

Wrestling For A Blessing Genesis 32:24

Jacob is well known in the Old Testament as “the man who wrestled with God.” His entire life had brought him to this turning point. He had left his parents and twin brother after stealing his brother’s birthright and deceiving his father into granting the “first born-blessing” upon him instead of Esau. He had lived the past 20 years with his uncle who’s daughters he took as wives and who’s livestock he had gained by deception. Up to this point Jacob had lived up to his name, “trickster, supplanter, cheat.”

But this experience of wrestling with God changed the rest of his life. Whenever we have a serious encounter with God and we respond as Jacob did, we too will gain the blessing of God upon our lives. This is not initially a picture of Jacob wrestling with God. It is, at first, a picture of God wrestling with Jacob. It affirms the truth that “man’s agonizing prayer for solution brings God’s aggressive call for surrender.”

Notice some characteristics of this struggle which often occur in God’s struggles with us:

- I. God’s struggle with us is ALWAYS INTENTIONAL (v. 24b “... a MAN wrestled with him.”)
 - A. God takes the initiative to get our attention.
 - B. The “Man” is the Angel of the Lord or the pre-incarnate Christ (cf. Hosea 12:4).
 - C. This struggle brought him “face to face” with God (v.30).
- II. God’s struggle with us is OFTEN INTENSE (v.24b “...a man WRESTLED with him...”).
 - A. “Wrestled” = “hand to hand combat” (v.24c)
 - B. The Angel touched the socket of Jacob’s thigh...so that it was dislocated” (v.25).
 - C. “We can never win battles with men until God has won the battle with us.”
- III. God’s struggle with us SOMETIMES SEEMS INDEFINITE (v.24c “...a man wrestled with him UNTIL DAYBREAK.”)
 - A. This is a picture of travailing and prevailing prayer.
 - B. James 5:16b “...The effective prayer of a righteous man can accomplish much.”
 - C. Have you had any “until daybreak” encounters with God?
- IV. God’s struggle with us is INVALUABLE.
 - A. There must be a time when we take hold of God (v.26).
 - B. Our struggle will result in either submission or further rebellion.

For Jacob, his wrestling match with God resulted in his submission. He surrendered to God’s will for his life and, as a result, God blessed him. And this blessing was far beyond the blessing of Isaac which he received some 20 years earlier.