



ALL THE WAY UP!

Prepared by the North American Division Youth and Young Adult Ministries Department

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Youth Week of Prayer is something that I have had the privilege of being involved with all my life, including as part of my pastoral ministry. It has been a wonderful experience that I cherish. I am excited that the ministry of Week of Prayers continues today.

The North American Division Youth Ministries Department is providing the sermons for March 13 - 19, 2022's Week of Prayer. Our theme is "All the Way Up". Our theme verse is Colossians 3:2; "Let heaven fill your thoughts; don't spend your time worrying about things down here."

The sermon series is set up so that each youth department/youth director of the local church can access the sermons, share them with the young people who sign up to preach each night of the week.

Additionally, we are asking that pictures of the young people preaching the messages be taken and posted on our NAD Youth Ministries Facebook page giving a description of the worship service and the person(s) who shared the messages. An outline of the service in-person or virtually might look like this:

Praise & Worship

Welcome

Opening Prayer

Opening Activity (youthsabbathschoolideas.org)

Bumper Video (youthsabbathschoolideas.org)

Introduction of Speaker

Special Music

Sermon

Closing Prayer and Remarks

Please note this is simply a suggestion. The order of the worship experience is left to the local church to organize.

Lastly, we are asking that a group photo be taken at the end of the week commemorating the Youth Week of Prayer. Again, I am excited that this year the Week of Prayer will be hosted by local churches March 13-19, 2022. If you are unable to host the services during that time, please choose a time with the support of your pastor that is most convenient for your local church. Let's prepare to "All The Way Up" in Jesus Christ!

Pastor Vandean D. Griffin
Associate Youth Director
North American Division

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What Do You Really Want?

(GEN. 25:27-34)

Intro: Would you rather eat Taco Bell or your favorite food?

I want you to think about your favorite meal. The meal that makes you feel good every time you eat it. Maybe that meal is served at your favorite restaurant. Or maybe it is something that is only served at home. Whatever it is, I want you to think about if you would rather eat that favorite meal or simply eat Taco Bell.

We might all agree that there is nothing special about Taco Bell. The Taco Bell menu is okay. It works when you are really hungry, but would if you were hungry. I mean really hungry. Could you wait to have your favorite meal or would you simply settle for Taco Bell?

Sometimes it's hard to wait for what you really want. When we are put into a situation where we must choose, we often choose what is okay over what is great.

Today, I want to tell you a story about a guy named Esau because his story helps us to understand how to determine if what we want is worth it.

1. Jacob exploits Esau's hunger. (Are you Hungry?)

There once lived this man named Isaac who had two sons. Jacob and Esau. They were twins and even though Esau came out of the womb first, his brother Jacob had his hand on his brother's heel almost as if to say, "Let me be first."

Jacob, like most younger brothers, wanted to be treated like his older brother. Even though they were born together, the fact that Esau came out first, gave him access to the birthright of the firstborn. Jacob thought it was unfair because only a few minutes at birth separated him from what could have been his. Jacob wanted the birthright which were the rights, privileges, and wealth of the Father. Though he would get some of his father's wealth, it would pale in comparison to what Esau would get.

One day Jacob would get the upper hand. He was cooking some lentil stew when Esau came back from a hunting adventure. Esau was hungry. In fact, he was so hungry that he asked Jacob for some of his stew. Jacob saw an opportunity to hold something over his brother. So he proposed that Esau give him his birthright to have the food he requested.

Now stop right there, and let's take a close look at this. Esau was hungry. Hunger is an appetite. He wanted food, and one could argue that he needed food after being out hunting all day long.

— Jacob sees that Esau's appetite is out of control and he exploits it.

- Esau is hungry but feeling hungry is not always an indication of something you really need.

***Just because you want it doesn't mean you need it!**

What are some things we want that we really don't need?

I know we want to be accepted by all the popular people at school, but do we need their acceptance?

We want to have the coolest stuff so that we can flex on people, but do we need to have the coolest stuff just to impress people?

I know we want to be in a relationship because we are lonely and we don't want to be alone, but do we need to always be in a relationship?

I know we think we need to drink because that's just what everyone is doing, but do we really need that alcohol?

