

GOD'S FAITHFULNESS OUR HOPE

JACKIE OESCH

GENESIS 24-33

- LESSON 1: A WIFE FOR ISAAC – *WHOSE DAUGHTER ARE YOU?***
LESSON 2: DESPISED AND DECEIVED – *THE BIRTHRIGHT AND BLESSING*
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MORE THAN LEAH***
LESSON 6: JACOB WRESTLES WITH GOD – *CROSSING THE JABBOK RIVER*

“...I have stored up Your Word in my heart...”

Psalm 119:11

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GETTING STARTED

You are embarking on an adventure that will shape the rest of your life. Your journey will be unique to you and will be determined in part by your eager and enthusiastic desire to grow in your understanding of the book called The Holy Bible. Your commitment to the study promises to enrich your life as God speaks to you through His Word.

As you study you are encouraged to have some recommended supplies on hand:

1. This Bible Study unit: *God's Faithfulness, Our Hope*
2. English Standard Version of the Holy Bible (ESV). Note: If you are making a new purchase, look for a Bible, if possible, that has:
 - a. a cross-reference column preferably down the center of each page,
 - b. a Concordance usually found in the back of the Bible, and
 - c. a few basic maps also usually found in the back.
3. Pen or pencil
4. 3x5 or 4x6 index cards

With the three features listed in #2 you will be adequately supplied for your study and be ready to successfully navigate through these lessons. If, however, this is your first exposure to the Bible, you may want to consider beginning with the study entitled *Navigating the Bible*. This study provides navigational tools designed to help you develop skills and make you a more confident Bible student. *Navigating the Bible* may be downloaded at no cost or obligation on the CrossConnect Ministries website (www.crosscm.org). Although this study is recommended, it is not essential for success in studying *God's Faithfulness, Our Hope*.

Do not hesitate to mark up your Bible. It's your Bible to study. Make it your own with your notes, your underlining, highlighting, circling and arrows! You may choose to use a notebook or tablet for recording thoughts, questions, and tracking your journey through the study.

The study material is written so that you are able to learn on your own. With a degree of self-discipline you will cover the material with little or no difficulty. At the same time, you will acquire new information, share new insights, and ask some challenging questions that will beg for answers. Anticipating this response you are encouraged to seriously consider inviting a couple of friends to study with you.

May you find joy in your study. May your heart be receptive as God speaks to you through His Word. May these Bible stories reassure you of His great love given to you through His Son Jesus Christ, our Lord and Savior.

Editor's note: For clarification, capitalized pronouns reference God. i.e. "...what He said."

LESSON ONE

WHOSE DAUGHTER ARE YOU?

GENESIS 24 – A WIFE FOR ISAAC

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INTRODUCTION TO LESSON 1

Abraham was old and the culture of the day stipulated that it was time for this father to find a wife for his son. In Lesson 1 watch for the customs that may or may not be familiar to you. Observe Abraham's protection and care for his son who was the intended heir of the covenant blessing.

Who would this woman be? Where would she be found? How would Isaac regard the woman that his father had chosen? The story all unfolds in Genesis 24.

The story is rather simple but the questions that need to be asked in this study are questions that help us focus on the concerns of the father for his son's wife-to-be, the commitment of the servant to his master's will, the supporting role of the extended family, and the comforting love the wife brings to her husband. Take time to consider the tremendous gift a godly daughter-in-law offers to her father-in-law as she loves his son. For it is by loving his son that she brings to her father-in-law the steadfast love of God the Father.

It's time to begin! Open your Bible first to Genesis 25. Write the words of verse 19:

Part 1

INTRODUCTION: Genesis tells us relatively little about Isaac, the son of Abraham and Sarah. What we learn about him is revealed in the stories about his family life with his wife Rebekah and their two sons Jacob and Esau. Isaac was the promised son and heir of the covenant God made with Abraham. As discovered in the Bible study *God's Promise, Our Blessing*, the covenant was God's unconditional promise of land, possessions, and offspring, but Abraham and Sarah had no children and they lived as aliens in a foreign land. God told Abraham that he would be the father of nations. His hope rested in knowing God and believing that what God had promised He would be faithful to fulfill.

God's Promise, Our Blessing concluded with the death of Abraham in Genesis 25. However, before Abraham died his desire was to have a wife for his son Isaac. Genesis 24 tells the story of how Rebekah was chosen. The chapter begins with the dialogue between Abraham and his chief household servant. We are not told the servant's name. He is referred to as the servant or the man.

Just a reminder before we begin... As we study this and other stories in these lessons continue to 1) look for the *facts* of the story, 2) be alert for the *truths* of what we learn about God and us, and 3) ask the important questions that lead to discovering *application* of the story's facts and truths to our lives today.

ASSIGNMENT: Read Genesis 24 and write in your notebook comments and phrases, even situations that you do not understand. Record whatever may seem unusual but appears to be what the culture dictated.

EXERCISE: Let's begin by looking at what the story says.

1. Verse 1: Abraham is now old and "well advanced in years." We know that he was 137 years old when Sarah died and that he himself died at the age of 175. The verse ten tells us that "the Lord had blessed Abraham in all things." Look ahead to Genesis 24:35 and write out the things mentioned in this verse that indicate the Lord's blessing on his life. _____

2. Verses 2-4: Abraham called for his chief household servant. What was the servant's assignment? _____

3. What was the stipulation that Abraham had his servant swear to uphold? _____

TEACHING: We need to ask the question: Why was it so important to Abraham that his son was not given in marriage to one of the Canaanite women? Who were the Canaanites? What do we know about them? To rediscover who they were, look at Genesis 10:15-19? What do we learn about these people?

The Canaanites worshiped false gods made of wood and stone and did not follow the teachings of the one true God, the God of Abraham. These clans would become the nations that Abraham's descendants would one day need to destroy as they took possession of the land, their inheritance.

There are other things we learn about the Canaanites in Genesis 10:20. They were descendants of Noah's son _____. The descendants of Ham were cursed because of the shameful disrespect Ham displayed toward his father (Genesis 9:25-27).

In Genesis 24:4 where is the servant told to go? _____

We need to remember another extremely important matter. God made the covenant promise with Abraham. The bloodline passed through Shem to Abraham and on to Isaac. The everlasting covenant was made with Abraham and with his descendants (Genesis 17). This was a religious decision that Abraham made. Rather than intermarry with those who were cursed and not of the same bloodline and not under the covenant promise, Abraham had his servant return to the old country of Haran and seek from his relatives a wife for Isaac. The son or daughter's prearranged marriage contracted by the parents was the accepted tradition of the culture.

Part 2

INTRODUCTION: We now begin to understand the heavy responsibility of the chief household servant. Before he takes the oath another matter needs to be discussed.

EXERCISE:

1. Verses 5: What are the servant's questions? _____

2. What is Abraham's response (verse 6)? _____
3. What was Abraham's reason (verse 7)? Review Genesis 12:1-3. _____

TEACHING: God brought Abraham *out of* the land of Haran and brought him *to* the land of Canaan. When God called him out of Haran He promised to give him land, offspring, and wealth. God eventually

fulfilled His promise and gave him property (land), progeny (offspring), and prosperity (wealth). All that God promised to give Abraham is sometimes referred to as the 3P's of the covenant.

Abraham now tells his servant that the same God who brought him (Abraham) out of the land will go with him (servant). But, since Abraham had been called *out of* Haran, his son as part of the covenant was not to *go back*. He was called to leave the old country and go to the new land. He and his descendants were given a new promise by God that was sealed in the everlasting covenant (Genesis 17). He was *called out* to make a new beginning, a new genesis.

REFLECTION: A couple of things may come to mind at this point in the story. We will not go into detail but begin to use your imagination as you consider:

1. Do you think Abraham may have treated his son much like a monarch would treat the crowned prince? Abraham had experienced God's activity in his own life. God fulfilled His promise to him through Isaac—everything from his birth to his trip with his father to Mt. Moriah where he was to be sacrificed. Abraham knew that God's hand of protection and blessing was with Isaac as a child. And, now as an old man Abraham knew that the same Lord God would provide a wife for his son. The same God who gave the promise "will (Genesis 24:7) send His angel _____
_____." And, if the woman was not willing to return with Abraham's servant (verse 8), _____
_____.
2. Another consideration... As a member of Abraham's household, this servant was circumcised. He, too, came under the everlasting covenant established by God in Genesis 17. Because of his relationship with Abraham God's grace became his own as well as his master's. He would experience the same companionship and protection of the Lord that his master Abraham did. The servant knew this because Abraham confirmed that it was so. The servant knew that Isaac was a part of God's promise. As God had been with Abraham and, because of Abraham, God would be faithful to him. And, thus he swore on oath to Abraham concerning this matter (verse 9). Note your thoughts: _____
_____.

Part 3

INTRODUCTION: The servant took some camels and other goods that showed the wealth of Abraham and set out for Aram, the region of the Tigris and Euphrates Rivers, and to Haran, the town where Nahor lived. Aram is northwest Mesopotamia which is present day Syria.

EXERCISE:

1. Abraham sent ten camels with his servant and all kinds of good things. The servant came to Aram and placed himself and the camels outside the city by the town well (verse 11). When he arrived it was _____ and about the time when the _____ came to draw _____.
2. Write his prayer using your own words (verses 12-14): _____

3. The servant prayed that the Lord display His kindness to Abraham by granting him success. What was to be the sign that the servant would know the girl whom the Lord had chosen for Isaac? _____
4. Before he finished praying what happened (verse 15)? _____
5. What does verse 15 tell us about Rebekah? How was she related to Abraham? Who was her father? _____
See also Genesis 11:27-29 and Genesis 22:23.
6. How is she described in verse 16? _____
7. She filled her jar at the spring. The servant hurried to meet her and ask for a _____
_____. The subsequent verses tell what she did next. Everything happened just as the servant had asked of the _____. She gave him a _____ and then offered to _____ the _____ until they were satisfied.

REFLECTION:

1. When you think about it, that was an enormous expectation on the part of the servant. Ten camels! Water them until they are finished drinking! How many trips did she have to make down to the spring and then up again with the *filled* jar to empty in the watering trough!
2. Verse 21 seems to indicate that the servant did _____ to help but simply _____ at her in _____ to learn whether the “ _____ ”
3. In the next verse the man takes out a gold ring and two bracelets for her arms. Then he asks Rebekah who she is and asks if he can spend the night at her father’s house. What does she offer the servant in verse 25? _____

4. What is the servant’s immediate response? _____

5. What is the reason that he worships the Lord and gives thanks in verse 27?

- a. _____
- b. _____

Part 4

TEACHING: In verses 7 and 27 we are reminded of God's faithfulness to His promise. He keeps His Word. His Word is Truth. In *God's Promise, Our Blessing* we studied the life of Abraham and watched as he waited for God to fulfill His promise. We need to be careful that God's faithfulness to His Word is not based on our time schedule. Our human condition with all of its impatience can distort our thinking and our expectations. Often we want to determine what faithfulness is rather than allow God to teach us what it is. As we learn to know God and grow in our relationship with Him He will give us the understanding and wisdom we need to comprehend faithfulness and to trust that He is faithful.

