lesson for Christian living today:

Do your best. Prepare your game well. And smell like a Christian!

Bible Devotions: Hook Line & Sinker (study guide)

Genesis 27:3-5, 27

What We Do Best

HOOK

1. What is the strongest outdoor odor (besides skunk!) you can think of?

2. How do you eliminate odors, or manage scent, when you are hunting?

3. The best way you can, describe how you dress and prepare your three favorite game meats.

LINE

We must practice what we do best. It could be prayer, teaching, administration, proclamation, or any number of spiritual gifts, but whatever it is, our walk with Jesus requires us to do our best.

There's honor and respect in the stewardship we practice over our natural resources, with regard to how we dress and prepare our game.

As a believer, we need to smell like a Christian. We might call that an 'aura.' Sometimes it's the way we talk. Mostly, it's simply the Christian demeanor that hints at the walk we have in Christ.

The story of Esau and Jacob shows us how God moves in the lives of men in spite of their actions, right or wrong. When we look beyond the action of deceit, we find a lesson for Christian living today:

Do your best. Prepare your game well. And smell like a Christian!

Name two ways that people know you are a believer. Explain how you can improve each one.

How does the world respond to deceit? How do you respond to deceit? What is the best thing you can do to keep from being deceitful?

SINKER

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

Key words: deceit weapons doing our best
