



"This is the Story..."

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Week 5: To Take It Or To Be It

Genesis 25-33

Intro Video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-Ufxtmntv64&list=PLiSIfKtmhnBYNdDKZqJJ2xS8wuUH7JJH3&index=7&t=0s>

Review the big story: God created the cosmos and humans and called it all good. We were created to live in harmony, but sometimes we miss the mark. Adam and Eve, Cain and Abel, and all of humanity missed the mark, and they had to live with the consequences, but God stuck with them and continued to love them. Then God called Abraham and Sarah to be in a covenant relationship with God. Like the humans before them, they often missed the mark, but God kept God's promises to make them a blessing to the whole world.

- **Key verses:** Genesis 25:23, Genesis 27:41, Genesis 32:28, Genesis 33:4

Tell the story: Abraham and Sarah had a son named Isaac. He and his wife, Rebekah, had twin sons named Jacob and Esau. They did not get along well. Esau was Isaac's favorite, and Jacob was Rebekah's favorite. Jacob was born after Esau, so by custom would not receive as much inheritance or blessing. Esau "sold" his inheritance to Jacob for stew one day when he was hungry, and several years later, Jacob tricked Isaac (who was blind) into giving him the blessing before Isaac died. This messy family missed the mark a lot in how they treated each other, and the consequence was that Jacob and Esau were not able to live close to one another. Many years later, when they were old men, they met again and reconciled with each other. But even after they forgave each other, they went their separate ways. Through it all, God found ways to be in relationship with them and stuck with them.

- Read Genesis 25:19-34, Genesis 27:1-28:5, and Genesis 32-33
- Read page 34 in the *Shine On* story Bible

Prime the pump:

- **Things to notice:**
 - There are recurring themes and recurring stories from the story of Abraham and Sarah to this story. Do some detective work to discover these. Why do you think these themes keep coming back?
 - More head-scratchers: If you read Genesis 12:10-20 and Genesis 20 for the Week 4 story, read Genesis 26:6-11 now. Talk about a family cycle!
 - Genesis 33:4 is deeply emotional. How are humans depicted differently here than in Genesis 1-11? What do you make of those differences? How does that affect the way we read these stories?
 - Notice the interesting ways God communicates with Jacob. Read Genesis 38:10-17 and Genesis 32:22-32.

- **Background information:**

- Before you are too hard on Rebekah for helping her son trick his father, consider the position of women in her society. She had little to no power, but if the son who identified with her was the son who inherited the power of the family, then she would be protected. Do some searches to learn about the rights of women in biblical times.
- There's a whole narrative we're skipping over here, of Jacob and his wives. Read that if you want a little window into a culture very different from our own.

- **Conversation starters:**

- What a mess. It's easy to see that this family had some serious communication problems. Name some of their dysfunctions. God stuck with them! Do you ever feel like a mess?
- This is the family, the covenant people, who God called to be a blessing to the whole earth. Are there places in this story that you see them being a blessing?
- Esau was a hunter and farmer, and Jacob preferred the quiet of the tents. Do you and your family members have some big differences like this? How do you avoid missing the mark when you deal with these differences? Can these differences make for stronger families?
- The story of Jacob and Esau's reconciliation is an intriguing one. It came a very long time after they fought. Do you think it was a full reconciliation? Was there any way it could have ended differently?
- Jacob wrestles with God. Consider that. We can wrestle with God. Do you ever wrestle with God?

Microsong: "To take it or to be it" (Listen: <https://youtu.be/OhJoZnJVpjE>)

Rebekah tricks Isaac, Jacob takes the birthright, Esau threatens murder, Jacob wrestles all night, Angels on a ladder bridging heaven and earth, brothers embrace after decades apart. It's all about the blessing, to take it or to be it, "God was in this place but I did not see it"

Sing the big song: (Listen: <https://youtu.be/LmA8QfdphZM>)

This is the story of how it all began. God made matter, and chaos shattered.

Eve and Adam, they tried to hide.

The world got violent and God replied with a mark and a flood and a rainbow sign, God's love written on skin and sky,

And then God called a family to be a blessing to the earth, ahhhhhh

A mother and her favorite son wrestle for the blessing,

God loves every one of us, it's true, and God loves the universe.

Go do your household project!