

God continually pursues Jacob through the course of his life so that when he hits rock bottom and feels 'great fear and distress' he begins to turn to God for help.

Genesis 32:7-12:

- He's afraid & distressed (v.7)
- He's humbled (v.10)
- He acknowledges his unworthiness (v.10).
- He asks God for help (v.11) – *Jacob's first prayer!*

It's often when people hit rock bottom in life that they begin to look up to God. It's during these times that people surrender to God's active and loving pursuit. Jacob was close to surrender, *but not yet...*

KEY QUESTION: *Why did God pursue Jacob? Why does God pursue us in our lost condition?*

GOD PURSUES HIS _____
(Genesis 25:19-26; Romans 9:10-17)

2. God _____ upon us so we _____
Gen. 32:22-32

GENESIS 32:22-27: "That night Jacob got up and took his two wives, his two maidservants and his eleven sons and crossed the ford of the Jabbok. ²³ After he had sent them across the stream, he sent over all his possessions. ²⁴ *So Jacob was left alone, and a man wrestled with him till daybreak.* ²⁵ When the man saw that he could not overpower him, ***he touched the socket of Jacob's hip so that his hip was wrenched as he wrestled with the man.*** Then the man said, "Let me go, for it is daybreak." But Jacob replied, "I will not let you go unless you bless me." ²⁷ *The man asked him, "What is your name?" "Jacob," he answered.*

"A mere touch of the divine conquers Jacob"
Bruce Waltke, Genesis, 446.

"In this literal wrestling-match Jacob refused to accept defeat until it was unavoidable. *His opponent 'hit below the belt' and forced him to give in.* With his hip out of joint Jacob was *totally helpless* because of the excruciating pain. *All he could do was*

cling to his opponent for support." **Joyce G. Baldwin, The Message of Genesis 12-50, 137.**

"With severe mercy, God dislocates Jacob's hip (the acetabulum), the wrestler's pivot of strength. His natural strength shriveled, Jacob must prayerfully cling to God's grace." **Bruce Waltke, Genesis, 446.**

CHARACTERISTICS OF SURRENDER TO GOD

- ❖ An acceptance of _____ (32:25).
- ❖ An acknowledgment of _____ (32:27).

3. God _____ us and gives us a _____
(Genesis 32-26).

GENESIS 32:26-31: "Then the man said, "Let me go, for it is daybreak." But Jacob replied, "I will not let you go unless you bless me." ²⁷ *The man asked him, "What is your name?" "Jacob," he answered.* ²⁸ *Then the man said, "Your name will no longer be Jacob, but Israel, because you have struggled with God and with men and have overcome.* ²⁹ Jacob said, "Please tell me your name." But he replied, "Why do you ask my name?" *Then he blessed him there.* ³⁰ So Jacob called the place Peniel, saying, "It is because *I saw God face to face,* and yet my life was spared." ³¹ *The sun rose above him as he passed Peniel, and he was limping because of his hip."*

- A. A new _____ and _____ (32:28).**
- B. A new _____ (32:28b).**
- C. A new _____ (32:29b).**
- D. A new _____ (32:30).**
- E. A new _____, a new _____ (32:31a).**
- F. A new _____ of his own weakness (32:31b).**

Victor P. Hamilton, *Handbook on the Pentateuch*, 125.

FINAL THOUGHTS

“Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come!” **2 Corinthians 5:17**

Are you a Christ-follower?

SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Take some time to review the message from Sunday and discuss any new insights and observations you've gleaned regarding the life of Jacob.
2. What was Jacob like before he surrendered fully to God? (See point #1 in message) In what sense were we like Jacob *before* we surrendered our lives to God? (See Ephesians 2:1-10).
3. What were the contributing factors that led Jacob to finally surrender to God?
4. Genesis 25:19-26 & Romans 9:10-17 tell us that Jacob was chosen by God, but Esau (his brother) was not. How do you make sense of this? What is the basis for God's choice according to Romans 9:10-17? Take time to consider a few other passages: Ephesians 1:3-14; John 6:37-44; 2 Timothy 1:8-9.
5. Does it seem unfair or unjust to you that God chooses one person and not the other? If so, consider Paul's reply to the issue of fairness and justice in Romans 9:14-24.
6. God has chosen Jacob before he is born, but Jacob does not surrender to God until later in life. What does this tell us about those who are spiritually lost and have not made a decision to follow Jesus? Is it our responsibility to know who is chosen? What is our responsibility?
7. What was Jacob's life like after he surrendered to God? (See Genesis 32-26). In what sense are we like Jacob *after* we surrender our lives to God? (See 1 Timothy 1:12-16; 2 Corinthians 5:17).
8. Compare the story of Jacob with the story of the prodigal son in Luke 15. How are they similar? How are they different?

PRAYER:

HEROES OF THE FAITH: *Lessons From the Lives of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob & Joseph* **Today's Message: "Wrestling With God"**

Genesis 25:19-36:43

02.08.09 / SMC / Pastor Cory Anderson

INTRODUCTION:

1. God _____ us in our _____ **Genesis 25:19-32:21**

A. ***Jacob's spiritually _____ Condition.***

- ❖ Jacob means '*he grasps the heel*' – a name implying '*deceiver*' & one who '*pulls others down so he can get ahead*' (25:19-26).
- ❖ Jacob steals Esau's birthright (25:27-34).
- ❖ Jacob deceives his aged father & steals the blessing belonging to Esau (27:1-40).
- ❖ Jacob runs from the problems he created (27:41-28:9).
- ❖ Jacob makes no mention of God for the first 40+ years of his life (28:10-22).
- ❖ Jacob is deceived by his father-in-law and in return deceives him (29:1-30:43).
- ❖ Jacob runs again from the problems he created (31:1-55).

KEY QUESTION: *What kind of a man would do all this?*

B. ***God's _____ of Lost Jacob.***

- ❖ *God initiates* a relationship with Jacob (28:10-22; 35:7), but Jacob is '*afraid*' (v.17) & says '*If you...then you will be my God*' (28:20-21).
- ❖ *God reveals himself* to Jacob by *providing, protecting and blessing* Jacob despite his lifestyle (28:12-15; 29:31-30:24; 31:5,7,24).
- ❖ *God re-introduces himself* to Jacob (31:10-13).
- ❖ *God sends his angels* to meet Jacob when he hits rock bottom (32:1-2).