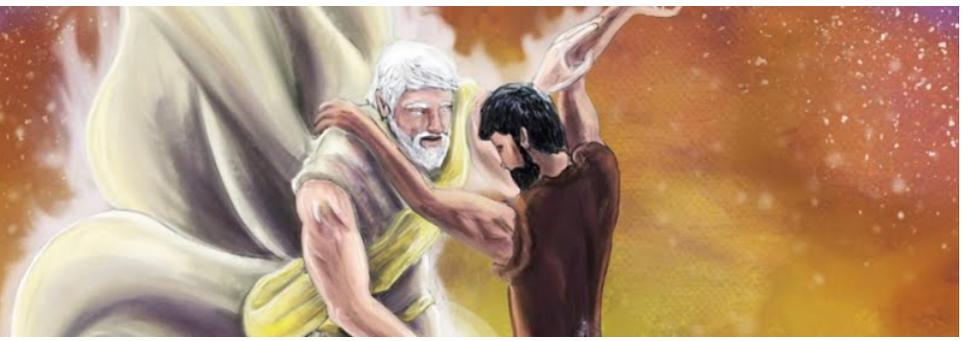


Chronicles of Courage

LESSON 5

Jacob Wrestles with God

GENESIS 32



1. Jacob's journey home

▼ He was headed home from Haran

Genesis 28:10 Jacob left Beersheba and set out for Haran.

▼ He had labored long for Laban

Genesis 31:38 "I have been with you for twenty years now. Your sheep and goats have not miscarried, nor have I eaten rams from your flocks. 39 I did not bring you animals torn by wild beasts; I bore the loss myself. And you demanded payment from me for whatever was stolen by day or night. 40 This was my situation: The heat consumed me in the daytime and the cold at night, and sleep fled from my eyes. 41 It was like this for the twenty years I was in your household. I worked for you fourteen years for your two daughters and six years for your flocks, and you changed my wages ten times.

▼ He was going at the guidance of God

Genesis 31:3 The LORD said to Jacob, "Go back to the land of your fathers and to your relatives, and I will be with you."

▼ He had a full family and a fortune in flocks

Genesis 30:43 In this way the man grew exceedingly prosperous and came to own large flocks, and maidservants and menservants, and camels and donkeys. — 31:17 Then Jacob put his children and his wives on camels, 18 and he drove all his livestock ahead of him, along with all the goods he had accumulated in Paddan Aram, to go to his father Isaac in the land of Canaan. — 32:22 ...his two wives, his two maidservants and his eleven sons...

▼ He was accompanied by an army of angels

Genesis 32:1 Jacob also went on his way, and the angels of God met him. 2 When Jacob saw them, he said, "This is the camp of God!" So he named that place Mahanaim.

2. Jacob's junky history

▼ He had bamboozled the birthright and the blessing from his brother

Twenty years earlier, Jacob had a falling out with his twin brother Esau over the swindled birthright (Genesis 25) and the stolen blessing (Genesis 27).

Genesis 27:41 So Esau hated Jacob because of the blessing with which his father blessed him, and Esau said in his heart, "The days of mourning for my father are at hand; then I will kill my brother Jacob."

▼ He feared a family feud

Genesis 32:3 Jacob sent messengers ahead of him to his brother Esau in the land of Seir, the country of Edom. 4 He instructed them: "This is what you are to say to my master Esau: 'Your servant Jacob says, I have been staying with Laban and have remained there till now. 5 I have cattle and donkeys, sheep and goats, menservants and maidservants. Now I am sending this message to my lord, that I may find favor in your eyes.'" 6 When the messengers returned to Jacob, they said, "We went to your brother Esau, and now he is coming to meet you, and four hundred men are with him." 7 In great fear and distress Jacob divided the people who were with him into two groups, and the flocks and herds and camels as well. 8 He thought, "If Esau comes and attacks one group, the group that is left may escape."

▼ He prayed passionately for protection

Genesis 32:9 Then Jacob prayed, "O God of my father Abraham, God of my father Isaac, O LORD, who said to me, 'Go back to your country and your relatives, and I will make you prosper,' 10 I am unworthy of all the kindness and faithfulness you have shown your servant. I had only my staff when I crossed this Jordan, but now I have become two groups. 11 Save me, I pray, from the hand of my brother Esau, for I am afraid he will come and attack me, and also the mothers with their children. 12 But you have said, 'I will surely make you prosper and will make your descendants like the sand of the sea, which cannot be counted.'"

