

Daily Devotional, July 9, 2021 Making Smart and Faithful Choices

“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. Genesis 29:25-34 (NIV)

Have you ever been so focused on some present need or circumstance that you made a decision that you later came to regret? Esau certainly did! He was so hungry that he sold out his birthright. In “despising his birthright” for stew, Esau satisfied his hunger for a day, but gave up the privilege of being first-born in his household, which was a tremendous benefit in ancient times. Esau met the fleeting and short-term need of hunger, but it cost him the great and long-lasting blessing of his father on all of his future descendants. So many times, we are guilty of the same type of failures. We foolishly choose the things that make us happy now...only to regret our short-sightedness later.

Doing what is faithful, wise, and good is often hard. “Denying self and picking up your cross” is not easy work! So instead, we are tempted to take the short cut to pleasure or what comes easy. We are guilty of dismissing negative future consequences for current convenience. For instance: how long will that plastic cup be in a landfill?) It is a hard lesson to learn, but it can be learned! Can you think of examples from your own life? I know I can.

Eating healthy, exercising, pursuing education, working and keeping after a worthwhile task, taking time to develop relationships, helping others, assuming responsibility and caring for the well-being of the earth...all of these things have benefits “in the long run.” Making good choices in life sometimes means we must delay satisfaction and put-off reward. That cell phone call or text you get while driving can wait! Faithfulness, discipline, sacrifice, mercy and endurance are indeed challenging pursuits. But in time those sacrifices pay great dividends and bring lasting rewards! Patience and trust in God’s will are a few of the gifts we need going forward to, make us great examples of faithfulness.

Prayer: God of our lives, help us make wise and faithful choices each day as we strive to follow Jesus. Teach us that ‘suffering produces endurance, endurance produces character, character produces hope and hope never disappoints us.’ Amen.