

Women in the Word
Genesis 31 and 32
March 10, 2016

Friends of God
★ A Study of Genesis ★

1. What are some of the possible benefits of being an independent individual?

How can independence become a negative characteristic when considering our spiritual life?

2. Read Genesis 30:25-27 along with Genesis 31:1-3. What have Laban's sons failed to realize in chapter 31 that Laban himself realized in chapter 30?

Six years have gone by since Jacob first asked Laban about returning to his own country. What encouragement now spurs him on to pursue his desire to separate from Laban and return to the land of his relatives?

3. Read Genesis 31:4-13. What can you admire about Jacob's faith in these verses?

Why was it important for Jacob to have this conversation with Rachel and Leah?

Read again the words from God that Jacob shares in 31:13. Now remind yourself of this moment in Bethel by reading Genesis 28:18-22. Even when Jacob was on a journey away from his home where was he hoping to be one day?

Knowing about Jacob's time with Laban, how had God's kindness extended beyond the desires of Jacob's vow in 28:18-22?

4. Read Genesis 31:14-16 to see how Jacob's wives respond to his words about leaving their father and family. What is their attitude toward their father and why?

5. Read Genesis 31:17-21 as Jacob begins his journey toward home. When we read about this secret departure and the actions of Jacob and Rachel, what seems to be the thoughts and emotions they are experiencing?

Read Genesis 31:22-24. What do you think was the meaning of God's words to Laban?

How is God protecting Jacob with his warning to Laban? Also read 31:29.

6. Read Genesis 31:25-35. In what ways are Laban's words a mixture of hypocrisy and exaggeration? Also read 29:20-25 to be reminded of one of Laban's own tricks.

How does Laban's passion for his stolen gods give us more insight into his true character?
How was Rachel a true daughter of her cunning father?

7. Read Genesis 31:36-42. What does Jacob realize about God speaking to Laban the night before?

What does Jacob believe to be true about God's protection in his life?

8. Jacob has just listed all of the ways Laban has wronged him. Now Laban defends himself. Is it a weak or strong defense and why? Read Genesis 31:43.

Read Genesis 31:44-55. What is the purpose of the covenant agreement according to verse 52?

9. Read Genesis 32:1. Jacob is entering the land where he will face his brother Esau who desired Jacob's death. What ministry would these angels have in Jacob's life?

Read Genesis 32:2-8. Facing this frightening situation, how well is Jacob remembering the protection of God throughout his life?

Read Genesis 32:9-12. Where did Jacob eventually go with his fears?

List the elements of his prayer that point to the maturing of Jacob's faith.

10. Read Genesis 32:13-21. Jacob prayed but Jacob still feared. His detailed plans to appease Esau demonstrated Jacob acting independently of God. What does he hope to accomplish with his plans that God would have accomplished without Jacob's desperate acts?

11. Read Genesis 32:22-32. Describe the details of this wrestling match between Jacob and God. Also read Hosea 12:3-5.

Considering the descriptions of Jacob throughout our studies — his planning and plotting and hard work to order his life as he wanted — why might God be physically wrestling with Jacob before he returns to the promised land?

How would the crippling touch of God also touch the heart of Jacob?

The blessing for Jacob comes in the form of a new name. What is this name and what is the significance of it?

12. Do you have a personal prayer request to share with your small group?

WRESTLING WITH GOD

Our world applauds an independent spirit, but God applauds the spirit that depends on Him.

GOD'S PLANS PREVAIL

31:1-55

God commands Jacob to return to the Land of Promise

To set out on a journey of _____, remember God assures us of His guidance and His presence.

Jacob prepares to return to Canaan

When we place our hope on God's approval instead of man's approval, we are able to go on God's _____.

Laban intends to stop God's plans

We have to set aside our plans to recognize God's plans.

GOD'S PROTECTION PREVAILS

32:1-20

Jacob is met by the angels of God

No human effort is sufficient to battle the enemies that confront us. God is our means of _____.

Jacob recognizes his need for God

Prayer is the means to grow our faith when we are tempted to live life in our own strength.

Jacob protects himself

Ruled by our fears and not by the fear of God results in spiritual _____.

GOD'S LOVE PREVAILS

32:21-32

Jacob wrestles with God at the threshold of the Promised Land

The Lord will 'cripple' the self-sufficient believer so that he might _____ to the power of God.

Jacob is given a new name

Holding tightly to God throughout our lives will open our eyes to who He is and who we can be.

Jacob's life is delivered

To accomplish all that God wants us to do, we must _____ on Him in faith.

FRIENDS WITH GOD: A Study of Genesis
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John 15:4-5 Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit by itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in Me. I am the vine; you are the branches. Whoever abides in Me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from Me you can do nothing.

John 12:42-43 Nevertheless, many even of the authorities believed in Him, but for fear of the Pharisees they did not confess it, so that they would not be put out of the synagogue; for they loved the glory that comes from man more than the glory that comes from God.

Genesis 28:20-22 Then Jacob made a vow, saying, "If God will be with me and will keep me in this way that I go, and will give me bread to eat and clothing to wear, so that I come again to my father's house in peace, then the Lord shall be my God, and this stone, which I have set up for a pillar, shall be God's house. And of all that you give me I will give a full tenth to you."

Genesis 24:50 Then Laban and Bethuel answered and said, "The thing has come from the Lord; we cannot speak to you bad or good."

James 4:13,15-16 Come now, you who say, "Today or tomorrow we will go into such and such a town and spend a year there and trade and make a profit.....Instead you ought to say, "If the Lord wills, we will live and do this or that." As it is, you boast in your arrogance. All such boasting is evil.

Psalms 18:17-19 He rescued me from my strong enemy and from those who hated me, for they were too mighty for me. They confronted me in the day of my calamity, but the Lord was my support. He brought me out into a broad place; He rescued me, because He delighted in me.

Hebrews 12:5b-6 My son, do not regard lightly the discipline of the Lord, nor be weary when reproved by Him. For the Lord disciplines the one He loves, and chastises every son whom He receives.

Lamentations 3:22-24 The steadfast love of the Lord never ceases; His mercies never come to an end; they are new every morning; great is your faithfulness. "The Lord is my portion," says my soul, "therefore I will hope in Him."