

## **A Place to Find God (Genesis 28:10-17)**

**Intro:** Much of the narrative found in the book of Genesis centers on the story of Jacob and how God continued to work in his life even when he was not aware of it. His watershed moment happened at Peniel where God changed his name and thus identity to Israel (Gen. 32:28-30). When God seems hard to find:

1. Remember that God set a course for your life long ago.
  - a. It was always God's plan that Jacob would receive the blessings of the firstborn. "The older shall serve the younger" (Gen. 25:23).
  - b. "Even before He (God) made the world, God loved us and chose us in Christ to be holy and without fault in His eyes" (Eph. 1:4).
2. Don't let the past determine your future.
  - a. "Behold there were twins . . . the first . . . Esau. Afterward his brother came out with his hand holding Esau's heel" (Gen. 25:24-26).
  - b. The phrase "First will be last" is found 3 times in the Gospels – Mt. 20:16; Mk. 9:35; Lk. 13:30)
3. Resist taking matters into your own hands.
  - a. "Then let the curse fall on me, my son! Just do what I (Rebekah) tell you" (Gen. 27:13).
  - b. Abraham and Ishmael (Gen. 16:1-16)
  - c. King Saul (1 Sam. 13:1-15)
  - d. The disciples choosing Judas' replacement (Acts 1:20-26)
4. Know that there is a place where God can be found.
  - a. For Jacob, it was Bethel, which means "house of God" (Gen. 28:10-22; 35:9-15).
  - b. "Surely the Lord is in this place, and I did not know it" (Gen. 28:16).
  - c. Jesus went to the Mount of Transfiguration (Mt. 17:1-7).
  - d. Jesus invites us to a place of rest (Mt. 11:28-30).
5. Keep trusting even when things don't go as planned.
  - a. "I (Jacob) worked for seven years for Rachel! Why have you tricked me?" (Gen. 29:25).
  - b. "Yet your father (Laban) has cheated me and changed my wages ten times" (Gen. 31:7).
  - c. But God prospered Jacob despite these setbacks (Gen. 30:43).
6. Courageously face what comes your way seeking God for a redemptive outcome.
  - a. The night before meeting Esau for the first time after stealing the birthright, Jacob wrestled with God (Gen. 32:22-32).
  - b. The meeting with Esau? "But Esau ran to meet him and embraced him and fell on his neck and kissed him, and they wept" (Gen. 33:4).

7. Believe even when all hope is lost.
  - a. After returning to Canaan, Jacob's life returns to normal until his favored son Joseph is sold into slavery by his jealous brothers.
  - b. Yet, God had a redemptive plan and Jacob against all hope found Joseph alive! (Gen. 45:25-28).
  - c. You may have failed in the past, but God just may give you a chance to get it right!
  - d. When it came time to bless Joseph's sons, Jacob knew that it was God's will to bless the younger (Ephraim) over the older (Manasseh). Despite Joseph's efforts to correct it, Jacob simply crossed hands (Gen. 48:17-22) and fulfilled God's plan.

**Postscript:** Jesus raised the widow of Nain's son from the dead. Israel had not heard from God for 400 years, but this was a new day. "They (the disciples) realized they were in a place of holy mystery, that God was at work among them. They said, 'God is back, looking to the needs of His people'" (Lk. 7:16, MSG).

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