

Running with the Giants
Jacob
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Hebrews 12:1 Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles, and let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us.

Key Thought: When your life isn't turning out the way you hoped... "Let God have control of your life."

Genesis 25:21-34 Isaac prayed to the Lord on behalf of his wife, because she was childless. The Lord answered his prayer, and his wife Rebekah became pregnant. **The babies jostled each other within her**, and she said, "Why is this happening to me?" So **she went to inquire of the Lord**. The Lord said to her, "Two nations are in your womb, and two peoples from within you will be separated; one people will be stronger than the other, and **the older will serve the younger**." When the time came for her to give birth, there were twin boys in her womb. The first to come out was red, and his whole body was **like a hairy garment**; so they named him Esau. After this, **his brother came out, with his hand grasping Esau's heel**; so he was named **Jacob**. Isaac was sixty years old when Rebekah gave birth to them. The **boys grew up**, and Esau became a skillful hunter, a man of the open country, while Jacob was content to stay at home among the tents. Isaac, who had a taste for wild game, loved Esau, but Rebekah loved Jacob. Once when Jacob was cooking some stew, Esau came in from the open country, famished. He said to Jacob, "Quick, let me have some of that red stew! I'm famished!" (That is why he was also called Edom. **Jacob replied, "First sell me your birthright."** "Look, I am about to die," Esau said. "What good is the birthright to me?" But Jacob said, "Swear to me first." So he swore an oath to him, selling his birthright to Jacob. Then Jacob gave Esau some bread and some lentil

stew. He ate and drank, and then got up and left. So Esau despised his birthright.

The process of learning to become dependent on God:

✓ Overcome me first.

Matthew 6:33 But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.

Matthew 19:30 But many who are first will be last, and many who are last will be first.

Luke 9:25 What good is it for someone to gain the whole world, and yet lose or forfeit their very self?

✓ God can't bless who we pretend to be.

Genesis 27:15-23 Then Rebekah took the best clothes of Esau her older son, which she had in the house, and put them on her younger son Jacob. She also covered his hands and the smooth part of his neck with the goatskins. Then she handed to her son Jacob the tasty food and the bread she had made. He went to his father and said, "My father." "Yes, my son," he answered. "Who is it?" Jacob said to his father, "I am Esau your firstborn. I have done as you told me. Please sit up and eat some of my game, so that you may give me your blessing." Isaac asked his son, "How did you find it so quickly, my son?" "The Lord your God gave me success," he replied. Then Isaac said to Jacob, "Come near so I can touch you, my son, to know whether you really are my son Esau or not." Jacob went close to his father Isaac, who touched him and said, "The voice is the voice of Jacob, but the hands are the hands of Esau." He did not recognize him, for his

hands were hairy like those of his brother Esau; so he proceeded to bless him.

- ✓ When we face God alone, we will finally find ourselves.

Genesis 32:24-30 So Jacob was left alone, and a man wrestled with him till daybreak ... The man asked him, "What is your name?" "Jacob," he answered... Then the man said, "Your name will no longer be Jacob, but Israel, because you have struggled with God and with humans and have overcome."... Then he blessed him there. So Jacob called the place Peniel, saying, "It is because I saw God face to face, and yet my life was spared."

Jacob's Words of Encouragement

1. Brokenness precedes breakthrough.

Psalms 51:17 The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart, O God, you will not despise.

1 Peter 5:5-6 "God opposes the proud but shows favor to the humble." Humble yourselves, therefore, under God's mighty hand, that he may lift you up in due time.

2. You must lose yourself to find yourself.

Mark 8:34 (MSG) Calling the crowd to join his disciples, he said, "Anyone who intends to come with me has to let me lead. You're not in the driver's seat; I am."

Mark 8:35 (NLT) If you try to hang on to your life, you will lose it. But if you give up your life for my sake and for the sake of the Good News, you will save it.

3. When you find yourself on God's terms, you find fulfillment.

John 15:8, 11 This is to my Father's glory, **that you bear much fruit**, showing yourselves to be my disciples. I have told you this so that my joy may be in you and that your joy **may be complete.**"

Walk Away: The strength of my life is not what I control; it is what I release to God.