

# SMALL GROUPS

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

### Spring Semester - Week 7

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*Remember, these questions are just tools for discussion. You don't need to 'get through them all'. Use the questions that are helpful, skip the ones that are not, and let the conversation flow naturally.*

#### OPTIONAL ICEBREAKER(S)

- a) Have you or someone you know ever run away from home? What was that experience like?
- b) Do you remember any of your dreams? Share a vivid one, or a recurring dream you remember well.

#### PASSAGE AND DISCUSSION

##### Read Genesis 28:10-22

- a) What stands out to you upon first reading this passage?
- b) What does the dream God gives Jacob announce about Himself? (Think of four points Cam named on Sunday.)
- c) Read **Psalm 145:17**. Walter Bruggemann says, "Heaven has to do with earth. And earth can now count on the resources of Heaven." Heaven interacts with earth at the command of a loving God. What does Jacob's dream tell us about the present reality of God?
- d) What does this 'ziggurat' (i.e. temple staircase) in Jacob's dream tell us about who initiates the relationship between God and man? Compare that with what was believed culturally at the time of the tower of Babel about this building's religious significance?
- e) Explain and discuss how this particular ziggurat / staircase is a picture of the Gospel.
- f) Read **v13**. What was the primary thing that God was revealing to Jacob through this encounter?
- g) Read **John 14:26** and **Luke 18:1**. What do these verses tell us about God's availability in our lives?
- h) When Jacob woke up from the dream, the passage tells us he was afraid and worshipped God. Have you ever experienced a powerful encounter with the Lord that left you in fear and wonder?
- i) God's promises are based on God's faithfulness, not our worthiness. How does this truth comfort your heart? What does it mean to you personally?

- j) Was Jacob worthy of God's calling? Why or why not? What does this tell us about Jacob? What does it tell us about God?
- k) Read **v15**, and **Isaiah 41:10**. To Jacob, God expands the promise first given to Abraham and commits to him His presence and protection. How does this promise impact you in what you're currently facing?
- l) Read **v20-22**. Jacob's vow is conditional which reveals his lack of trust in God ("If... then..."). Does this kind of reasoning with God sound familiar to you? What is flawed with this way of approaching God?
- m) Read **v13-15**. What is the nature of God's promises to Jacob, contrasted with the nature of Jacob's reasoning with God? ("Am" and "will")
- n) Read **John 1:51** and **2 Timothy 1:9-10**. "What was a vision for Jacob is salvation for us all." How does Jesus fulfil the vision of the staircase?

### **TAKE IT HOME (OPTIONAL IDEAS FOR RESPONSE THIS WEEK)**

- a) Take time to pray and reflect on the nature of your present relationship with God. Are your prayers and commitments conditional, or are you trusting in Him unconditionally and learning to rely on His faithfulness?
- b) Write down a few ways that you may be trying to build your way to God. Release those things to God, and ask Him to show you that He is the initiator of your relationship, and his presence is given unconditionally.

### **OPTIONAL IDEAS FOR PRAYER TIME**

- a) Take time to worship God as a group and name out the attributes of His praiseworthy character!
- b) Pray for those around the world affected by natural and manmade disasters at the moment.