

GROWTHguide

"Stretching Your Character"

January 21, 2018



THIS WEEK'S SCRIPTURES

Genesis 25:23-26, Matthew 19:30, 16:26,
Genesis 27:15-33, Genesis 32:22-29

DAY 1

Read [Genesis 25:23-26](#)

Conflict is part of life. Why do you feel so many people do all they can to avoid it? Think of a time when you had conflict in your life and what was going on.

- **What actions seemed to accelerate the conflict and what actions calmed the situation down?**
- **As you read the story of Jacob's birth, what do you note about the event?**

It is said Jacob came into the world "holding onto his brother's heel.". This leads us to understand Jacob lived in a "me first attitude."

- **What does that mean to you?**

DAY 2

Read [Matthew 19:30, 16:26](#)

We learned yesterday that Jacob came into the world with a "me first" attitude. Pastor Bob shared how ego and placing ourselves first is a dangerous thing. Gaining the world and losing your soul is possible when you are chasing the "me first" world.

- **Why do you think ego is so prevalent in our attitudes?**

Ego has been defined as "Edging God Out." When our egos are prevalent, we are actually moving away from God rather than towards God.

- **What do you learn from the Jacob story about how his ego is dangerous?**

Jesus said the Kingdom of Heaven was different than the kingdoms of the world. He spoke the words, *"The last shall be first and the first shall be last."*

- **What did he mean by this? Why was ego something Jesus was against?**
- **Take time to reflect on Jesus' words. What do they mean to you?**

DAY 3

Read Genesis 27:15-33

Jacob begins his plan of deception with the goal of stealing his brother Esau's blessing as the firstborn.

- **Why do you think we are often focused on getting more than we currently have? What do you feel is behind the motives that could lead to deception, cheating and wrongdoing to get ahead?**
- **When have you deceived someone? As you think about that situation, how were you like Jacob? When has someone deceived you? How did you cope with that?**

Character is at the center of our relationship with God. Character flaws like Jacob's "me first" attitude draw us away from God. Strength of character helps us to choose the right path and draw closer to God.

- **How is God growing your character?**

DAY 4

Read [Genesis 32:22-29](#)

Jacob finds himself wrestling with a heavenly being. He is 97 years old at the time of this encounter. All of his life, Jacob has been holding onto the successes of others and getting ahead by taking the wins of others. Now he finds himself in a wrestling match that uncovers his character flaw.

- **Write down your own commentary of what you observe from this text.**

In the end, Jacob discovers he is worn out, defeated, unable to continue the path of deception he is on. He is in need of God. He realizes God's grace is holding onto him and won't let him go.

- **Describe a time when you were at the end of your rope and you discovered the grip of God holding onto you. Reflect on that moment.**

DAY 5

Pastor Bob noted on Sunday that "God cannot bless who you pretend to be." For his entire life, Jacob was attempting to be something he wasn't. He received the family blessing, but he could not even go home and enjoy it. He was a deceiver.

- **What is it in your life you need to correct?**
- **What will it take for you to learn to become the person God wants you to be versus trying to be someone else?**

DAY 6

Today is a day of reflection. Spend some time thinking about the ways you can improve your character, to be the person God created you to be. What will you do to live into that? Spend some time with God in prayer and seek his guidance. Thank him for holding onto you with his grace no matter what.

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