



To Wrestle with God

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Focus Jacob spent his life deceiving and manipulating others rather than trusting God. In a time of difficulty, Jacob wrestled with God until he surrendered to Him. In the same way, when we stop wrestling and surrender to God, He can bless us.

Fun What is your favorite Thanksgiving memory?

Review Key Scriptures: Genesis 32:22–30

1. Jacob's need for grace.

Jacob's name means "he deceives," and from birth, he rivaled with his brother, Esau. Jacob deceived his father, Isaac, in order to steal the blessing from his brother. Jacob continued to use trickery to get what he wanted, and it ended up going against him; Laban tricked him by causing him to marry Leah instead of Rachel. At the time Jacob wrestled with God, he was stuck between Laban and Esau. God's grace shows up when we are stuck and afraid.

2. Jacob wrestles with God.

Jacob cried out in prayer, and then he wrestled with God. Jacob refused to let go until God blessed him. Jacob was transformed through wrestling with God. Those who have encountered God often walk with a limp. The limp marks them, slows them down, and changes their reliance on self. At the end of wrestling with God, Jacob finally declares his name to be Jacob, "he who deceives." It is at this moment of confession that God changes his name to Israel. When Jacob submitted to God, he received the blessing and was able to then bless others.

Group Dynamics Idea The Gateway Christmas production is just around the corner! Now is a good time to make an intentional list of people you can invite. It always has a powerful

salvation message, and during this season people are often more open to accepting an invitation to church. For more information, visit gatewaychristmas.com.

Discuss

1. Jacob deceived Esau, stealing his birthright, and deceived Laban. How would you have felt if you were Jacob after running from Laban and going to meet Esau? What tensions do you think Jacob experienced?
2. When Jacob was in a difficult place, he wrestled with God. How does God use the natural stresses of life to bring us closer to Himself?
3. What pressures in your own life have caused you to call out to God for help? How did God meet you in those moments?
4. Why is it sometimes hard for us to surrender our will to God?
5. Jacob spent his life manipulating others rather than trusting God. Why do people often try to figure out life themselves rather than trusting in God?
6. Have you ever wrestled with God on an issue? If you're comfortable, share what that experience was like.
7. What is the Holy Spirit saying to you through this message? Are there areas of your life you are currently wrestling with God about? What area of your life is God asking you to surrender to Him?

Take Home As we conclude, remember the following:

- In a difficult moment, Jacob wrestled with God.
- Jacob admitted his name and was given grace.
- When we move from wrestling to surrendering, God will bless us.

Prayer

Heavenly Father, thank You for giving us so many examples in the Bible. Forgive us for the times we have trusted in ourselves, rather than trusting in You. Show us areas of our lives where we are wrestling with You and need to submit to You.

Help us to live lives in complete surrender and submission to You. In Jesus' name, Amen.

New Leader Tip People like to connect around food. Creating a sign-up list for others to bring food and drinks to your group ensures the responsibility doesn't fall solely on you. When people are eating, they are usually more comfortable to talk to and connect with. You may even want to plan one of your groups at a restaurant and make it simply a relational time.