

## Conversation Starters

- Have you ever had any funny moments that, at the time may not have been funny, but happened as a result of a bad decision?
- What did you learn from it?

## Discuss

**We have all made bad decisions in life. One reason is because we can fall into the trap of thinking short term instead of long term. Consider the story of Esau from the Bible:**

*One day when Jacob was cooking some stew, Esau arrived home from the wilderness exhausted and hungry. Esau said to Jacob, “I’m starved! Give me some of that red stew!” (This is how Esau got his other name, Edom, which means “red.”) “All right,” Jacob replied, “but trade me your rights as the firstborn son.” “Look, I’m dying of starvation!” said Esau. “What good is my birthright to me now?” But Jacob said, “First you must swear that your birthright is mine.” So Esau swore an oath, thereby selling all his rights as the firstborn to his brother, Jacob. Then Jacob gave Esau some bread and lentil stew. Esau ate the meal, then got up and left. He showed contempt for his rights as the firstborn. (Genesis 25:29-34 NLT)*

- Have you heard this story before?
- Have you considered the gravity of the results to Esau’s decision?

**What we can learn from short-term thinking is the importance of long-term thinking. We often make a decision with short-term thinking because it is just natural to just think about what is right in front of us and not consider long-term; or we give in to our feelings over thinking; or we know but simply don’t care because we would rather have immediate satisfaction. Regardless of the reason, short-term thinking can lead to some hard consequences in the long-term.**

- Have you ever made a short-term decision that you later regretted?
- Have you ever made a decision for one of the above reasons?
- Are there any small decisions (think daily) that you make now and never consider long-term?

**To begin making good decisions, we would be wise to consider the long-term results of our choices. One way to remember that is to consider the results of a choice you must make by thinking about what the results of that decision would be within the next 10 minutes, next 10 months, and next 10 years (or 10-10-10). Then choose what is best in light of that.**

- Have you ever taken this approach?
- Do you have any big decisions now that you can apply this thinking too?
- Are there other ways you carefully make decisions with long-term results in mind?

## Next Steps

We live with the effects of our decisions daily. They can be big or small decisions. Decisions about relationships, work, diet, where we live, finances. The effects can be good or bad and range in severity and length of time we feel them. Learning from Esau’s bad decision, we can start making good decisions by thinking long-term about the direction of our life. Set a few minutes aside this week, get to a quiet place free from distraction, and consider the direction of your life – where are you headed?

## Further Reflection

*See Genesis 25:29-34 NLT.*

## Pray

God, you have wired us up with unique personalities and we each have different opportunities presented to us every day. It is so easy for us to make decisions based on short-term thinking, not even considering life in the long term. So, we often make bad decisions, whether we know it or not. Thank you for the wisdom that you offer us and can provide. Help us to make better decisions, and consider our lives in light of eternity.