The truth is a lot of the things we think we need; we really don't need.

But the truth is that it's hard to see that in the moment, isn't it?

When it's in front of you, it's hard to know if it is essential or non-essential.

All we know is we want it!

Most of us, if not all of us, get in trouble or make bad decisions, or do things we later regret because we fell into the Esau trap.

We confuse our hunger with our need!

All of us have struggled with confusing the two.

- A. What Esau felt was not hunger but desire.
 - The food looked and smelled good, and he wanted some.
 - Hunger and desire can feel the same, and that's the problem.
 - Our desire for sex can become so strong that we convince ourselves that it is essential.
 - Now we can't tell the difference between what we want and what we need.
 - We upgrade our expedient desire to an essential need!

2. You want it too much!

Esau is so desperate that he literally says, **"I'm getting ready to die."**

Please give me the stew

Really Esau?

You're gonna die?

Esau wants it so much that he exaggerates his desire and says if he doesn't have what he wants he will die.

Think about it.

Do you act like if you don't have what you want that you will die?

I get it because our desire for what we want is so strong and everyone around us may have it or tell us that we deserve it.

But if you don't get what you want, will you die?

No! You will not die just because they don't like your posts.

No, you will not die just because they don't follow you back.

No, you will not die because they don't like you.

No, you won't die if you are still a virgin.

Do you know why?

Your life is worth more than their follows.

Your life is more important than their likes

Even if they don't like you, Jesus doesn't just like you, He loves you!

And Jesus puts people in your life who love you too and even if you don't get the things you want, you will NOT die!

You have so much potential in you.

You have so many talents you know about and so many more you don't know about.

You are too smart, too creative, too brilliant, too important to act like you cannot live without what other people have.

3. Not everything that is before you is for you!

Esau wanted something that belonged to Jacob, and he wanted it so much that he gave up too much.

One of the challenges we have is that everything has been marketed to us:

Food is marketed to us.

Luxury clothes are marketed to us.

Sex is marketed to us.

But not only these things, lifestyles and life goals are marketed to us. When we are on Tiktok or IG, all we see is a life that we are told we need to have.

We see people living their best life, and we want to be like them. We see people with all the money, all the cool stuff, and all the followers, and we want to have what they have because it's always in front of us!

And the way life works is that we often believe we need something because it's always in front of us.

But when you look at Esau's life, we can learn that not everything in front of us is for us.

The stew was not for Esau; it was for Jacob. And sometimes when you try to get what belongs to other people, it may cost you too much.

Do you know what Esau gave up to have the stew in front of him?

He gave up his inheritance.

The story goes that Esau promised to give Jacob his birthright which is just a biblical word for an inheritance. Esau was giving up all the money and privilege because he wanted what was in front of him.

Dumb move, right? Why would Esau trade his fortune for some stew? It doesn't make sense.

I know it doesn't make sense, but does it make sense what we do today?

We do the same thing Esau did. We give up a lot just to have what's in front of us.

We give up our unique individuality and our unique personality just to hang with certain people.

We give up our future plans for college to hang out with cool people who don't have any plans. So we don't study, and we don't care about our grades because we are just trying to do what's in front of us.

We give up our dreams of starting or owning our own business or creating something new because we want to fit in with the people who tell us we shouldn't dream about doing great things.

We give up our hopes to grow up and live the life we want because we choose the pills, vapes, and drugs in front of us.

We give up our ability to live our best life because we want the party that is right in front of us!

In many ways, all of us have done this right?

- We give up too much for things that actually aren't that much at all.
- **We all have made the Esau decision, and yet we have the opportunity today to change things.**

- Remember this, not everything in front of you is for you because God always has greater things for you than you can see right now!

4. Your inheritance is not here yet.

One of the hardest things that you have to do as young people is wait.

We are used to having everything quickly and almost next to instantly.

We don't like waiting for food, new music, upcoming movies, or anything we want.

But the greatest things in life require for us to wait.

Do you know why Esau thought it was okay to give away his inheritance for some stew?

He didn't have his inheritance yet. He had to wait for it.