Another caution we must consider is that our promises are not God's promises and we cannot demand that He is to keep our promises for us. Our promises are ours, not His. His promises, however, override ours. He promises to be faithful and He will be faithful. I can promise to be faithful but my sinful human nature may choose not to be faithful. I may promise to keep my word to a child but circumstances may offer a choice in which I may choose not to keep my promise to that child. Often, because of our human condition, we treat God as another human being in which either He or I may choose not to be faithful to our word of promise. The reality of faithfulness is that giving one's word to both God and one another demands that one's word is kept. This attribute or characteristic of God becomes a part of our character as He continues to make, or restore, us into His image. Keep in mind that *His* image was His original plan for us in Genesis 1:27.

EXERCISE:

1. Verses 28-33: Rebekah runs home to tell her mother's household all that has transpired. Laban, Rebekah's brother, hurries out to meet the servant at the spring. He saw that Rebekah had the ring and was wearing the arm bracelets. Laban listened to his sister tell him what had happened. Then he went to the servant and invited him and the others who were traveling with him, including the camels, to his home to spend the night. Before the servant would eat the food that was placed before him he insisted on sharing with Rebekah's father Bethuel and Laban what he needed to say.
2. In verses 34-49: The servant told in detail what had happened beginning with Abraham's instruction and up to the time he actually gave to Rebekah the nose ring and the two bracelets. Of

all the facts that he related what do you think was the most critical? _____

3. It was so important that the servant received the answer to the question in verses 23 and 47, “Whose daughter are you?” What had Abraham insisted in Genesis 24:4? _____
4. Above all, the Lord had provided once again. The Lord provided the ram in Genesis 22:13 and now He provides a wife for Isaac. Again He shows His kindness and faithfulness to Abraham. Laban and Bethuel also see the Lord’s hand directing the process. What is their response in Verses 50-51? _____
5. The gifts given to Rebekah and her family established the agreement between the two families. What were the servant’s gifts for Rebekah? _____
6. What did he give to her brother and her mother (verse 53)? _____
7. In verses 54-61 Laban and his mother prepare to send Rebekah back with the servant to become the wife of Isaac. In the morning the servant was ready to leave and head back to his master’s home. He was ready to act on the success that the Lord had granted to him. What did the family request in verse 55? _____
8. But the servant insisted. The family received Rebekah’s consent and then sent her on her way with her nurse and maids. Write out their blessing for her in verse 60: _____
9. Verses 62-67 relate what happens when Isaac meets Rebekah.
 - a. Where was Isaac? What was he doing? _____
 - b. Rebekah sees Isaac and asks, _____
 - c. The servant tells her that Isaac is his master and what does Rebekah do?

 - d. Isaac heard the servant’s report. What does Isaac do? _____
Possibly Isaac and Rebekah had no festive wedding celebration. We know that the sexual union between the man and the woman consummated the marriage.
 - e. Rebekah became his wife and we know that Isaac loved her. What did she bring to Isaac that he longed for? _____ The comfort of a wife helps to satisfy her husband’s longing to be loved.

Part 5

WHAT DO WE LEARN ABOUT GOD? Read again Genesis 24. As you read, mark with your highlighter any words that are used to describe the character of God and write out those words and phrases indicating the verse or verses where they are found:

VERSE(S)	WORDS AND PHRASES
_____	_____
_____	_____

The words steadfast love and faithfulness are used in verse 27 and again in verse 49. The servant had seen God’s love and faithfulness to Abraham and now experienced these qualities for himself.

APPLICATION QUESTIONS:

1. Faithfulness is found in the commitment to the spoken word. Faithfulness nurtures trust. Marriage vows call for the man and the woman to be faithful to each other and in doing so give their commitment to one another. When the commitment is broken trust is destroyed. Faithfulness says that what one says, one will carry out. What has been your experience with *faithfulness*?
 - a. Who are those who have taught you faithfulness? _____

 - b. Who has been *unfaithful* to you? What has been your experience? _____

2. Do you struggle with God’s faithfulness? What have you been taught about His faithfulness? What have you experienced of God’s faithfulness? _____

3. What commitments have you made that enable you to model faithfulness? Consider times when others have encountered your faithfulness and trust has been nurtured through your commitment.

DIGGING DEEPER: God’s faithfulness does not depend on anything beyond Himself. In 2 Timothy 2:13 we are reassured that even if we are _____, He will remain _____, for He cannot _____ Himself. God is who He is! Faithfulness is an attribute of God. The attribute tells us the essence of who He is. He is faithful. One might say that faithfulness is a part of His DNA. Another example of an attribute is when the Bible tells us that God is love. Love is also an attribute of God. Love is simply who He is. The Bible also tells us another attribute of God is that He is

just. A biblical reference is 1 John 1:8-10. What are the two attributes of God mentioned in these verses?
_____ and _____. He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins. These
verses tell us that when we confess our sinfulness that he will forgive us. He is faithful to do this.
However, if we lie to ourselves and to God about our sinful condition, His Word of promise has no place
in our life for he is also just.

PRAYER: O Lord, You were kind and faithful to Abraham. As You kept Your promise to him, I thank
You that You have been kind and faithful to me. But I need to tell You that I struggle with steadfast love
and faithfulness. Sometimes I am unfaithful. My broken word causes others not to trust me. Forgive my
lack of love and restore in me Your image. I know that Your faithfulness is not dependent upon my
faithfulness. Thank You for loving and forgiving me in Jesus. Thank You for reassuring me that Your
loving kindness and faithfulness endure forever. _____

LESSON TWO

THE BIRTHRIGHT AND THE BLESSING

GENESIS 25, 27 – DESPISED AND DECEIVED

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INTRODUCTION

In Genesis 25 and 27 we are told of the privilege and promise bestowed upon the firstborn son in the culture of the day, the birthright and the blessing respectively. If these were intended for the firstborn, namely Esau, discover in Lesson 2 how and why they were acquired by Jacob, the second born twin.

Jacob's acquisition of these two gifts exposed major relational unrest within Isaac's family. Watch for and identify the cause of the unrest. See how this cause permeated Isaac's family, the family of the patriarch who was the heir of the covenant. Note how this family's relationships were affected.

But, how can this be? How can God keep His covenant promise to this family when everything seems so wrong? Discover why God kept His promise to Isaac. What do we learn about God and the promises He makes?

Their actions, however, had consequences and Isaac's family was not exempt. What were these consequences and what was the pervasive effect sin had on these brothers? Discover the only plausible escape for Jacob. Learn of Esau's demise.

As you proceed through the lesson consider what it means for you and me that God's only Son, the firstborn of the Father, embraced His birthright. Learn what the inheritance was that He received because of His faithfulness to the will of the Father.

Part 1

INTRODUCTION: When Abraham died his sons Isaac and Ishmael buried him by Sarah in a cave in the field he had purchased. Isaac and his wife Rebekah lived in Beer Lahai Roi. The story of Isaac continues in Genesis 25. The promise to Abraham was that his descendants would be as many as the stars in the sky and the grains of sand on the seashore. Now he has died and has only left his one son Isaac who was the one heir to whom the promise was passed.

ASSIGNMENT: Read Genesis 25:19-34.

EXERCISE: This chapter continues to tell the story of Isaac. In verses 19 and 20 there seems to be a need for a background check. So, let's review.

1. Who was Isaac's father (verse 19)? _____
2. How old was Isaac when he got married (verse 20)? _____
3. Who did Isaac marry? _____
 - a. Who was her father? _____
 - b. Who was her brother? _____
4. Isaac interceded for Rebekah (verse 21). What was his prayer concern? _____
5. Why was this such a big deal? _____
6. If Isaac was the one through whom God's promise was to be fulfilled then what needed to happen? _____
7. We learn that God answered Isaac's prayer. What happened (verses 21, 23)? _____

8. What does this verse tell us about Rebekah's pregnancy (verse 22)? _____

TEACHING: Rebekah was pregnant with twins and apparently the pregnancy was difficult. We are told that the children "struggled together within her." A woman who has experienced a pregnancy will speak of the discomfort caused by the movement within her. However, Rebekah's discomfort was undoubtedly compounded by the fact that she was pregnant with twins and, in addition, we are told that they were pushing and shoving each other around even before birth. Her discomfort caused her to inquire of the Lord, "Why is this happening to me (verse 23)?"

EXERCISE:

1. In your own words, what did the Lord tell her? _____

Rebekah's life would be different. She was pregnant with twins. The Lord told her that the twins within her would form two peoples and that they would be divided. One of these nations would be stronger than the other. And, the last thing Rebekah was told was that the older would serve the younger which was against cultural protocol.

2. When the time came for her to give birth, she delivered twin boys. How is the first son described in verse 25? _____

What did they name him? _____

3. Describe his brother (verse 26). _____

4. What did they name the second twin? _____

Esau and Jacob were born to Isaac twenty years after his marriage to Rebekah. He is now 60 years old.

5. Verses 27 and 28 give more information about these boys as they grew up. What additional things do we learn about Esau? _____

6. What do we learn about Jacob? _____

These boys had obvious differences. One was the rugged outdoorsman, favored by his father and the other was a quiet homebody, described almost as a momma's boy.

Part 2

ASSIGNMENT: Reread Genesis 25:19-34. We learn more about the character of these sons.

EXERCISE: Jacob was obviously the one who helped with cooking and Esau was the one who was busy exploring the rugged outdoors.

1. What was Esau's condition when he came home (verse 29)? _____

2. What demand did Esau make (verse 30)? _____

3. Jacob was not about to give into Esau's demand without a bargain. What was Jacob's proposal?

TEACHING: Verse 31 speaks of a *birthright*. The birthright belonged to the firstborn son of a household whether the son of the wife or a concubine. The owner of the birthright ultimately became the head of the family. The family bloodline continued through the one who possessed the birthright. He was also the one who inherited a double portion of the father's estate.

What Jacob was asking was no small thing. Jacob wanted what belonged to Esau as the firstborn. Recall the Lord's words to Rebekah when He said that the older would serve the younger. Jacob acted shrewdly. He knew that Esau was vulnerable. After all, the only thing Esau could think about was food. What good would the birthright be if he was dead?

EXERCISE: Continue with verse 33...

