

Bible Discussion 7: Wrestling and Blessing

Text: Genesis 25:27-28; Genesis 27:18-30; Genesis 29; Genesis 32:18-30

Purpose: To ask God to confront the areas of our life that keep us from freedom and a life fully with Him.

1. Opening Question: *What is the best fight scene in a movie you have ever seen?*

Read and Discuss Genesis 25:27-28 & Genesis 27:18-30

Jacob's life was characterized by relational hostilities. He was a determined man; he was considered ruthless, a con artist, and a manipulator. In fact, the name Jacob not only means "deceiver" but more literally it means "grabber". Esau (Jacob's brother) was favored by his father Isaac and Jacob was favored by his mother Rebekah. When Isaac was toward the end of his life he was ready to bless Esau. While Esau was out hunting and preparing a final meal for Isaac, Jacob disguised himself and stole the blessing from Esau.

2. Chances are we will probably be on the wrong end of favoritism at some point in our life. (preferences given to someone else at work, more attention from a parent to a sibling, or some advantage given to someone else) *What's the right heart response when someone else is given preference over you?*
3. *What would be the right kind of prayer to God when we experience favoritism?* (God I trust you to work this out, God thank you for favoring me with salvation, God I know I am valued by you, God let your justice come, God guard me from being a bitter person.)

Read and Discuss Genesis 29

Jacob is on the run from his brother Esau. His uncle Laban takes him in. Jacob soon fell in love with Laban's daughter, Rachel and agreed to work for Laban seven years in exchange for marriage to her. After seven years Laban deceived Jacob and gave Rachel's older sister, Leah to him as a wife instead.

4. *How can you recover when you are deceived by someone you trust?* (get help from a counselor, work through process of forgiving, have people pray over you, set proper boundaries, etc.)
5. Matt. 24:4-5 *And Jesus answered and said to them, "See to it that no one misleads you. "For many will come in My name, saying, 'I am the Christ,' and will mislead many. The bible gives many warnings to us to "not be deceived" because it can easily lead us astray from God (we can be deceived doctrinally, morally, or convinced to disobey God in what seems small ways). What are some ways that you can safe guard yourself from being deceived?*

Read and Discuss Genesis 32:18-30

Jacob has lived a life of running from God, running from his struggles, running from the sin done against him and running from his own sin of deceiving, jealousy, and insecurity. However, because of God's great love for Jacob God forces Jacob to do what we all must do, confront our failures, weakness, sins, all the things that are hurting him and face God. It was only after he came to grips with God and ceased his struggling that he received God's blessing.

6. God doesn't want you to struggle with past hurt, pain from being deceived, or stuck battling jealousy. His desire is freedom, peace, and joy for you. *What are some things going on right now inside your life that you would love to be free of?* (holding on to hurt from a past relationship, unwilling to forgive a past hurt, or disappointments from life not turning out how you planned, etc.)
7. What are some things you can do this week to keep from slipping back into past hurts, past failures, past bitterness? *(continue to hold it in front of God in your prayers, journal your emotions, invite someone in to talk with you about your emotions, etc.)*