



### **Why would Esau sell his birthright for a bowl of stew?"**

This great question came from one of our Confirmation students after reading about Abraham's grandsons Esau and Jacob.

The "birthright" refers to the right the firstborn has to a double portion of the inheritance. (See Deuteronomy 21:17) and the right to leadership of the family - including spiritual leadership. Esau was the firstborn of the two twins.

Here's the situation from Genesis 25:27-34

*The boys grew up, and Esau became a skillful hunter, a man of the open country, while Jacob was content to stay at home among the tents. Isaac, who had a taste for wild game, loved Esau, but Rebekah loved Jacob.*

[There's an important lesson on not playing favorites here, but that's for another time.]

*Once when Jacob was cooking some stew, Esau came in from the open country, famished. He said to Jacob, "Quick, let me have some of that red stew! I'm famished!" (That is why he was also called Edom.)*

*Jacob replied, "First sell me your birthright."*

*"Look, I am about to die," Esau said. "What good is the birthright to me?"*

*But Jacob said, "Swear to me first." So he swore an oath to him, selling his birthright to Jacob.*

*Then Jacob gave Esau some bread and some lentil stew. He ate and drank, and then got up and left.*

*So Esau despised his birthright.*

I'm not sure what all went into Esau's spur-of-the-moment decision to trade his birthright for a bowl of stew, but it certainly seems like a decision that was primarily guided by Esau's feeling of the moment (which was hunger.)

You could say it was a hasty reaction based on a fleeting feeling. Esau definitely didn't take any time to actually think about what he was doing. He just made a life-changing decision based solely on how he was feeling at that moment.

Romans 15:4 says, ***"The things written in the past (Old Testament) were written to teach us..."***

So, as we read through the Bible in Confirmation class one of the things we look for is:

What's the lesson God is teaching us here?

It seems there's a pretty obvious lesson here that applies to each one of us:

**Don't make big decisions on the spur of the moment based just on how you are feeling at that moment. Instead, take some time to think about it. Pray about it. Ask God for His guidance. Check with other Christians for their thoughts.**

Or, as someone I know summed up in this acronym:

**FYGNFY**

**Follow Your God Not Your Feelings.**

Feelings can lead you astray (ask Esau). God can't.

Thanks for asking,  
Pastor David

**Send your questions to [pastor@livingwordlutheran.net](mailto:pastor@livingwordlutheran.net)**