1. Jacob insisted that Esau swear to him first before eating. So what did Esau do? _____

2. Jacob then gave Esau his food (verse 34). For what did Esau sell his birthright? _____
_____ What a foolish act on Esau's part! What Jacob wanted and valued Esau gave away for some bread and lentil stew.
3. The verse ends by saying that Esau ate and drank and then got up and left. "Thus, _____
_____."

Part 3

WHAT WE LEARN ABOUT GOD: This story about the birthright is very short, only 15 verses and yet we learned many things about Isaac and his family. We were taught what the individual family members valued, who they favored, and what their natural tendencies were. We also discovered what value each son placed on the birthright. One senses that this family played one family member against another, that they took sides, and played favorites. Yet God was faithful to His promise to Abraham and this family would be heirs of the promise.

Our thinking can become distorted and we can believe that God would not use us because we are so bad. We may think that God's promises depend on our behavior or that the way we act determines the way in which God treats us. If we're good, then He will bless us and if we're not, then He won't. In this story we see one brother taking advantage of the other. Esau was famished and desperate for food. Jacob saw this as an opportunity to attain the privilege granted to his firstborn brother. At the same time we also observe the older one allowing the appetite of his stomach to control his conduct and thus Esau acted with contempt and despised the inheritance that was his as the firstborn son. Jacob seizes this opportunity and deceitfully takes possession of what he wants.

God's actions are not based on our behavior. God acts because He has covenanted with us. He has made a promise to us. God promised that the eternal covenant would be for Abraham and his descendants, his offspring. He didn't qualify it by saying something like, "If they are good enough" or "if they do what I

say” or if they keep their word.” No, God acts because He gave His Word. He made His promise to Abraham, to Isaac and his sons and would keep it! Everything is because of His great love for all people. We all come under this same promise in baptism. We are totally dependent upon God to fulfill His promise. Even when we act deceitfully and dishonestly and take advantage of others, He acts honestly, truthfully, and with integrity to keep His Word.

In spite of our human condition, God involves people in His plan to restore humankind to what He had originally intended. He chose to redeem us all from our sinfulness and enable us to live free and forgiven. Redemption for all of us rests with God. God, too, had a firstborn Son. His name was Jesus. He took His responsibilities as the firstborn Son very seriously. John 3:16-17 reminds us. Write out these verses:

We are blessed because Jesus did not despise His birthright. He came as the firstborn Son, God’s only Son, willing to provide life everlasting for those who believe in Him. Jesus was the means the Father chose to restore all people and bring them all into the Kingdom of His Son.

PRAYER: O Lord God, like Jacob, I have acted deceitfully with others in order to achieve what I want. My thoughtless and dishonest treatment of family members, friends, and coworkers has severed relationships. Often I feel all alone and hopelessly abandoned with my guilt. Jesus, give me the courage to admit my sin and to confess it. I believe that You are the One who will empower me to be truthful and honest and will make me one who acts with integrity. I ask You to work specifically with me in the area of _____ I am grateful that You, Jesus, as the firstborn Son, did not despise Your birthright but rather chose to die in order that I might be made an heir of all that the Heavenly Father has for us as His children.

Part 4

INTRODUCTION: We are beginning to get the vibrations that things aren’t going all that well at Isaac’s house. The Lord had revealed to Rebekah that the twins would become two nations. One son was named Jacob which means *he deceives* and deceive is what he does! Throughout these next few chapters we will watch how often Jacob, the deceiver, either is in the act of deceiving or is the one deceived. We have just learned in Part 2 how Jacob shrewdly deceived Esau and obtained his birthright. In this act we also learned that Esau did not value what was rightly his as the oldest son. In fact, we are told that he despised it. He turned away from the God of his parents, chose to marry Hittite women (Genesis 26:34-

35), and determined to live his life doing his own thing. These actions communicated his disrespect for his father and disregarded all that his father represented. This is significant when we recall that Isaac carried the blessing God bestowed on his father Abraham. All that was promised to Abraham and passed on to Isaac now belonged to Jacob.

TEACHING: Both the birthright and the blessing were gifts bestowed by the father to the firstborn son. The *birthright* gave the son the inheritance of the father. The *blessing*, however, declared the words of the father to his son that would guide and govern the son for the rest of his life. In Genesis 25:29-34 we learned how Jacob acquired Esau’s birthright. Now in Genesis 27 we will learn how he also obtains Esau’s blessing.

ASSIGNMENT: Read Genesis 27:1-29.

EXERCISE: Let’s look at these verses and see how the story unfolds.

1. What was the condition of Isaac’s health (verse 1)? _____

2. Isaac acknowledges that his days on earth are numbered. He is old, weak, and blind. He knows it is time to give Esau his blessing so he initiates the process by calling for Esau. What is his instruction to Esau in verses 3 and 4?
 - a. _____
 - b. _____
 - c. _____
3. Isaac has set the stage “that my soul may _____ before I die.”

TEACHING: In spite of what Isaac knew about Esau, he was determined to give him his blessing. Esau was his favorite son. As father and son they shared a love for hunting in the open country and enjoyed the taste for wild game (Genesis 25:27-28). But Esau rejected the God of his father and chose to follow his own ways (Genesis 26:34) including the choice to marry within Ishmael’s family and following after those who were not a part of the covenant promise of God (Genesis 28:8-9).

Part 5

EXERCISE: Rebekah’s favorite son was _____. She was listening to Isaac as he spoke to Esau. Now she, too, is out to get Isaac’s blessing, not for herself, of course, but for Jacob whom she loved.

1. When Esau leaves what does Rebekah do (Genesis 27:6-7)? _____

2. What is her instruction to Jacob in verse 8? _____
 - a. In verse 9: _____
 - b. In verse 10: _____
3. Rebekah, too, has set the stage “so that he may _____ you before he dies (Genesis 27:10).”
4. Jacob, however, sees some problems with this plan. What are his concerns in verses 11 and 12? _____ Obviously, his biggest concern is that he would get caught in this act of deception and be cursed by his father rather than blessed.
5. Rebekah appears so determined for Jacob to receive the blessing that she is willing to have the curse fall on her if the plan fails. In verse 13 she gives the reader a sense of secrecy and urgency. What does she say? _____
6. So, Jacob obeys and mother and son proceed with the plan to deceive father and brother. Note the great lengths they went to in order to make sure that Isaac is deceived.
 - a. Verse 14: _____
 - b. Verse 15: _____
 - c. Verse 16: _____
7. Then Jacob goes in to his father. In verse 18 what is Isaac’s first question? _____
8. In verse 19, what is Jacob’s response? _____
9. Isaac is surprised that Esau is back so soon (verse 20). He asks: _____
10. Jacob responds: _____
11. In verse 21 Isaac wants to make sure that it’s Esau so he asks him to come near so that he can _____ him. Why would he even doubt that it was Esau unless Isaac had been deceived before? Or had deceived? What are your thoughts? _____

Isaac lived in a house of deception. His own wife chose to deceive her husband in order to attain for Jacob what she wanted even though it was not rightfully his. Isaac’s own son Jacob had deceived his brother in order to get what he wanted, namely Esau’s birthright. And now, mother and son were after the father’s blessing and knew that it could only become Jacob’s by deception.

12. Although his voice sounded like Jacob’s his hands were hairy and the deception worked. In verse 24 Isaac asked one more time, _____
13. And Jacob replied, _____

14. Isaac instructed him to bring some of the food that had been prepared for him. He ate the food and drank the wine. Then he asked Jacob to come close for a kiss. In verse 27 what ultimately convinced Isaac that he was Esau? _____
15. Finally, the blessing is given. What was the blessing (verses 28-29)?
- “May God _____.”
 - “Let peoples _____.”
 - “Be lord over _____.”
 - “Cursed be _____.”

PERSONAL APPLICATION: What a blessing Isaac gave to his son Jacob! Have you ever received a blessing from anyone? A parent? A friend? A pastor, priest, or some other church worker? In some cultures blessings are not common. A blessing, however, empowers the one to whom it is given. Are you able to hear God’s blessing on your life?

- What would you like to hear Him say to you? _____

- What might be a blessing you would like to give to a child, a spouse, a friend or coworker?
_____ The blessing of a parent to a child as the child leaves the house may be, “Remember, I love you!”
- Recall in Genesis 12 Abraham was blessed by God to be a blessing to others. Take time to consider how your life might bless someone else’s life. Who might that individual(s) be?

- What might you say or do to bless the life of that person? _____

PRAYER: O Lord, You have blessed my life with Truth. I never need to fear that You would deceive me. You only want Your best for me. Enable me to hear You speak Your Word of blessing to me: “May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in believing, so that by the power of the Holy Spirit you may abound in hope (Romans 15:13).” Keep me attentive to opportunities to bless the lives of others. May all that I do give You glory and honor. _____

LESSON THREE

NOW ESAU HATED JACOB

GENESIS 27, 28 – JACOB FLEES

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INTRODUCTION

So, what is deceit? Where does it come from? What are the consequences of deceit? What does the Bible teach us concerning deceit? If deceit is the bad news, what's the good news? In this lesson anticipate growing in your knowledge and understanding of deceit and its power to divide and destroy relationships.

In Lesson 2 we learned that by deceiving his brother and his father Jacob acquired both the birthright and the blessing of the firstborn. Now in Lesson 3 discover how Esau responded to his brother's willful and deceitful act of taking what rightfully belonged to him. Watch Rebekah's plan unfold for Jacob. Learn of Esau's demise.

Finally, after studying this story we must take time for personal reflection. What has been my own experience with deceit? When have I been the deceived and when have I been the deceiver? Scripture teaches that we even deceive ourselves. We may ask how this is possible. Allow yourself time to take a hard look at your own reality. Reverently consider your response to what the Lord reveals.

Part 1

ASSIGNMENT: Reread Genesis 27.

TEACHING: Since deception is a significant part of this story and other stories that follow, it seems appropriate to take some time and study additional references in the Bible that speak about deceit. What is deceit? What are the consequences for those who deceive? What is the root problem? In order to answer these and other questions we will leave Genesis 27 and look up supplementary references. This will give you some practice locating verses in different books of the Bible and give God's Word the opportunity to teach us.

1. Matthew 13:22-23 – What is something that often deceives us? _____
2. Jeremiah 17:9 – Where does deceitfulness come from? _____
3. Mark 7:20-23 – What does the heart hold within it? _____

4. Leviticus 19:11 – What is the command of God? _____

Matthew speaks of deception that comes with wealth. We have all at one time or another experienced the deceit of wealth. It often happens just because it's something we just believe we *must* have. Once the purchase has been made or the degree of wealth acquired we realize that we were deceived into believing that it brings satisfaction or happiness or contentment or friendships or whatever one might choose to believe. The truth is that we have been deceived into believing a lie.

