

The background of the entire poster is a warm-toned desert landscape. In the upper half, there are silhouettes of jagged mountains against a light orange sky. In the lower half, the terrain is flatter, and the silhouettes of three camels are visible on the right side, walking towards the left. The overall color palette is shades of orange, tan, and brown.

The life of **JACOB**

The Journey from being self-made to being God formed

**SERMON
SERIES
FOR FALL
2021**

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7 Ways to Maximize the Impact of your Small Group

1. Pray: Pray on a regular basis for those in your study group. Pray for the leader, Pray for the impact of the study on all who attend.
2. Each week, read through the Bible passage before you come.
3. Listen to the sermon. This book is designed to supplement the sermons, Either listen to the message on Sunday or online before attending your small group.
4. If time permits, read through the questions beforehand and start percolating on some answers. Keep in mind that each week there are lots of questions and the leader has the freedom to skip some of the questions depending on time.
5. Think of a personal prayer need that the rest of your small group can be praying about. If you can't think of anything, then be prepared to share some praise item.
6. Pray for Pastor Don as he preaches.
7. Be intentional about asking others in the group about their week, or follow up questions on shared prayer requests.

Week 1: Genesis 25: 19-34

1. The sermon series tag is "a self made man becomes God formed". What does it mean to be a self made man?
2. What's the difference between a self made man and a God formed man?
3. Below is a list of people mentioned in the Bible, can you identify if or when they moved from self made to God formed? Paul, Peter, David. *Obviously coming to Christ is key in this change, but it's not just a one time event, there is also the process of sanctification.*
4. Do you know what the word sanctification means?
5. How does God use our sanctification as a means to make us more God formed?

6. The story of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob involved periods of waiting. In their case, the waiting was connected with infertility and promised offspring. How is waiting often connected with the promises of God?

7. Can you identify the periods of waiting involved in these other Bible stories. Moses, The children of Israel (in the wilderness), Joseph (Son of Jacob), Simeon (Luke 2:25-32).

8. In v.22 Rebekah is curious why her twins are struggling within her. What answer does she get?

9. We live in a culture of instant gratification. It would be foolish to think that we are not affected by the surrounding culture. How do we pursue and value patience in an impatient world?

10. Is there anything that God has made you wait for either currently or in the past?

11. The account of v22,23 gives us an insight into life in the womb, how does this verse give support for the preciousness of the unborn?

12. Esau is guilty of being reckless with his birthright, he didn't value that privilege. What good gifts are we given that we "despise" or take lightly?

13. We've seen over and over that Jacob likes to use trickery to get one over on people. Not that we want to excuse Jacob, but does the passage give any clues that this was a skill that Jacob likely learned from his parents?

14. Ch 25:29-34. The fact that Jacob desired the birthright was not a sinful thing. Is it possible to pursue the right thing in the wrong way?

15. "The church is full of people who sell their heavenly birthright for some passing pleasure." What do you think of this quote? Does 1 Corinthians 9:24-27 speak into this?

Week 2 Genesis 26

1. What did God tell Isaac to do during the famine?

2. What do Isaac and Rebekah do to Abimelech that reminds you of Abraham and Sarah?

3. Is lying ever justified?

4. Why does Abimelech ask Isaac to leave? (Gen. 26:16)

5. In Ch 26:24, the Lord appears to Isaac and says "I am the God of your Father Abraham," What's the significance of that introduction?

6. In v24 God tells Isaac not to be afraid. What does God promise that should alleviate his fears?

7. Are there practical ways that would help us recall God's promises when we are afraid?

8. Isaac and Rebecca knew that one of these boys would fulfill the promise given to Abraham. Was there any reason why God choose Jacob over Esau?

9. How does Romans 9:10-13 help us to understand the role the boys had in being chosen by God?

Read v26-35.

10. Why had Abimelech's attitude toward Isaac changed?

11. When Abimelech came to see Isaac again, what change can we see in Abimelech?

12. What did Isaac ask him and how did he respond?

13. In 26:34, what does it mean that Esau's wives were Hittites?

14. Why is that problematic?

15. How did Esau's choices affected his family. Ch 26:35, Ch 27:46

16. Chapter 26 ends with the sad account of Esau's wives. Esau was Isaac's favourite. Could his love for Esau have blinded his ability to parent well? Is there a warning to those of us who parent?

Prayer Requests

Prayer	Answer

Week 3: Genesis 27:1-40

1. Ch 27 starts with the unfolding scene of Isaac trying to pass on his blessing to Esau. As the events unfold, we see a divided family. One writer has pointed out that all four people involved in the story are at fault. Identify the four people, their role and their blame.

2. How are the events of Ch 25:33 evidence of Esau's guilt in going along with Isaac's plan?

3. In light of Ch 25:23, should Isaac have been trying to bless Esau? Look at Ch 27:29. Why is this blessing unwise?

4. What seems to be the role of the game and the savoury food in this story?

5. Why has Isaac made the food the precondition for giving the blessing? What are your thoughts?

6. Is Isaac's old age and dimming eyes (v1) an indicator that his spiritual antenna was not tuned into God, so that he could not see that the promise was for his younger son and not the older?

7. Why could Isaac not have pronounced a new blessing on Esau?

8. How is the promise given to Abraham connected to Christ?

9. Part of becoming 'children of promise' involves Christ being cursed and taking the punishment for sin. How?

10. After God appears to Isaac at Beersheba, he calls upon the name of the Lord? What does it look like today to call on the name of the Lord?

Prayer Requests

Prayer	Answer

Week 4 Genesis 27:41-28:9

1. Let's revisit our theme of self made/ God formed. Now read :41. How is Esau's life a reminder of the phrase "there but for the grace of God go I"?