▼ He sent the servants with some stuff to soothe his sibling

Genesis 32:13 He spent the night there, and from what he had with him he selected a gift for his brother Esau: 14 two hundred female goats and twenty male goats, two hundred ewes and twenty rams, 15 thirty female camels with their young, forty cows and ten bulls, and twenty female donkeys and ten male donkeys. 16 He put them in the care of his servants, each herd by itself, and said to his servants, "Go ahead of me, and keep some space between the herds." 17 He instructed the one in the lead: "When my brother Esau meets you and asks, 'To whom do you belong, and where are you going, and who owns all these animals in front of you?' 18 then you are to say, 'They belong to your servant Jacob. They are a gift sent to my lord Esau, and he is coming behind us.'" 19 He also instructed the second, the third and all the others who followed the herds: "You are to say the same thing to Esau when you meet him. 20 And be sure to say, 'Your servant Jacob is coming behind us.'" For he thought, "I will pacify him with these gifts I am sending on ahead; later, when I see him, perhaps he will receive me."

▼ He camped by the creek after his crew had crossed

Genesis 32:21 So Jacob's gifts went on ahead of him, but he himself spent the night in the camp. 22 That night Jacob got up and took his two wives, his two maidservants and his eleven sons and crossed the ford of the Jabbok. 23 After he had sent them across the stream, he sent over all his possessions.

3. Jacob's judo-jiu-jitsu hold

▼ He struggled with a spiritual stranger

Genesis 32:24 So Jacob was left alone, and a man wrestled with him till daybreak. 25 When the man saw that he could not overpower him, he touched the socket of Jacob's hip so that his hip was wrenched as he wrestled with the man.

▼ He fought fervently for favor

Genesis 32:26 Then the man said, "Let me go, for it is daybreak." But Jacob replied, "I will not let you go unless you bless me."

▼ He received a revolutionary renaming

Genesis 32:27 The man asked him, "What is your name?" "Jacob," he answered. 28 Then the man said, "Your name will no longer be Jacob, but Israel, because you have struggled with God and with men and have overcome." 29 Jacob said, "Please tell me your name." But he replied, "Why do you ask my name?" Then he blessed him there.

▼ He had literally looked at the LORD

Genesis 32:30 So Jacob called the place Peniel, saying, "It is because I saw God face to face, and yet my life was spared."

JACOB = *deceiver*
ISRAEL = *struggled with God*
PENIEL = *face of God*

4. Jacob's jammed hip

▼ Darkness dissipated as the day dawned

Genesis 32:31 The sun rose above him as he passed Peniel, and he was limping because of his hip. 32 Therefore to this day the Israelites do not eat the tendon attached to the socket of the hip, because the socket of Jacob's hip was touched near the tendon.

▼ Favor and forgiveness followed as he faced the future in faith

Genesis 33:1 Jacob looked up and there was Esau, coming with his four hundred men; so he divided the children among Leah, Rachel and the two maidservants. 2 He put the maidservants and their children in front, Leah and her children next, and Rachel and Joseph in the rear. 3 He himself went on ahead and bowed down to the ground seven times as he approached his brother. 4 But Esau ran to meet Jacob and embraced him; he threw his arms around his neck and kissed him. And they wept.

Tactical
Takeaways

1. When you're all alone, Christian, you're not alone; so get a grip on God, even in the darkest, most frightening nights!
2. God has already promised to bless you, Christian, so hold on in faith until the blessing makes itself known!
3. The blessing of God may change you more than it changes your situation, so hang on to God and let Him work!
4. It takes courage to repair damage done, but God can give you a new name and a new nature for moving forward!

Jacob's Timeline

- 77 years old – Jacob goes from Canaan to Haran (Genesis 28)
- 84 years old – Jacob marries Leah and Rachael (Genesis 29)
- 97 years old – Jacob returns from Haran to Canaan (Genesis 31-32-33)
- 108 years old – Joseph sold into slavery by his brothers (Genesis 37)
- 130 years old – Jacob goes to Egypt at Joseph's invitation (Genesis 46)
- 147 years old – Jacob dies in Egypt (Genesis 49)

350 miles
from Haran