Jeremiah tells us that we've got a heart problem and that it can't be fixed. He says that the heart is deceitful and beyond a cure. Sin has permeated the heart and the essence of sin is deceit. Recall the incident in the Garden of Eden when the serpent spoke to the woman. Everything he said was deceitful. And, now Mark tells us that the heart holds deceit within it. It's a part of who we are as sinful human beings.

God's command in Leviticus is that we are not to deceive one another. This is for our good that He gives this command. Notice that Jacob when engaged in deceit had to lie. He lied to his father, not once but several times. All of deceit is a lie. The Bible teaches that the evil one is a liar and the father of lies. There is no truth in him (John 8:44).

The opposite of deceit is truth. Now look up each of these passages and learn about truth:

1. Proverbs 14:5 – What is the characteristic of a faithful witness? _____
2. Ephesians 4:21-24 – Where does truth come from? _____
3. 1 Corinthians 3:18 – What are we to stop doing? _____
4. 1 John 1:8-9 – Write out this passage: _____

5. 1 Peter 2:21-22 – What is the example of Christ that we are to follow? _____

6. John 14:6 – What does Jesus say about Himself? _____

Truth is not deceitful. Truth can be trusted. How many times did Isaac seek proof that the man before him whom he was about to bless was his son Esau? Deception had been in his house before. He didn't trust what he was unable to see. Truth and deceit cannot coexist. One is a truthful witness or one is a deceitful witness.

Truth comes from Jesus. Truth is the essence of who He is. He says that He is the Way, the *Truth*, and the Life. We can trust Him for truth when the devil wants to deceive us with lies. Above all, we need to stop deceiving ourselves. We can deceive ourselves into believing that we're something when we're really nothing. We can think we are important or intelligent or whatever deceives us and makes us feel superior to others. Don't be deceived. God is not mocked. St. Paul tells us in Galatians 6:7-8 that whatever we sow we will reap. It's the principle of farming. If we plant wheat seeds we will reap a harvest of wheat. So, if we plant things in our lives such as deception and lies, we only deceive ourselves if we think our lives are going to harvest truth and trust.

St. John wants to give us the bad news and the Good News. The bad news is that if we claim to be without sin then we are just deceiving ourselves. We are not telling ourselves the truth. He says that the truth is not in us. However, the Good News is that if we confess our sins, He is faithful and just and He will forgive us our sins. Just as He was faithful to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob He is faithful to us and forgives us all of our sins because of Jesus. God wants us to be truth-tellers both to ourselves and to Him.

We have all been guilty of the sin of deceit. Our actions might be different than Jacob and Rebekah's but deceit is deceit no matter how it plays itself out. Jesus has come to set us free from all that would deceive us. Our hearts deceive us. The devil deceives us. The world around us with its advertising and gimmicks, and even friends and family will deceive us. But Jesus was the one who had no deceit. The

Good News is that although it cost Him His life, we are now empowered by Him to freely follow in His steps as He eradicates the deceit that so easily sucks us into its wicked snares. His truth of grace and mercy sets us free to live as His children and heirs of His Kingdom.

Part 2

EXERCISE: Turn back to Genesis 27. Jacob has been blessed and has left his father's presence. Esau has now come home.

1. What does Esau do (verse 31)? _____
2. What does Isaac ask? _____
3. What is Esau's response? _____
4. Jacob's deception has been uncovered. Notice the violent emotional reaction of each man:
 - a. Isaac's reaction in verse 33: _____
 - b. Esau's reaction in verse 34: _____
5. Both men had been deceived. They couldn't believe what Jacob had done. What does Esau say about Jacob in verse 36? _____

6. In verse 36 Esau pleads with his father, "Bless me, even me also, O my father!...Have you not reserved any blessing for me?" In verse 37 Isaac tells Esau that he gave everything to Jacob and asks, "What then can I do for you, my son?" How devastated this father is. What does Esau ask of him in verse 38? _____
7. So, Isaac blesses Esau. What does he say in verses 39 and 40? _____

8. Does this sound like a blessing to you? Compare Isaac's words to Esau with the words of his blessing to Jacob. _____

REFLECTION: We draw to the end of this story. There's more to come, however. The blessing has been given. Deceit has had its way within this family. When God told Rebekah that the older would serve the younger did He have this in mind?

1. If Rebekah and Jacob had not played their hand how might the story have been different? _____

2. One cannot help but feel the regret in the father's reaction. But one can wonder why Esau suddenly needed the blessing when the birthright was despised and the ways of Isaac were rejected. What did the blessing mean to him? What would it be like to live life now without that blessing? _____

3. What might be the Heavenly Father's blessing for us whom He has created in His image and now seeks to restore and bring into a loving relationship with Him? _____

4. Esau was passionate about receiving his father's blessing. Are we as passionate about receiving the blessing of our Heavenly Father as Esau was about receiving the blessing from his father?
Your thoughts: _____
5. How do I demonstrate my passion for receiving God the Father's blessing on my life? _____

Part 3

MEMORIZATION: A passage that has great significance for this lesson is 1 John 1:8-9. Reference was made to these verses earlier in this study. Once again you are encouraged to write the passage on an index card and spend the next several days enjoying the truth of these words. Let the words bless you as you find the release of confession and the joy of knowing the truth that God is faithful and just and will forgive all of your sins and purify you, making you righteous in His Son, Jesus.

PERSONAL APPLICATION: The destruction of deceit is all around us. Families struggle with relationships. Businesses suffer disappointment. Political figures fall prey and end up with destroyed reputations.

1. What might be a consequence you are dealing with either because you were deceived or you were the one deceiving? _____
2. What was the deception? _____
3. What relationships were broken or affected by this deception? _____

4. What admission of guilt must be made? What act of forgiveness declared? _____

God encourages us to come before Him admitting our guilt and confessing our faults to Him. He wants truth to be a part of our lives, truth that admits and confesses wrong and truth that receives His love and forgiveness.

PRAYER: O Lord God, I must confess that deceit is in my heart. It is a heart condition and within myself there is no cure. I am deceived by lies that come from within me because I am a sinful human being. But You are the Truth. Your Word is Truth. You tell me that by confessing to You my sin that You are faithful and just and will forgive all of my sin. I come before You believing that Your Son Jesus

is the cure for my heart condition. May He have His way within me. _____

Part 4

INTRODUCTION: Jacob deceived his father and his brother and acquired the blessing of his father that was intended for his brother. Esau was devastated when he realized the blessing was given to Jacob and begged his father for a blessing reserved for him. But there was no blessing to be given. Isaac had bestowed on Jacob lordship over his brother and made all of Esau’s relatives his servants. His blessing included also being sustained with grain and new wine. Now the story continues as Esau grieves that he did not receive from his father the blessing of the firstborn.

ASSIGNMENT: Read Genesis 27:41 through Genesis 28:9.

TEACHING: In Part 1 we learned from the prophet Jeremiah that “the heart is deceitful above all things and beyond cure (Jeremiah 17:9 NIV). Deception manifested sin’s destructive power in the Garden when the serpent deceived the woman and she ate the fruit (Genesis 3:13). Deceit reveals the sinful condition of the heart. Deceit reminds all of us that the image of God has been ruined by sin. We are unable to reflect Him to creation as He had intended.

EXERCISE: Esau was not about to let things rest. Resume the story in Genesis 27:41.

1. What thoughts are going on in Esau’s mind according to verse 41a? _____
2. What was at the root of Esau’s grudge? Why the grudge (verse 41b)? _____
3. _____
4. What does he plan to do (verse 41c)? _____

This plan may bring to mind two other brothers—one brother, namely _____, determining in his mind to kill his brother _____ (Genesis 4:8).

5. Grudges harbor evil. Grudges continually fed with sinful thoughts and wicked desires can even lead to murder. What does St. Paul tell us in Ephesians 4:26? _____

Why not? Sleep gives the evil one the opportunity to get a foothold (Ephesians 4:27) and nurture evil thoughts in our subconscious mind.

6. Rebekah gets wind of what Esau is planning and quickly informs Jacob. What does she tell Jacob in verse 42? _____

Esau has figured it out. He has a plan. He just needs to wait until his father is dead.

7. For the third time in chapter 27 Rebekah tells Jacob (verse 43): _____
 Find the other two references in chapter 27 and note where they are found:
- a. _____
 - b. _____
8. Rebekah’s instructions are “obey my voice.” Just do what I say. What insights might this give into her character? _____
 Into her relationship with Jacob? _____
9. What is Rebekah’s plan according to verses 43-45? _____

10. What reason does Rebekah give Isaac for Jacob’s hasty departure (verse 46)? Genesis 26:34-35 will give some insight. _____

11. In Genesis 28:1-2 Isaac is quick to affirm Rebekah’s plan to send Jacob to her father’s house in order for Jacob to take a wife for himself. Recall that his father Abraham sent his servant to his relatives in Haran, or Paddan-aram, in order to acquire a wife for Isaac. What was his instruction to Jacob? _____
12. What was the blessing Isaac gave Jacob before he sent him on his way (Genesis 28:3-4)? _____

13. Which of these words are similar to the words that God had given to Jacob’s grandfather Abraham and also to his father Isaac? _____
14. In Genesis 28:5 Jacob is on his way to be with his uncle _____ who was _____’s brother. Their father was _____
 Once again we see that keeping the lineage straight is important for the bloodline of Jesus. The covenant was to Abraham and his descendants.

Part 5

DIGGING DEEPER:

1. While Jacob is off to his uncle Laban’s house, what does Esau decide to do (verses 6-9)?

2. What do Esau’s actions tell us? What’s happening to him? _____

3. Recall who Ishmael is. Ishmael is Esau's uncle, the half-brother of his father Isaac. Would it please his father that he went to the family of Ishmael to take another wife? After all, Jacob went to the brother of his mother. What would be wrong with Esau going to Ishmael's home? Recall what the angel of the Lord told Hagar about Ishmael in Genesis 16:11-12. _____

Genesis 25:18 (NIV) says, "And they lived in hostility toward all the tribes related to them."

REFLECTION: The story is about to take a different turn. But before we press on to Haran with Jacob we need to take time to reflect on some of our own feelings and attitudes about what is going on. A home is divided. Brothers are at odds with one another. Parents are taking sides with their sons. The father holds God's promise that was passed down to him from his father Abraham. While these brothers were still in the womb the Lord had told Rebekah that they would be separated and that the older would serve the younger. Obviously, that is exactly what is happening.

