

Monday, February 6

In Old Testament culture the oldest son was awarded the "birthright," or an extra portion of the father's inheritance. In the case of Jacob and Esau, the birthright was the covenant of God as well as material possessions. Esau, Isaac's elder son, was a man driven by his appetite, and he sold his birthright for a pot of stew. The temporary satisfaction of his physical desire for food was a higher priority than an ongoing relationship with God.

Genesis 25:19-34 and Hebrews 12:16-17

- How did Esau's actions fulfill the prophecy concerning him and his brother in Genesis 25:23?
- Have you ever made a hasty decision based on physical drives that resulted in long-lasting consequences? What happened?

Tuesday, February 7

It will always be tempting to run with your physical appetites for eating and drinking. Physical desires are strong, and you can allow them to be the deciding factor in your actions. When you practice overindulgence and excess in these areas, you are practicing what the Bible calls "gluttony." Your decisions on how to handle yourself are based on your understanding of who you are in Christ and how much respect you have for yourself, the work of God's hands.

Isaiah 5:11-12 and Corinthians 9:24-27

- To what or whom is each of the runners in Isaiah 3:11 and 1 Corinthians 9:24 running? What motivates each runner?
- What positive decisions about handling your physical appetites will you make today?

Wednesday, February 8

After crossing the Red Sea from Egypt, the Israelites found themselves in a desert void of food and water. For forty years God provided a daily supply of water, quail, and manna (bread) to meet their nutritional needs. Most of the Israelites trusted God and depended on God's food supply to be there. But some of the people tried to hoard an excess of food, which spoiled overnight. Overindulging or hoarding reflects dependence on self rather than God in meeting your physical, emotional, and spiritual needs.

Exodus 16:9-30 and Psalm 78:15-32

- What did Moses promise the people (Exodus 16:11)? Why?
- In what scenarios are you most likely to overindulge your appetites?

Thursday, February 9

Paul was experienced in dealing with excess. Before knowing Christ he sought meaning through an insatiable appetite not for food but for overachievement and recognition. After coming into a relationship with Christ, Paul no longer put confidence in the flesh (his own abilities, significance, and habits) but was progressively learning to depend on the resurrection power of Christ in his life.

Philippians 3:3-21

- How does Paul describe those who put confidence in the flesh rather than in Christ (3:18-19)?
- What is taking the place of Jesus in your life and needs to die so you can know "the power of his resurrection" instead?