



Day 1 — Genesis 28:10-22

WHO IS JACOB?

Please answer the following questions in reference to this scripture passage. If you don't currently do so, we suggest keeping a journal during this series describing the life of Jacob.

- o What happens in Jacob's life?
- o What are the circumstances surrounding him?
- o How does he respond to situations? What choices does he make?
- o What stands out about Jacob's character?
- o Where does God show up?
- o What other thoughts do you have?

You may find an overview of Jacob's life at the Welcome Center or online at www.jacobsweltec.org.

Day 2 — Genesis 28:10-15

WHAT'S IN A DREAM?

So Jacob is running for his life, running from his home, alone in a brutal land. God meets him in his fear and insecurity to reassure him of His presence and His promises. Underline the phrases in the this scripture where God is reassuring Jacob of His presence. Can you relate to God's presence in hard circumstances? If so, how has God met you when you were struggling?

Day 3 — Genesis 28:16-19

MISSING THE POINT

What does Jacob focus on after waking up? Circle the nouns he uses. Notice that he doesn't see the *relationship with God* after his dream, only his experience. He missed the whole point of the dream. To be fair, he had only heard of God through his father's stories. This was likely the first time Jacob had his own communication from God, and there are hidden meanings in this promise. There are probably very few of us at this young age who would have gotten the point.

Have you ever "heard" from God through a dream or a word or reading Scripture or some other experience? How did you respond? Were you confused or encouraged? Did you focus on the experience or the relationship? What did you learn in retrospect?

Day 4 — Genesis 28:20-22

A MOUNTAIN TOP EXPERIENCE

Explain how Jacob's vow is short-sighted, self-centered, superficial, conditional, controlling, and external. How often do we do the same? How often do we put conditions on our relationship with God? "If I just get this _____, then I'll follow you." If...then. What Jacob is forgetting is that God just told him that he would receive the land he was standing on and his descendants would be innumerable. How often do we forget what God's already promised us?

"Transformation is the removal of our masks. [A mountain top experience] won't remove our mask. Jacob's trouble and struggle is just beginning, but God has only begun to work."

An experience with God, whether a dream or otherwise, isn't the thing that changes us. The relationship we have with God allows us to be who we really are. We can remove our masks with God. We can be ourselves. Is this a new concept to you? Have you poured out your struggles to God? Do you feel comfortable sharing your heart with Him? Do you recognize that God is working through your trouble and struggle?

Day 5 — Colossians 3:2-4

THE ROPE

During the message last weekend, Pastor Paul gave the illustration of the rope which represents the length of our life eternally. But somehow we get focused on this little portion in our hands as if it's all we have. We don't even notice the rest of it. So how do we begin to take our eyes off what's right in front of us and see what's ahead of us? How do we set our mind on things above? How is God connecting your life here with your eternal life? Write down some of the promises and rewards that God has set before you. Thank Him for these treasures.

Indeed, if we consider the unblushing promises of reward and the staggering nature of the rewards promised in the Gospels, it would seem that Our Lord finds our desires not too strong, but too weak. We are half-hearted creatures, fooling about with drink and sex and ambition when infinite joy is offered us, like an ignorant child who wants to go on making mud pies in a slum because he cannot imagine what is meant by the offer of a holiday at the sea. We are far too easily pleased.

C.S. Lewis, *The Weight of Glory*, pg 26