Jacob held both the birthright and the blessing of the firstborn. Rightly, these belonged to Esau but now Esau despised them and also his father and his brother. So often today we hear similar stories. For whatever reason brothers no longer speak to each other and sisters have grown far apart. Resentment and grudges have festered; relationships are broken and love is lost.

Is the future of this particular family at risk? Is the survival of the covenant promise at risk? Isaac is the only heir of the promise. He only has two sons and now one of those sons has turned away from everything for which the father stood. The other son is running for his life for fear that his brother will kill him. Where is God in all of this? Has He abandoned this family? Has He changed His mind about the covenant that He made with Abraham and his descendants? It appears as though the deceit within this family has jeopardized the whole plan of God. Your thoughts: _____

Reflective questions don't necessarily have answers but they do give us permission to think of what the possibilities might be. They give us the opportunity to imagine what it might be like to live in someone else's shoes. Reflective questions allow us to ask the hard questions. Where is God in all of this? What is He thinking? Is He going to do anything? Is He angry? What must it be like for Him to see this family struggling, even one brother wanting to kill the other? Does God approve of all the deceit that has been going on? Can He accomplish His purposes in spite of all the broken relationships? Your thoughts: _____

What might be some of your reflections as you come to this point in the story? What are the hard questions you may want to ask? _____

PRAYER: Lord, I'm beginning to feel a little uncomfortable. The more I learn about Isaac and his family the more I find myself identifying with what's going on. Hard things have gnawed away at my family. The way we have treated one another has inflicted wounds and the wounds don't seem to heal. I ask You to heal the broken relationships. Bring Your love to the hurt and pain. We need Your hand of peace to restore us to joyful living. I bring before You a particular concern on my heart. _____

LESSON FOUR

FROM BEERSHEBA TO HARAN

GENESIS 28, 29: THE DECEIVER IS DECEIVED

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INTRODUCTION

Jacob fled for his life. He left behind a mother who had partnered with him in deceiving both his brother and his father. He left behind a father grieving for his firstborn son who had been robbed of his birthright and blessing. He left behind a brother who had set his mind on killing him.

His experience on his journey to Haran, however, changed his life. What could possibly have happened along the way that would bring about such a transformation? As you study Lesson 4 watch for this turning point, this new beginning in Jacob's life.

After a time, Jacob arrives in Haran and meets his uncle, his mother's brother. What would his life be like living among relatives? Learn of Jacob's love for Rachel. But the story becomes complicated by her father's deception.

And, yes, there were consequences. Uncover the consequences of this father's unscrupulous scheme. What were the heartaches? Who bore the pain?

This lesson invites us to order our individual lives for experiencing a fresh and new beginning. Take note of your own new beginning as you encounter the Lord God in His Word and among His people.

Part 1

TEACHING: The word *patriarch* may be a familiar word to you. The three most prominent patriarchs of the Old Testament are Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. The word patriarch comes from the Latin word *patri*, or father. These men are regarded as the forefathers of the Jewish people, the Hebrew nation. In Genesis 28:10-22 we learn that God chose Jacob to carry the promise of the eternal covenant.

ASSIGNMENT: Read Genesis 28:10-22. Let's continue with the story as we travel with Jacob. Jacob has left Beersheba where his parents live and is traveling to Haran, also called Paddan Aram, to the home of his uncle Laban (Genesis 28:10).

EXERCISE:

1. Jacob is on his way. What does he do (verse 11)? _____

2. Describe his dream in verse 12: _____
 - a. According to verse 13 who was at the top of the ladder? _____
 - b. Who did He say He was? _____
 - c. What did He say He would give? _____
 - d. In verse 14a what did He promise Jacob's descendants? _____

 - e. Who would be blessed through Jacob and his offspring (verse 14b)? _____

3. In verse 15 what did He promise?
 - a. I am _____
 - b. and will _____
 - c. and will _____
 - d. I will not _____
4. Once again the promise of land and progeny are promised. The same promise made to Abraham and Isaac has been made to Jacob. He awakens to the awareness of the Lord's presence (verse 16). What is his reaction in verse 17? _____
5. What does he say? _____

6. Apparently, this dream took place in the middle of the night for verse 18 goes on to say that “early in the morning...” What did Jacob do? _____

7. What did he name the place? _____ Look at the footnotes in your Bible. You may have a note that gives the meaning of the word *Bethel*. _____
The word Bethel comes from two words: *Beth* which means house and *el* which means God.
8. In verses 20-22 Jacob made a vow. The vow consisted of both *if* and *then*.
- a. What is the *if* part? _____

- b. What is the *then* part? _____

Jacob says that *if* God will 1) be with him and watch over him, 2) give him food and clothing, and 3) return him safely to his father’s house, *then* 1) the Lord will be his God, 2) the stone, or pillar, will be God’s house, and 3) everything that God gives him, he will give a tenth back to God.

9. Genesis 28:22 is the first Biblical reference of giving the tithe to God. Jacob determined to give a tenth of all that he received back to the Lord. A tenth was his tithe. Other places in the Bible refer to tithing of one’s possessions. The practice of tithing has passed down to this present day. Within the Church Jacob’s example is followed. Tithing a tenth is a guideline. Tithing keeps us mindful that everything we have comes from the Lord. He is the One who provides all that we have and need for life.

Part 2

REFLECTION: Once again we need to pause in our study and take time to reflect on all that is happening. Jacob is fleeing to his uncle Laban’s home. He is running for his life. On the way he spends the night out under the stars with his head resting on a rock. He has a dream, but this isn’t just any old dream. This is a dream in which God comes to him with the certain promise that what was given to Abraham and Isaac is now given to him. The land will all be his and his descendants, and his descendants will be spread out as dust over the face of the earth. Above all, all the people on earth will be blessed through him and his offspring. Jacob recognizes the presence of the Lord at this place and with a stone makes a monument to Him pouring over the stone oil that sets it apart for holy use. He makes a vow to God with the ifs and thens and includes the promise of the tithe in return for all God gives to him. This is the story in a nutshell.

This is a new beginning for Jacob, a turning point. Had Jacob received for himself the God of his father before this time? What had God meant to him? Anything? Obviously, God's presence was in this place. Jacob was afraid. He recognized that this wasn't just any ordinary place but regarded it as awesome, nothing other than the house of God, the gate of heaven. One gets a sense that all of life looked different to Jacob that night and the next morning. He was ready to put God to the test. You watch over me because I'm afraid I'm going to be killed. I have nothing so You provide food and clothing for me. I'm running away from my home, my family, everything familiar and everything I love. You bring me back home safely. What a lot of nerve to ask, to demand, that God do these things for him! Have I ever been so bold to ask God for the needs on my heart? When might have been such a time? _____

If I haven't been so bold as to ask before, what might be something that is heavy on my heart that I want to ask that would reassure me of His love and care for me? What would reassure me that he cares for me and wants to be my God and wants me to be His child? _____

Jacob also makes the promise that the Lord will be his God, that he will acknowledge this place to be God's house and that he will give to the Lord a tenth of all that He gives to him. Is this same Lord your God? Have you received Him as the One who provides for the needs of your heart? Jacob saw himself as giving testimony to his relationship with God by tithing. How might you see yourself giving witness to your relationship with Him? _____

PRAYER: O Lord God, You appeared to Jacob at a low time in his life. He was running away. He was hopelessly needy and far from anything that was familiar to him. In his aloneness You came and reassured him of Your presence and declared to him that the covenant You had with his grandfather and father was also given to him. You had not changed. Your Word had not changed. I ask You to come to me in my aloneness. You know the needs on my heart. I thank You for being my God and for making me Your child forever. May I be bold to give witness to You and to the relationship that is ours because of Your Son, Jesus. May I thank and praise You by boldly and generously giving back to You as You have given to me. _____

Part 3

INTRODUCTION: Jacob leaves Bethel, the place of his dream, and continues on his journey to Haran. He arrives in the land of the eastern peoples. A well was in the field. Three flocks of sheep were lying nearby. This well provided water for the sheep. A large stone was placed over the mouth of the well. When the flocks had all gathered the shepherds would roll away the stone. The water from the well watered the sheep. When they were finished the shepherds would place the stone over the mouth of the well.

ASSIGNMENT: Read Genesis 29:1-14. In these verses we are introduced to Laban and Leah. Remember, Laban is Rebekah's brother, Jacob's uncle.

EXERCISE: Jacob engages in a conversation with some of the shepherds.

1. What does Jacob find out in verse 4? _____
2. What does he ask next in verse 5? _____
3. In verse 6 he learns that Laban is well and Laban's daughter Rachel is introduced. In verse 7 Jacob indicates that the sheep lying nearby are to be watered and taken back to pasture. What's the problem in verse 8? _____
4. Rachel came to the well with her father's sheep. Rachel was a _____
5. What did Jacob do when he saw Rachel (verse 10)? _____

6. In verses 11 and 12 Jacob tells Rachel who he is and she runs home to tell her father. What did Laban do when he heard the news about Jacob (verse 13)? _____

7. And after Jacob told him all that had taken place, what is Laban's response in verse 14? _____

Part 4

TEACHING: After all that has taken place in Jacob's life, he has found a place of refuge. His mother's family whom he has never met has embraced him as a member of his uncle Laban's family with the words "you are my bone and my flesh." But Jacob is about to find out what it means to be his own bone and flesh. The characteristics of the family run deep.

ASSIGNMENT: Read Genesis 29:14-30. Underline the one word in this section that seems to be a trait of Laban and Rebekah's family. What is the word? _____

EXERCISE: In Genesis 29:14 Laban and Jacob begin to discuss the matter of wages.

1. Jacob has lived with Laban for a month now and Laban doesn't think that just because he's a relative that Jacob should work for nothing. What does Laban ask in verse 15? _____

 2. In verses 16 and 17 we learn about Laban's two daughters. The oldest daughter is _____ and the younger one is _____.
 - a. How is Leah described? _____
 - b. How is Rachel described? _____
 3. Verse 18 tells us that Jacob loved Rachel. What was Jacob's proposal to Laban regarding wages? _____

 4. Laban agreed believing that it was better for his daughter to be given to Jacob than to some other man. According to verse 20 how did Jacob regard his service to Laban knowing that Rachel was to become his wife? _____
 5. When the _____ years were completed Jacob went to Laban and said that in essence he had completed his part of the agreement and wanted his wife (Rachel) to lie with him. Laban agreed and celebrated. What did he do (verse 22)? _____
 6. But the story gets complicated. In verse 23 what does Laban do? _____

- Leah is now Jacob's wife. Laban gave Leah a maidservant named _____
7. When morning came, the truth was revealed. Leah lay beside him. Needless to say, Jacob went to Laban. What does he ask Laban in verse 25? _____
Jacob says to him, "I served you for Rachel, didn't I?" And then comes the question that exposes the truth of the situation: _____
 8. After deceiving Jacob, what does Laban tell him in verse 26? _____

- The custom dictated that the older daughter should marry first. Laban agreed to give Rachel to Jacob in return for another seven years of work. Verse 28 says, "Jacob did so." Jacob finished the bridal week with Leah and then received Rachel as his wife. In addition, Laban gave Rachel _____ as her maidservant (verse 29).
9. Verse 30 tells us about Jacob's relationship with his two wives. He was raised in a home in which parents played favorites and now he lives in his own home and loves one wife more than the other. He worked for Laban another _____ years.

