

Before the WWE

Genesis 32:1-32 | August 23, 2020

Context: Jacob has begun his journey home back to Canaan, and God surprised him again with another unexpected “meeting.”

W Wrestler #1: Jacob (1-21)

W Wrestler #2: God (22-26)

E End result: Transformation (27-32)

**God changes those He uses;
God uses those He changes.**

Self-sufficiency today?

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Discussion Questions:

1. How do you struggle with self-sufficiency the most?
2. Can you come up with other Biblical evidence that God works through human weakness?
3. Can you share ways that you have seen God work in you (or a biblical character) to drive out self-sufficiency?



Questions for Parents to use with their children:

- 1. Take a moment and have everyone share what their name means. If they do not know feel free to look it up on your phone.**
- 2. Have everyone answer this question: “If you could change your name, what would you change it to?”**
- 3. Last question: “If you were to wrestle God who would win?”**
- 4. Read Genesis 32:1-32 out loud together. Have someone share in brief the context of the story.**
Answer: Jacob is preparing to meet Esau (the brother from whom he stole his birthright) for the first time in 20 Years (v1-21). Before he does he has an encounter with what appears to be angels of God (v1-2) and a manifestation of God himself (22-32). God is getting ready to show Jacob that He is with him and will confirm that he has commanded Jacob to go back home. God blesses Jacob and gives evidence of this by changing his name.
- 5. Jacob has a run in with some angels in v1-2. He goes on to say “this is God’s camp!” What do you think this suggests? Also, Jacob names the place “Mahanaim” which means “two camps.” What do you think this means?**
Answer: Although we are not 100 percent sure, Jacob’s run in with the angels and his remark could suggest that God has sent the angels to protect and accompany him he travels back to Canaan where he will eventually meet his brother Esau.
Naming the camp Mahanaim. Jacob could be alluding to God’s camp that is now traveling with him and his own camp.
- 6. In verses 3-21, we see Jacob dividing the people who were traveling with him into two groups ultimately sending everything he owns ahead towards Esau. He also uses phrases like “your servant Jacob” and “my lord Esau.” Why does he do this?**
Answer: Jacob finds out that his brother Esau is coming towards him with 400 men. This often was a sign of war. Jacob was afraid of Esau because of the things he did to him when they were younger. Jacob, instead of trusting God, now devises a plan to split up into two groups so that the second one could get away. God is going to prove once again that he is with Jacob.
- 7. What do you find interesting about Jacob’s prayer in v9-12?**
Answer: Jacob was desperate. In his prayer he reminded God that He was the one who told him to go back. Jacob was being obedient to God.
- 8. Jacob has a wrestling match with God. Who wins? What do you find interesting about their wrestling match?**
Answer: God wins. Jacob hangs on and asks God to bless him. At any point God could have defeated Jacob. But instead he cripples him while simultaneously blessing him by changing his name and letting him live.
- 9. What is God ultimately doing in this story with Jacob?**
Answer: Shaping Jacob’s character.
- 10. How can we apply this story to our lives?**
Answer: God changed Jacob and promises to bless and use Jacob. God changes us and makes us more like Jesus in our character (Romans 8:29). This often results in God’s using us to make his name known.