2. Esau had made a calculated plan. What fuelled the plan?

3. What are the dangers of anger in our lives that we need to be watchful about?

4. Rebekah was motivated by not wanting to loose both her sons, did she succeed?

5. Do you think that Rebekah lived "happily ever after"?

6. Rebekah envisioned Jacob staying with Laban just a while.(:44). He ended up staying over 14 years and being "trapped" by Laban. Do you think Rebekah had any idea of the price Jacob would pay?

7. How is Rebekah shrewd by reminding Isaac of the pain of the the Hittite women?

8. Obviously deception has been a key part of story so far. Was there a time that you used deception or manipulation to achieve something you wanted? b) What was the outcome immediately and then over time?

9. There were two reasons Jacob goes to Haran, what are they?

10. Describe Isaac and Rebekah's parenting style?

Prayer Requests

Prayer	Answer

Week 5 Genesis 28:10-22

1. Read v12-13. Make sure that your group knows the details of the dream

2. Why did Jacob change the name to Bethel?

3. In verse 10 we read that "Jacob left Beersheba", meaning that he was essentially stepping out of his parents home. Why does that make the timing of the dream significant?

4. What's the significance of the angels perpetual ascending and descending?

5. This is the first of Jacob's two nocturnal encounters. The second is recorded in 32:24-25. Why are these encounters so central/impactful to the story?

6. Jacob ultimately wrestles with God. It can sometimes feel like we are wrestling with our faith. How can Jacob's chosenness, cheating, and eventual wrestling help us think about how we relate to God?

7. Jacob receives another blessing, this time from God. What does God promise him?

8. How does this promise tie in with God's earlier promises to Abraham and Isaac?

9. What's the irony about Jacob's conditions in v20?

10. How does Jacob repurpose his makeshift pillow?

Prayer Requests

Prayer	Answer

Week 6 Genesis 29:31-30:24

This passage highlights the birth of Jacob's children. Not surprisingly, given his unexpected marriage to Leah, Jacob's domestic scene is fraught with tension. Child birth and parenting are typically associated with joy and happiness, however it's impossible to miss the distress, manipulation and pain that accompany Jacob, Leah and Rachel through this time.

1. Look at the explanation Leah gives for the names she gave the boys, what insight does this give into her relationship with God?

2. These verses are very honest in telling us about Leah's desire for her marriage. What can we learn about the marriage?

3. Marriage is a gift from the Lord, but it still takes work. What practical tips can we learn from this passage?

4. Polygamy was allowed by custom, but it was never God's original plan for marriage. The polygamy between Jacob and Leah and Rachel (and concubines Bilhah and Zilpah) created a hotbed of jealousy, strife and bitterness that bled into the next generation. Who do you think was at fault in this situation? Laban? Leah? Jacob? Rachel?

5. Verse 1 of Ch 30 highlights Rachel's jealousy of Leah. She's jealous of her sister, an unloved, unnoticed wife. Rachel deals with the stigma of infertility. Is it fair to say that each sister wants what the other sister has?

6. How do these verses warn us about the dangers of jealousy?

7. Leah's questioning of Rachel in v15 is ironic considering that she was the one who "took Jacob away" from Rachel on what was supposed to be Rachel's wedding night. Did Leah really believe that Rachel "stole" Jacob from her?

8. v22 reads that "God remembered Rachel" What do you think that means?

9. Can this verse teach us about what we believe about God?

Prayer Requests

Prayer	Answer

Week 7 Genesis 30:25-43

Having completed 14 years of service to Laban, Jacob looks to return to His family. Laban is reluctant to lose Jacob's service, which has brought him considerable wealth.

1. Read 30:25-30. What did Jacob tell Laban?

2. Why was it time for a new contract? (30b)

3. Why did Laban want Jacob to remain?

4. Read 30:31-36. What were the terms of the new contract?

5. How did Laban try to take advantage of Jacob?

6. Read 30:37-43. Describe Jacob's efforts to improve the quality of his stock and increase the number of his flocks and herds.

7. Does Jacob's course of action seem justified?

8. Does Scripture back that opinion?

9. Did God give Jacob the wisdom to manipulate the breeding process of the flock?

Prayer Requests

Prayer	Answer

Week 8 Genesis 31:1-21

1. Jacob had overstayed his welcome. Laban no longer regarded him with favour, Laban's sons were frustrated with him. Was their gripe legitimate?

2. What reason does Jacob give his wives for his prosperity?(v5-7)

3. Why is this a turning point for Jacob the self made "grabber"?

4. Over the years, Laban tricked Jacob into marrying Leah, had cheated him, and changed his wages ten times. It hadn't been an easy road, not that Jacob was a saint either. Scan through the passage and find the verses that point out God's activity through this?

5. How does this remind us of the justice of God?

6. In Isaiah 1:17, God tells his people to “learn to do good; seek justice, correct oppression, bring justice to the fatherless, plead the widow’s cause” Why is it important to God that we pursue justice?

7. Think through some tangible ways how we can reflect God’s justice?

8. In v13 what is God reminding Jacob about?

9. Numbers 30:2 says “If a man vows a vow to the Lord, or swears an oath to bind himself by pledge, he shall not break his word. He shall do all that proceeds out of his mouth” Why is keeping our word important to God?

10. On one hand as you read through this story, we see lots of human activity, most of which is not a great example of good behaviour. We also see God’s hand at work. How can God work through sinful people?

11. Thinking back over what we have learnt about Jacob, what are three adjectives you would use to describe Jacob?

Prayer Requests

Prayer	Answer