REFLECTION: At this point a couple of thoughts come to mind for us to consider:

1. One thought is centered on Leah, the woman who was used by her father to deceive the man who was now her husband, the man who didn't love her. What would it have been like to have been Leah? She wasn't the beautiful one. The Bible describes her as the one with weak eyes. She was older and not married. Her sister Rachel was obviously the one sought after. Leah knew the custom of her people. Did she know during those first seven years that she would be given in marriage deceitfully to Jacob? Did she know that she would be given in marriage and dread the moment of revelation and the experience of absolute disappointment she knew she would be to Jacob?
2. Consider for a moment that you are a journalist assigned to interview Leah. What would be the questions that you would want to ask? What questions would be of interest to your readers that would give insight into what all has just happened? Was Leah a part of the deceptive plot? Was she an innocent victim? What was it like to be the underdog when it came to looks and attraction? How might you feel about always being compared to your younger sister or bigger brother? Take time to write a couple of your interview questions:

Part 5

APPLICATION:

1. Maybe you have had the experience of competing for recognition, maybe even for love. Who was your competitor? What did that individual have that caused you to consider yourself less than him/her? _____
2. What was something you always wished you were or had that you believed would make you feel more valuable to others? _____
3. How did others treat you? What was your experience? _____
4. How did you allow their treatment to make you feel? _____

PRAYER: O Lord God, You know the pain that I carry within me because of my feelings of being less than others. Others seem to have all the looks, all the ability, all the brains, all the talent, all the personality that make them so attractive. Enable me to thank You that You have made me just as I am. I thank You for loving me and blessing my life with Your faithfulness. _____

REFLECTION: Another thought for consideration relates to Jacob. He was on the receiving end of deceit. He and Laban had an agreement. He would work for seven years to have Rachel for his wife and that's exactly what he did. Now the time is up and he is ready to take her into his tent and lie with her. Veil and darkness obviously made it possible for Laban to pull off this deception but in the morning light truth was revealed. Imagine that moment of truth.

What happens when one's eyes are opened to truth? We can go back to Adam and Eve in the Garden when it says in Genesis 3:7 that the eyes of both of them were opened. How foolish one feels! We feel exposed and vulnerable and realize how easily we can be duped by someone. We ask ourselves: How could I have been so stupid? Sin has made us all aware of our vulnerability and so we attempt to put up our defenses in order to protect ourselves from all that would deceive us. At the same time, we, too, like Jacob are all too often focused on what we believe to be true rather than on what is truth.

PERSONAL APPLICATION:

1. Have you had the experience of someone you trusted deceiving you? Who was that individual and what were the circumstances? _____
2. Deceit can lead us to bear grudges like Esau did. What was your response to the deceit you experienced? _____
3. If deceit has caused you to carry a grudge against someone, the Lord invites you to be set free from its burden that weighs you down and keeps you from living life full and free. You are invited to let Him lift the burden from your shoulders and carry it for you.

PRAYER: O God, all too often I am deceived and believe the lie of the evil one rather than the Truth of Your Word. I am deceived by faulty advertising, misrepresentation of goods and services, by leaders and friends and even by family members. I sometimes even choose to deceive myself by believing lies and falsehoods. Forgive me. I want to live in truth. I want to know truth. I want to know and believe Jesus as the One who is the Way, the Truth, and the Life. _____

LESSON FIVE

HE LOVED RACHEL MORE THAN LEAH

GENESIS 29, 30 – THE BIRTH OF JACOB’S SONS

OVERVIEW OF LESSON 5

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• Sons Born to Jacob and Leah	47
• Rachel’s Jealousy and Leah’s Loneliness	49
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• Rachel Gives Birth to a Son	51
• Jealousy’s Fear	52

INTRODUCTION

Jacob is now married to Leah and Rachel, the two daughters of his uncle Laban. In Lesson 4 we learned how deceit had made its lasting mark on these two sisters and Jacob. As a result, many relational hardships existed within this family. This lesson exposes a trait of Jacob that was also a part of the family life in which he was raised with his parents Isaac and Rebekah. Learn about this trait and the damage it caused in each of the relationships—between Jacob and each of his wives and between these sisters with one another. Learn how this trait manifests itself within Jacob’s family.

Jacob was blessed with many sons. These sons were given names by Leah and Rachel. These names reveal to us the heart of these mothers. Discover what is happening to them through these childbearing years? Would you be asking again, “Where is God in all of this?”

This story gives us the opportunity for personal reflection. For example, which character in this story would you like to have been? Why? What would it have been like to be Leah? Or Rachel? Have you ever felt like one of them? What effect might their names have had on how they perceived themselves? What is the significance of your name to you?

Remember that God continues to keep His covenant promise—the promise He made to Abraham, passed on to Isaac, and now continues to fulfill in the life of Jacob. In spite of all that was going on in this family, the promise still holds steadfast. As you study Lesson 5 may you discover the faithfulness of God and may your hope rest in Him.

Part 1

INTRODUCTION: Jacob is now married. Leah and Rachel are his wives. Rachel is the younger and more beautiful sister. We are told that Jacob _____ Rachel _____ than Leah. This favoritism creates an environment of competition and jealousy between the two sisters. Laban has given each daughter a maidservant. Leah's maidservant was _____ and Rachel's was _____.

You are encouraged to familiarize yourself with the names of Jacob's sons, the patriarchs (Acts 7:9). They are important to learn. Some of their names may sound unfamiliar to you while other names are given to sons in this present day. You may choose to make your own individual notes on each son in your notebook for future reference. In other parts of the Bible the individual sons and their families are referred to as tribes. Together they are referred to as the twelve tribes of Israel.

ASSIGNMENT: Read Genesis 29:31 through Genesis 30:24. As you read underline the names of the individual sons born to Jacob.

TEACHING: The open womb signified in the culture of the day that the woman was blessed by God. The barren woman, on the other hand, was looked down upon by the community in which she lived. We are reminded of Sarah and Rebekah. Both of these women were barren (Genesis 16:1; Genesis 25:21). In Genesis 29:31 we are introduced again to the matter of the open womb and the barren woman.

Another part of this nomadic culture that needs to be understood is that of the maidservant. Earlier in Genesis 16:3-4 we learned that because Sarai was unable to conceive that she gave her maidservant Hagar to her husband Abraham to be his wife. Abraham slept with Hagar and she conceived. The maidservants Zilpah and Bilhah were given to Jacob as his wives (Genesis 30:4, 9). He slept with each of them and they conceived. It is interesting to note that the Bible teaches when a man and a woman sleep together the woman is considered to be the man's wife. The act of intercourse is the consummation of the union of the man and the woman. Intercourse is the act of the husband and wife becoming one flesh (Genesis 2:24).

EXERCISE: Complete the chart as you work through these next several verses. The footnotes may help. Identify the mother, the name of her son, and the meaning of his name. With the naming of each child watch for insights into the internal struggles of Jacob's wives.

- b. What insights might this verse give into Leah's pain? _____

2. Verse 35 tells us that she conceived again and gave birth to another son. His name and its meaning? (Chart) Leah appears to have come to a significant place in her life. She no longer chooses to struggle with what she does not have, namely, _____
 Rather she regards the birth of this fourth son as an opportunity to _____
 _____ What does the end of verse 35 tell us? _____
3. Meanwhile, in Genesis 30:1 what is happening with Rachel? _____
- Rachel has become _____ of her sister.
 - Jealousy* is the fear of being replaced. How does this definition of jealousy apply the Rachel's situation? _____
 - What does she demand of Jacob? _____
 - And, obviously frustrated, in his anger retorts: _____

Like Sarai in Genesis 16:2 Jacob believed that God had kept her from having any children (Genesis 30:2).

- What does Rachel tell Jacob (verse 3)? _____ Rachel is living in fear as a jealous woman. She is afraid that the love of Jacob will be lost and his love will turn from her to her sister Leah who has given him four sons. She is desperate to keep his love and affection.
4. In Genesis 30:4-6 we are told that Rachel gave Bilhah as a wife to Jacob; Jacob has slept with her; she became pregnant and gave birth to a son. What is his name and what is the meaning? (Chart)
- Who named the child? _____
 - Recalling the stigma attached to the barren woman, why did Rachel choose this name? _____ She believes she is exonerated. God has given her a son. She can no longer be regarded as guilty for a wrongdoing and thus deserving of God's punishment. She is free from blame.

Part 3

EXERCISE CONTINUES: (Genesis 30)

5. Bilhah conceived again (verses 7-8). What is the child's name and what is the meaning? (Chart) Again, Rachel names the child. What does his name reveal about Rachel?
- _____

Rachel's jealousy made her competitive with her sister. Because she has now had two sons though her maidservant Bilhah, Rachel proclaims herself to be the winner!

6. Verses 9-11: Leah had stopped having children so she gave her maidservant Zilpah to Jacob as a wife. She bore a son for him. What is his name and what does the child's name mean? (Chart) Leah was excited that she could present Jacob with another son. Something has changed. What does his child's name mean? What change does Leah's attitude reflect? _____

7. Zilpah bore Jacob another son. What is his name and what does his name mean? (Chart) What attitude is Leah reflecting now to those in her community? _____ A person almost gets a sense that the Lord had given her the love she never received from Jacob. Friends would now see that she reflected _____ rather than _____. The misery that once repelled family and friends was replaced with happiness that embraced and attracted others.

8. We would like to believe that everything is now well and good between these sisters, their maidservants, and Jacob. Verses 14-16 tell us that Leah's son found some mandrake plants and brought them to his mother. *Note: The mandrake plant was used to heal sores, ulcers and the like. The plant was referred to as "Satan's apple" and the love apple thought to induce fertility.* Rachel saw them and asked if she could have some. At this point we know that the strife between these sisters has not ended. What does Leah reply in verse 15? _____

In the end, Leah gives Rachel the mandrake plants in return for the opportunity to sleep with Jacob that night.

9. In verses 17-18 we learn that God listened to Leah and she bore a fifth son. What is the child's name? What does this child's name mean? (Chart) What does Leah seem to think she deserves? _____

Rewards are earned and then bestowed on the one deserving. How might Leah feel now that Zilpah, like Bilhah, has given birth to sons for Jacob?