So Esau didn't care about giving it up because He didn't know what it was to have all the money he wanted. All he knew was that he wanted some stew and wanted it now.

Here's one of the hardest things for us to do. It's really hard to walk away from things in front of us while we are waiting on the best things.

It's hard to walk away from the wrong people when we don't have any friends.

It's hard to walk away from the party scene when we don't have much going on in our lives at the time.

But here's the question you have to answer:

Would you trade a future fortune for a present party?

Do you think it's worth it?

Jesus wants us to know that while it looks good, and might be good, it's not as good as what He has in store for you.

5. Is it worth it?

It might be good, but it's not that good.

There are many good things that we often have to walk away from in order to have the best things.

Esau just wanted some stew, and nothing was wrong with eating stew.

Some things that we really want are good but just not the best for us based on what we really want out of our lives.

Stew can be good.

Having lots of friends can be good.
Having a lot of followers can be good.
Having money to buy what you want can be good.
Being in a great relationship can be good.

All these things can be good, **but they aren't *that* good!**

Having friends is not so good that it's worth you becoming somebody else.

Having a lot of followers is not so good that it's worth you doing things you might regret later.

Being in a relationship is not so good that it's worth dealing with things you don't really like.

Ask yourself is what I want worth what I have to give up!

When you think about it, it may not be worth it.

But how do you know your future is going to be worth it if you don't have it yet?

6. Stop long enough to notice!

One of the ways we can make the best decisions for our lives is to stop what we are doing, so we can think and process what we are really doing.

When you refrain, it gives you an opportunity to think through what you are doing.

Stop having sex long enough for you to realize that you may not have the whole picture of what you really want for your life.

Stop partying long enough for you to think about what you really want to see in your life.

When you stop, you give yourself time to get help to understand what you are really doing and what you really want.

Here is an example of what I mean.

There was a meeting of business leaders who had gathered for a leadership retreat. It's basically a time for the leaders to have some fun and learn new skills together while away from the workplace.

One of the games they played was a puzzle game. The leaders were separated into groups of eight. Rather than just giving the leaders 250-piece puzzles to solve together, the coach handed each group a bag of puzzle pieces and asked them to put the puzzle together. The groups were told what the puzzle picture should be. Each group struggled to complete the puzzles and most groups ended up frustrated because they couldn't complete the task. After about 30 minutes, one group stopped working on the puzzle, and they asked the coach for something that nobody asked for. They asked for the original box with the picture on it. The coach stopped every group and announced that one group finally understood the point of the game.

The coach explained that each group was given only some of the pieces to the puzzle and that none of the groups had all the pieces to the puzzle in their bags. But the group that stopped working on the puzzle long enough to ask for the original picture did the best thing they could do. The coach explained that the goal of the game was to see what group would stop long enough to realize they didn't have the whole picture!

The truth is that we don't always have the whole picture about what life is all about.

We have a lot of the pieces, and we have a lot of thoughts and plans.

But if we check in with the Coach, we only have a limited number of pieces. So we can't understand how to finish the picture of our lives.

But the goal is to ask God for the original picture.

In other words, what has Jesus designed for your life?

What is the best version of your life from the mind of the God who already knows the future?

What is the original picture of your life?

And here's the promise, if you ask Jesus, He will begin to show you the whole picture of who you are designed to be!

Jesus will tell you everything that will ever happen to you. And it's not about knowing about everything that will happen to you in the future. The power of asking Jesus about your big picture is that Jesus will begin to reveal to you the beautiful picture He has made of your life.

When you begin to see His picture of your life, that is when you begin to make the best decisions

When you begin to see the whole picture of your potential, that's when you begin to choose your future over what's in front of you.

In John 16:24, Jesus said, "Ask and you will receive, that your joy may be full".

Your destiny in Jesus is that you will not just be happy, but you will be full of joy.

And when you ask Jesus about your life, you begin to see how much your life is worth.

Your life is so valuable that this same Jesus sacrificed His life for yours on the Cross and died for all our sins so that we can have a life that never ends.

That's what your life is worth! Your life was worth Jesus giving his life up so that you can live.

It's time to live based on our worth.

Why?

Because Jesus says you and I are worth it!