

Small Group Discussion Questions  
The Birthright

Genesis 25: 24-34

1. Talk about a time when you lost something valuable. How did you feel? What did you do in response?
2. Today's scripture lesson tells the story of Esau, who traded his family birthright for a bowl of stew. Pastor Mark suggests that when we don't value things properly, we end up treating them foolishly. Have you ever taken something valuable for granted? Have you ever treated something relatively minor with too much importance or value? Try to give an example.
3. Why would the Family Birthright be considered so valuable?
4. Notice what Esau says in verse 32, just before trading (selling) his birthright to his younger brother Jacob. Pastor Mark suggests that when we exaggerate our circumstances in order to rationalize our decisions, we are almost always making a bad decision. To "rationalize" means that we tell ourselves "rational lies" in order to justify our poor choices. Do you think anyone ever does that today? Can you give an example?
5. Esau trades his Birthright for a bowl of stew. Why is that such a terrible deal?
6. To avoid Esau's mistake, we need clarity and commitment. To gain clarity, we have to determine what is really important in life. How do you get really clear about what is really important? How does the church help with that?
7. Pastor Mark recommends that people read "The Purpose Driven Life" by Rick Warren. Have you ever read that book? Would you be interested in reading it? Do you believe God has designed you for a purpose in life?
8. Pastor Mark suggests that we are living in a culture that encourages us to think that life is all about the stew, and that we should focus our energy and attention on those things that satisfy our momentary appetites but don't satisfy our thirsty soul. Do you agree or disagree, why or why not?
9. In addition to clarity, we need commitment to the things that matter most. Jesus said, "Seek first the Kingdom of God and it's righteousness, then everything else will be added unto you" (Matthew 6:33). What do you think that means?
10. Pastor Mark suggests that we can determine what is currently important to us by looking at how we spend our time. Our weekly schedule reveals what we really love and value. What does your weekly schedule say about you?

11. Gretchen Rubin says, “What I do every day is more important than what I do every once in a while.” What do you think she means by that?
12. Pastor Mark suggests that we spend 30-45 minutes each week planning our schedule for the upcoming week, making sure we intentionally schedule activities that match our highest priorities and values. How do you currently plan your week?
13. While there is more to life than worship, prayer, Bible study and small groups, Pastor Mark argues that when we intentionally build these activities into our weekly schedule, they will impact the quality of everything else that is part of our week. Do you agree or disagree, why or why not?
14. If the principle is true that “the way we treat things is a reflection of how much we value those things,” then is there anything (or anyone) in your life currently that needs to be treated with greater respect and appreciation? Is there anything (or anyone) that needs to get less time and attention because it isn’t as valuable?