

SERMON NOTES

From *In Touch With Dr. Charles Stanley*



Sacrificing Your Future for the Pleasure of the Moment

KEY PASSAGE: Genesis 25:25-34

► SUMMARY

We are living in the “now” generation. Whatever we want, we can often find a way to get it immediately.

This could be good if it's a legitimate and pressing necessity, but it can also be dangerous if what we desire is not something God wants for us. The problem with “have it now” thinking is that we don't pause to consider the consequences of our actions. One of Satan's tactics is to keep our minds on the pleasures and benefits of whatever he's offering us. How much better it would be if we submitted our desires to the Lord and waited on Him to provide what He knows is best.

► SERMON POINTS

Many people today are living for the moment and are willing to pay any price to get what they want. This is the situation we see in the story of Jacob and Esau recorded in Genesis 25:25-34. How each brother responded to this situation teaches us an essential lesson.

Abraham's son Isaac had twin sons with his wife, Rebekah. Esau was the firstborn and grew up to become a skillful hunter, but Jacob was a peaceful man who preferred staying home. One day when Jacob had cooked stew, Esau came in from hunting and said, “Please let me have a swallow of that red stuff there, for I am famished” (v. 30). Jacob told Esau if he'd swear to sell him his birthright, he would let him have some stew.

In a Hebrew family, the birthright was a very precious possession of the eldest son, which granted him the place of headship, honor, and authority in the family, as well

as most of the father's property after his death. Yet Esau was willing to trade away this privilege for some soup. His choice demonstrated that he despised his birthright (v. 34).

Esau's mindset is a perfect picture of our society today, which tends to think only of the present without considering the future consequences.

When do we sacrifice our future for the pleasure of the moment?

- **When we disregard the sacred values in life.** God gave us the Ten Commandments as a law by which we are to live for our good, but if we disregard them, we'll end up suffering the consequences in the future.
- **When we insist on immediate fulfillment of our desires.** David and Samson are two Biblical examples of this. King David yielded to his lust for Bathsheba and resorted to murder of her husband when she became pregnant. The pleasure of a moment yielded painful circumstances for the rest of his life.

Samson was given supernatural strength by God to fight the Philistines, but his desire for Delilah led him to foolishly tell her that the secret of his great strength was in his hair. As a result, she cut his hair, and the Philistines overpowered him, bound him, blinded him, and threw him in prison to work as a grinder. He wrecked and ruined his life by seeking his own desires instead of obeying the Lord.
- **When our focus is on the worldly rather than the eternal.** We tend to think we can pursue whatever we

want because no one, including God, will notice. We forget that His principles never fail. Whatever we sow now, we will reap in the future.

- **When we make irrevocable decisions in periods of physical and emotional weakness.** This is exactly what Esau did. In a moment of fatigue and exhaustion, he forgot about the future and traded away his promised position of authority and power in the family for a bowl of soup. Later when he wanted it back, it was too late. He had lost his birthright forever. Sin cannot be hidden from God. His satisfaction is only temporary, and regrets always follow.
- **When we have no respect for spiritual things.** King Saul is an example of someone who disregarded God's decision to make David the next king of Israel. In his determination to hang onto his kingdom, he did everything he could to hunt down and kill David in an attempt to thwart God's plan to make David the next king. As a result, Saul suffered mental torment, and both he and his son Jonathan were killed in battle. He destroyed his future because of his obsession to keep what he desired most—the kingdom.
- **When we fail to examine the possible consequences of our actions.** Judas walked with Jesus as one of His disciples because he thought Jesus would overthrow Rome, liberate Israel, and rule the world. When he didn't get what he wanted, he betrayed Jesus and suffered eternal condemnation.

Anytime we sin in seeking our desires, consequences will follow. Instead of rushing ahead to fulfill our longings, we should consider God's will and timing for our lives. We must guard against being like Esau who sacrificed his future for a moment's pleasure. His bowl was filled with soup, but we fill ours with all sorts of sins instead of seeking the only One who can truly satisfy our souls.

What is in our bowl today that carries disastrous consequences?

- **Alcohol.** We can buy and drink all we want and feel good for a while, but the results of becoming enslaved to it are difficult and long-lasting.
- **Prejudice.** Passing judgment on others simply because you don't relate to them never pleases God.
- **Drugs.** No one ever intends to become addicted to drugs, but the sought-after pleasure and relief soon turn into bondage.
- **Bitterness.** It begins with anger and grows into a more destructive emotion that affects our entire being.
- **Adultery.** Although it's often glamorized in our culture, adultery destroys individuals and families.
- **Abortion.** It may seem like a way to escape a difficult situation, but those involved in abortion carry a heavy weight of guilt.
- **Hatred.** Even if we feel justified in our hatred, it damages our emotions, health, attitudes, and relationships with others and with God.
- **Unforgiveness.** The right response to every offense is forgiveness, but harboring unforgiveness is a sin that hinders our lives.
- **Anger.** When we hold on to anger for wrongs committed against us, our bodies, feelings, spirits, and relationships suffer.

To continue in these sins will only result in future suffering. If we find any of these in our lives, we need to ask God to cleanse and forgive us so we can live the life He intends for us.

► RESPONSE

- Have you, like Esau, ever traded something precious for a moment's pleasure? What consequences did you experience? What lessons did you learn?
- The next time you have a strong desire and the ability to fulfill it, what should you do to ensure that you do not make a foolish decision? What spiritual benefits and fruit come from denying ourselves some of our desires?

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