10. Leah gives birth to her sixth son (verses 19-20). Chart the child's name and meaning. Jacob now has ten sons! Leah refers to this one as a precious gift. No longer is Leah looking for love from her husband. How is she expecting to be treated now? _____ Leah believes that because she had given Jacob six sons she deserves to be honored and respected by him.

REFLECTION: Take time to consider some of your own thoughts. What is happening between these sisters and their husband? What would it be like to live under these circumstances? _____

Part 4

EXERCISE CONTINUES: (Genesis 30)

11. Verse 21 tells us that sometime later Leah gave birth to a daughter, Dinah. This is recorded because of an incident that occurred in Genesis 34. We will not be studying this chapter so you may choose to read the story on your own.
12. And, what about Rachel? In verse 22 it simply states that God remembered Rachel. He listened to her and opened her womb. What is her son's name? What does his name mean? (Chart) At last, she became pregnant. The Lord had taken away her disgrace. And immediately what does she ask for? _____
13. Chapters 29 and 30 hold the recorded account of the birth of the eleven sons of Jacob; however, one more son is to be born. To learn about this son we need to turn to Genesis 35:16-20.
 - a. Jacob had moved the family from Bethel where he had the dream and where God renewed the promise He had made to Abraham and Isaac. They moved on from Bethel and were not far from Ephrath (the town of Bethlehem), and what happens in verse 16?

 - b. In verse 17 the midwife informs her that she has another son. Rachel named her son Ben-Oni but what name did his father give him and what does it mean? (Chart) The Lord granted Rachel her request (Genesis 30:24) and gave her another son. And then, Rachel dies in childbirth. Jacob saw Rachel as his right hand, the one whom he loved and now whom he had to bury.
2. Rachel died before Jacob could return to his father's house (verse 21). We are told in verse 28 that when Isaac died he was 180 years old. His sons _____ and _____ buried him (verse 29).

REFLECTION: Once again, several thoughts and ideas come to mind while studying this portion of Genesis. Individual opinions, questions, and feelings all raise opportunities for discussion and ongoing study. Keep in mind that some questions have no answers. We only have the written Word of God to relate God's truth to humanity. Not everything that we have considered in this lesson is essential for our study; however, the more information and knowledge we acquire, the deeper understanding we will have of who God is and His desire for all to live with Him forever in a relationship of love and forgiveness.

1. Take time to write some of your own reflections on this story. What questions might you like to ask the different characters?
 - a. Jacob: _____
 - b. Leah: _____
 - c. Zilpah: _____
 - d. Rachel: _____
 - e. Bilhah: _____
2. Personal life experiences may arouse strong feelings and emotions. As you read this story recorded in Genesis 29-30 consider some of your own thoughts. _____

The stories related to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob are the *genesis*, the beginning of Israel's history. The story of these individuals whom God blessed with His love offers to us the reassurance that the promise God made in Genesis 12 would be fulfilled. Throughout the history of Israel God kept His covenant promise that through this nation all people of the world would be blessed.

Part 5

TEACHING: In Genesis 30:1 we learned that Rachel was jealous of her sister, yet Rachel was the one who had the love of Jacob. Genesis 29:30 says that he loved Rachel more than Leah. Why would she be jealous over a sister who feels unloved by the husband they share? Why would Rachel be jealous when her sister was able to have children? After all, wasn't she the one that Jacob loved?

Remember, *jealousy* is the fear of being replaced. Rachel's fear was that Leah would become the one whom Jacob loved more. Rachel was afraid that her sister would take the place she had in Jacob's heart, the place that had belonged to her. Jealousy destroys relationships because jealousy is rooted in fear. When we act out of fear our thinking becomes distorted and we act irrationally. Rachel was afraid that because Leah was able to give Jacob these six sons that Jacob would turn his affections toward Leah.

PERSONAL APPLICATION: What has been your experience with jealousy?

1. Have you experienced jealousy in your life? Recall the individual(s) and circumstance(s).

2. What was the fear? How did the fear of being replaced manifest itself? _____

3. Do you have a need to admit your own jealous heart? Have you lived with the fear that you might be replaced, that your position in a relationship at work or at home may be in jeopardy?

4. The jealous person is threatened by the success of others, by the friendships of others, by the social graces of others. Their perception of their own ability to perform as well as the other person raises thoughts of doubt and fear. These feelings of inadequacy prevent them from encouraging others and offering words that give rise to confidence and character in the other person. When has been a time when you found yourself withholding words of affirmation and encouragement because of jealousy? _____

PRAYER: O God, I need to confess to You that I have been threatened by the abilities and talents of others. I have been afraid of losing my job and rather than building up someone I have found myself looking for ways to destroy them. I talk about others behind their back hoping to make myself look good and all the while hurting only myself. Forgive my self-centered thoughts and attitudes and free me from myself to look for ways to bless the lives of others with kind thoughts, encouraging words, and loving actions. Thank You for blessing my life with every good thing. _____

LESSON SIX

CROSSING THE JABBOK RIVER

GENESIS 32, 33 – JACOB WRESTLES WITH GOD

OVERVIEW OF LESSON 6

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INTRODUCTION

Jacob's life seems to move from one crisis to another. What is it this time? In Lesson 6 we become aware of Jacob's prosperity. The Lord has significantly increased his tribe, his possessions, his herds, flocks, and camels, and all of his servants. Now it is time to leave Laban's house and step out on his own.

But there is one with whom Jacob needs to make restitution. For Jacob it was unfinished business, even after all of these years. Learn what he needed to do and watch how he handled the situation? Take time to reflect on what you would have done, or not done.

In Jacob's situation God chose to manifest Himself to Jacob in a peculiar way. Watch for the outcomes of that encounter. What did God say? What did He do? What happened to Jacob? What happens to us when we encounter the Lord?

Lesson 6 is exciting. With all of Jacob's prosperity he was learning that God's faithfulness would endure and his life would be filled with hope forever.

Part 1

INTRODUCTION: So, whatever happened to Esau? Did he just disappear? What happened between him and Jacob? Did they ever see each other again? These twins were obviously different in appearance, in character, in heart. Their relationship had deteriorated to the point that Jacob had to flee for his life because Esau wanted to kill him. In this lesson we will learn what happened when Jacob and Esau met each other for the first time after several years of separation. Jacob has prospered. He has been blessed with a large family and great wealth. Now the time has come for him to face his brother. Is Esau still seeking revenge and wanting to kill his brother? Jacob is about to find out.

ASSIGNMENT: Read Genesis 32:3-21. *Note:* This lesson covers a large amount of material, however, and will not be studied in great detail.

EXERCISE: Jacob initiates contact with his brother.

1. What is the first thing Jacob does in verse 3? _____
2. Where is Esau? _____

Take time to look at a map and locate Edom. This is also referred to as the land of Seir. Edom is the territory to the southeast of the Dead Sea, or the Salt Sea.

3. What are the three things he wants included in his message to his brother?
 - a. _____
 - b. _____
 - c. _____

Jacob wants Esau to know where he's been, that he's acquired wealth, and that he desires to find favor with him. Jacob indicates that he is able and willing to buy his brother's favor, that his relationship with Esau is more important to him than his wealth.

4. What did the messengers report to Jacob in verse 6? _____
5. What is Jacob's reaction to this report in verses 7-8? _____
6. What is his immediate plan of action? _____

7. Jacob prayed to the Lord. What was the essence of his prayer in verses 9-12? Consider four things:
 - a. Who is God (verse 9)? _____
 - b. Who is he (verse 10)? _____

- c. What does he ask for (verse 11)? _____
 - d. What had God promised (verse 12)? _____
8. Jacob's plan exposes his fear of his brother. Rather than stand as a leader and lead his family, his household, and herds, we learn that he divides his family and possessions into groups and then proceeds to select a gift for Esau. What is the gift (verses 14-15)? What exactly did Jacob select?
- a. Goats: _____
 - b. Sheep: _____
 - c. Camels: _____
 - d. Cows: _____
 - e. Donkeys: _____
9. Who was to lead the procession (verse 16)? _____
10. What were the servants instructed to tell Esau when they met (verse 17-20)? _____
11. Verse 20 reveals Jacob's intent. What did he think? _____

The gifts went ahead of Jacob accompanied by the servants. Jacob stayed behind and spent the night in camp.

Part 2

REFLECTION: Leadership leads. Leadership has followers. Jacob is the head, or chief, of his clan. He's about to meet his brother and 400 men who are coming with him. And, who does he send to lead the procession? His servants! These men are bringing the gifts Jacob thinks will pacify his brother and cause Esau to receive him peaceably.

1. OK, so you have been sent by the local TV station to report the encounter of these brothers. What are some of the questions you would like to ask Jacob? What are some things you might like to ask Rachel and Leah? _____
2. From your perspective how would you describe the character Jacob is displaying? _____
3. What are some of your observations to report? _____

PERSONAL APPLICATION:

1. Have you been in a position of leadership but found it difficult to lead? What fears and anxieties affected your leadership in that particular situation? _____

An example of failure to lead when in a leadership position: Sometimes parents hesitate to accept their role as leaders. Children look to them for direction and guidance. They want their parents to give direction, to provide boundaries in which they can operate, and to consistently articulate and model values they can embrace. If parents don't lead and fail to take a strong stance as leaders in the home they miss the opportunity to influence their children in positive ways. Often the children begin making their own decisions, and without parental guidance start on a collision course that frequently results in rebellious acts of disobedience.

2. Consider other examples of leadership you have encountered.
 - a. What are some blessings of strong leadership? _____
 - b. What are some consequences of leadership that fails to lead? _____

ASSIGNMENT: Continue reading Genesis 32:22-32.

TEACHING: Jacob took his wives, maidservants, and children across the Jabbok River. Find this river on the map that shows the land of the twelve tribes. The Jabbok is located between the Sea of Galilee (Sea of Kinnereth) and the Dead Sea (Salt Sea). The river is about halfway between these bodies of water and flow from the east into the Jabbok River. Jacob is traveling from Haran in the north and heading back to Beersheba in the south. Esau is coming from the land of Seir, or Edom, which is located to the southeast of the Dead Sea.

EXERCISE: After Jacob took his family and sent over all of his possessions across the Jabbok River he was left alone for the night (Genesis 32:22-24a).

