

## The Wrestling Match

### Why wrestle?

*Jacob has been a fighter all along. His brother, father, uncle, and now God. (vs. 28)*

*Is God applauding his sneaky, cheating victories?*

v. 26 – “I will not let you go until you have blessed me.”

God is rewarding his pursuit of the promised blessing.

### What is Jacob learning?

*When Jacob understands that God will fulfill the promise, he is free from the moral compromises he has made in order to try to take care of himself.*

## Trusting God in a New Way

### Two very different plans

Gen. 32:1-21 – Jacob crafts an elaborate plan to get into his brother’s good graces. Importantly, Jacob puts himself last and sends servants ahead because he is afraid how his brother will react.

Gen. 33:1-3 Jacob abandons his plan and arranges his children, and then walks headlong into his brother’s presence.

“If he has survived meeting God, he will survive his meeting with Esau.” – Gordon Wenham

### Old habits die hard

Even with everything that Jacob has learned, his first instinct is to go about his plan with Esau in his old way.

*Sin patterns in the family undone*

Abraham and Pharaoh (2x)

Isaac and Abimelek

Jacob and Esau, Isaac, Laban...

## Becoming a New Person

### The fighter’s last fight

*“Physical strength characterized Jacob’s life: at birth grasping the heel of Esau (25:26), moving the stone to water Rachel’s sheep (29:10), and working Laban’s herds for twenty years in difficult conditions (31:38–40).” – Kenneth Matthews*

*Jacob’s strength, his physical endurance, is turned to a permanent lifelong weakness. Jacob’s weakness, his questionable moral character, is turned to a permanent lifelong strength.*

*2 Cor 12:9 But he said to me, ‘My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.’*

## Getting a New Name – (the key to unlock your own spiritual journey)

### Why does God ask Jacob’s name?

“However, by divulging his name, he also discloses his character. It is here a confession of guilt... in uttering his name, Jacob admits he has cheated his brother; “Is he not rightly called Jacob, he has tricked me these two times?” (Genesis 27:36) – Gordon Wenham

### Meeting Jesus

## Questions for Personal Study

1. Do you trust in God’s protection, or do you bend the rules to get your own way?
2. Are there things that trigger old, sinful habits in you? How can you trust God in that place?
3. How has God made you operate in weakness, not in strength? Has he given you a limp?
4. Have you been baptized before? Do you want to be baptized as a sign of your new life in Christ?