

## **Return to God**

Our lesson today will be focused on Genesis 35:1-15.

*God send Jacob to Bethel, and He asked Jacob to settle there and build Him an altar.*

God said to Jacob, “Get up! Go to Bethel and settle there. Build an altar there to the God who appeared to you when you fled from your brother Esau.” Genesis 35:1, (CSB)

*When Jacob gets to Bethel and builds the altar as God commanded in Genesis 35:1, he renames the place El-Bethel.*

Jacob built an altar there and called the place El-bethel because it was there that God had revealed himself to him when he was fleeing from his brother. Genesis 35:7, (CSB)

Jacob was the one who named the place Bethel in the first place but now he names it El-Bethel. Why the name change? The clue is in the meaning of the name.

Bethel means house of God, but El-Bethel means God of Bethel or God of the house of God.

**When we pray revive us again, we are saying God, we are not just returning to your house, we are returning to You.**

## **How Do We Return to God?**

Jacob outlines how to return to God in Genesis 35:2

*So, Jacob said to his family and all who were with him, “Get rid of the foreign gods that are among you. Purify yourselves and change your clothes. Genesis 35:2, (CSB)*

### **1. Get rid of the foreign god’s (idols)... among you**

**To get rid of idols means to** – Identify and put away anything that hinders our drawing near to God.

A foreign god or an idol is any unauthorized person, place, thing, or thought that you look to as your source.

It can be anything that becomes the subject of your ultimate focus.

Exodus 20:4-5, don’t worship any other god before because I AM A JEALOUS GOD.

Anything or anyone that competes with your ultimate loyalty to God is an idol.

Bad things you look to as the source of your ultimate wellbeing are idols.

*a. Drug addiction*

*b. Alcohol addiction*

Good things you look to as the source of your ultimate wellbeing can also become an idol.

- a. **Money** is good but when it becomes the source of your ultimate wellbeing it is an idol
- b. **Career** is good but when it becomes the source of your ultimate wellbeing it is an idol
- c. **Educational Degree** – you put so much weight on your degree that it is competing with God’s place in your life.
- d. **Celebrity Worship** – appreciating people, valuing them is good. The moment they become the source of how you are doing
- e. **Politics**
- f. **Greed** – Colossians 3:5

*You must put to death, then, the earthly desires at work in you, such as sexual immorality, indecency, lust, evil passions, and greed (for greed is a form of idolatry). Colossians 3:5, (GNB)*

- g. **Luck** – you can’t have a sovereign God and talk about luck
2. **Cleanse ourselves** - confess our sins and appropriate God’s forgiveness.
  3. **Change our clothes** - Change our outward behavior, which usually involves changing our schedules.

### **Conclusion:**

It is time not only to return to the house of God but to return to the God of the house and he says, that starts with putting away the idols, cleansing ourselves, and changing our clothes.