1. What happened during the night (verses 24b-26)? _____

2. Jacob wrestled with a man during the night. We are told that the man is God. Jacob prevailed against him. What did the man do (verse 25)? _____
3. Jacob was in a desperate situation. His brother was coming after him. What did he ask of God in verse 26? _____
4. The man responded by asking Jacob his name. He then told Jacob that his name would no longer be Jacob. What was the new name he was given? _____

5. What was the significance of his new name? _____
6. In verse 29 we learn that God blessed Jacob. Jacob named the place _____
7. What does this mean? _____
8. What is an interesting fact about Jacob's hip and the practice of the Israelites (verse 32)?

Part 3

TEACHING: God changed Jacob's name to Israel. Several years earlier God had changed the name of Abram to Abraham and Sarai to Sarah. An accepted belief is that the one giving the name is the one who has power over that individual or object that is named. For example, you will recall in Genesis 2 that Adam was the one who gave the animals their names. He was the one given the responsibility to have dominion over them.

God has come to Jacob in an unusual way. In the process of overtaking Jacob He dislocates his hip from its socket leaving him with a limp. Jacob asks to be blessed. The man asks Jacob his name and then tells Jacob that his new name will be Israel. Naming Jacob gave God the authority or rule over his life. He was under new ownership, under new management. The Lord God, the One who covenanted with Abraham and Isaac was now the one who graciously spared his life and has declared him to be His. Thus, He blessed Jacob.

PERSONAL APPLICATION: In our modern day it is not difficult to see similar situations. Consider your own name. As a newborn infant you were given your name by your parents. Most likely your name was determined before leaving the hospital and was recorded on your birth certificate.

1. What is the name you were given? _____
2. What does your name mean? _____
3. Were you named after someone? _____
4. Who named you and was given authority over and responsibility for you? _____

5. What is your reaction to the concept of someone having rule or authority over you? Is this a new concept? Have you always had the name that you have now? Maybe you have been adopted, married, or even divorced and given a new name. Your thoughts: _____

6. As God changed Jacob's name and became the one responsible for his life, so God calls us and wants to be the one responsible for us. He wants to have authority over us. He wants us to accept His rule and reign in our hearts. What thoughts come to mind as you consider Him blessing your life by inviting you to come under His lordship, His authority? _____
-

PRAYER: This whole idea of coming under Your authority, Lord, is somewhat disconcerting. This means that I am no longer the one who is in charge of my life but now You are. I don't know what that means. I don't know how things will change. What difference will You make in what I do and how I live my life? I ask You to give me a heart that embraces You and like Jacob refuses to let You go until You bless me. Thank You for Your steadfast love that endures forever. _____

Part 4

ASSIGNMENT: Read Genesis 33:1-17.

EXERCISE: A change has occurred in Jacob. Watch! Jacob sees his brother coming with his 400 men. He lines up his family from lesser to greater. First in line are the maidservants and their children, then Leah, and at the end his favorites Rachel with Joseph.

1. What does verse 3 say? _____
Jacob goes ahead. He takes the lead. He humbles himself before his brother by bowing to the ground. What is Esau's response when he sees his brother? _____

Esau ran to Jacob, embraced him, hugged him, kissed him, and together they wept! Wouldn't you have liked to have been there? What a celebration!
2. In verses 5-7 Esau is introduced to Jacob's family. Jacob acknowledges to his brother that his children are "the _____ whom God has _____ your servant." These loved ones were graciously given to Jacob by _____.
3. Then Esau asks about "all this company I met." What does Jacob admit in verse 8? _____

4. Notice the interesting insistence and refusal between the brothers. First, Esau refuses Jacob's gift in verse 9. What does he say? _____
5. But Jacob insists. What does he say? _____

Jacob wants to acknowledge to his brother that God has been gracious to him by Esau favorably receiving him. He has all that he needs (verse 11). Finally, at Jacob's insistence, Esau accepts Jacob's gift.

6. Esau wants to accompany Jacob and bring him to the land of Seir but Jacob has different plans. In your own words, what does Jacob tell his brother? _____

7. Esau wants to leave some of his men with Jacob to assist him on the journey but how does Jacob respond? _____

8. So, in verse 16 Esau begins his journey back to Seir (Edom). What does Jacob do? _____

He heads to Succoth which is in the opposite direction from Seir. In Succoth he built a place for his family to live and made shelters for his livestock.

REFLECTION: What a relief it must have been for Jacob when he saw Esau running toward him, embrace and kiss him, and then weeping for joy in their reunion. His gift that was intended to pacify his brother had been unnecessary but graciously received in exchange for seeing each other again face-to-face. These were twin brothers. It wasn't as though they had come from a large family but these were the two sons of their parents Isaac and Rebekah.

It's interesting to note that Jacob did not go to Seir with his brother but rather believed that God had called him back to the land of his father and to the land that He had promised to give to Jacob and his descendants.

PERSONAL APPLICATION: Restitution had been made between brothers. Is there someone in your life with whom you need to repair a broken relationship? What was said or done that inflicted hurt on one or the other? _____

God was gracious to Jacob and brought healing and wholeness between these brothers. He can do the same for some fractured situation in your life.

PRAYER: Lord God, You have graciously given me everything that I have. I deserve none of it. Sometimes I think I need more. Sometimes I want more but when I honestly consider all that You have given me I can only thank You! Reveal to me those whom I have offended in any way. Give me the courage to seek forgiveness and to trust You to heal all the brokenness between us. You are the one who loves us and enables us to live in peace with each other. _____

Part 5

TEACHING: We have spent several lessons focused primarily on Jacob, the deceitful twin, who succeeded with the help of his mother Rebekah to obtain not only the birthright from his brother but the blessing from his father as well. We have journeyed with him to Haran where he found safety from Esau. After he was deceived by his uncle Laban, Jacob was given Laban's two daughters to be his wives. In this last lesson we were introduced to the twelve sons of Jacob and after his encounter with God saw the two brothers peacefully reunited.

In Genesis 35 we learn that Jacob left Esau and returned to Bethel, the place where he had encountered God in a dream (Genesis 28:10-15). God appeared to him a second time and blessed him and gave him a new name, the name Israel (Genesis 35:9-13). Later in this same chapter we learn that Rachel died giving birth to her son Benjamin. Benjamin was the youngest of Jacob's twelve sons. He and his brother Joseph were favored because of their mother Rachel whom Jacob dearly loved. In verses 27-29 we learn that Jacob returned to the land of his father in Hebron. Isaac lived to be 180 years old and when he died both Esau and Jacob buried him.

Chapter 36 gives an account of Esau's genealogy. The land was not able to support both brothers because of all the livestock, so Esau settled in Edom, the hill country of Seir and became the father of the Edomites. Esau turned from the God of his father Isaac and took wives from the Canaanites and Hittites. These were not the chosen people of God.

Did Jacob and Esau ever see each other again? The Bible does not tell us. What we do know is that when reference is made to Esau in other parts of the Bible it is never in a positive way. The Edomites caused difficulty for the Israelites when the Israelites were ready to enter the Promised Land. The Edomites reflected the false gods they worshipped.

How interesting that Abraham had two sons, the first turned from the God of his father and went to Egypt while the other son, Isaac, carried the promise of God made to his father. Now Isaac has two sons and the one son turns from the God of his father and goes to live in the land of Edom while the other son, Jacob, returns to the land of his father in Haran for he carried the promise passed on from his grandfather. From the same family comes one who accepts and follows the ways of his father and another who turns completely away.

PERSONAL APPLICATION: Consider your own family and your attitude toward the value and ways of your parents. One must first acknowledge whether or not the parents' ways were aligned with God's ways. Next, one needs to consider what his/her own ways have been. Whether parent or child, employer or employee, student or teacher we all mess up because we live as sinners in a sinful world. Yet, we can hear the call of Jesus who invites us to come and follow Him.

Has your heart been turned to follow God who faithfully provides you with everything you need? Has your heart been turned to follow God who continues to invite you into a relationship with Him, a relationship in which you become His child? When earthly parents fail, God desires to be our Father and He calls us His children. Zephaniah 3:17 says that He takes great delight in us. Write out this verse:

MEMORIZATION: Zephaniah 3:17 is one of those verses to put into your memory. It is a delightful picture of a Father enjoying His child. Again, you are encouraged to write this verse on an index card and spend the next days making these words your own!

PRAYER: O God, You desire to be our Father. Sometimes our image of what a father is has become distorted by the sinful actions of our earthly father. Open my eyes to see Your love filling my life. Your love provides for all that I need. Your love offers more than I can comprehend. Your love causes You to never abandon me but rather to be with me and to save me from everything hurtful. You delight in me. That's almost too difficult to comprehend, especially when I know the sin that lurks in my heart. Quiet me with Your love and rejoice over me with singing. I rest in You. _____

UNIT REVIEW

**GOD'S
FAITHFULNESS,
OUR HOPE**

REVIEW

This particular exercise was designed for the purpose of affirming your growth and knowledge of these Old Testament characters: Isaac, Rebekah, Esau, and Jacob.

1. In your own words write a summary sentence describing the character of each:
 - a. Isaac: _____
 - b. Rebekah: _____
 - c. Esau: _____
 - d. Jacob: _____

2. In modern times we would probably describe this family as dysfunctional. In spite of their human condition discuss what God's faithfulness meant to them and to the sons of Jacob:

3. God's behavior toward this family was not influenced by their behavior. Nothing they could do or would not do caused Him to stop loving them. What did you learn about God in this study that gave you reasons to trust Him to be truthful (John 3:33) and thus to believe that He loved you so much that He gave Jesus to be the One who gives you eternal life (John 3:16)? _____

4. You have learned many new names, names of people and places. Just for fun, attempt to match the following:

a. Land of Seir	1. the old country
b. Haran	2. the inheritance of the firstborn son
c. Laban	3. the forefathers of the Israelites
d. Bethel	4. the place of Jacob's dream
e. Tithes	5. Edom
f. Blessing	6. Jacob's new name
g. Birthright	7. a tenth of what God gave Jacob
h. Patriarchs	8. the words that governed the son's life
i. Israel	9. Rebekah's brother

Congratulations! You have completed *God's Faithfulness, Our Hope*. You are becoming familiar with Old Testament Bible stories. Through the lives of these individuals we see evidence of God's love as He chooses to live in a relationship with them. His desire is to live in a similar relationship of love with us. His invitation is for you and me. He invites us to receive Him as our God and His Son Jesus Christ as our Savior and our Hope for salvation. Press on with your study. There's so much Good News!

PRAYER: O Lord God, You are my Father. Continue to reveal Yourself to me through the study of Your Word. Keep my heart open to listen as You speak to me through the stories and lives of those You chose so long ago. Keep me mindful that in spite of my past, regardless of my history, You choose to use me. You fill my life with hope and purpose. As You have blessed me may I be a blessing to others. This is Your will. Your desire has become mine because of Your faithfulness to me. _____

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