

GOING DEEPER STUDY NOTES (June 11, 2023)

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There is heartache and pain in today's story from the book of Genesis. Our attention is now firmly focused on Jacob and his two wives (having two wives was not his idea). Jacob cheated his older brother Esau, lied to his father, and gained the blessing of the first-born son ... a blessing he had no right to. But what he stole did not bring him position, privilege, or power, instead it brought fear. Fear made him run for his life. His uncle Laban took him in. It didn't take long to discover that his uncle was a better liar and cheat than Jacob himself. Jacob became Laban's slave. The one bright light for Jacob was his love for his uncle's younger daughter Rachel.

Here's where the heartache comes in ... Laban promised his daughter Rachel to Jacob, but on the wedding night he sent his daughter Leah instead. Leah knew she was a substitute. She soon discovered that she was also unloved. That can mess a person up!

Every one of us wants to be loved. Even twisted souls, beaten and damaged lives, have a longing to be loved. But when who we are, and what we do, is not enough, what then? In this story God provides an answer for Leah and all of us. His answer is good, loving, enough.

Please Love Me (Genesis 29:21-30:24 Some verses omitted below)

^{29:21} Then Jacob said to Laban, 'Give me my wife that I may go in to her, for my time is completed.' ²² So Laban gathered together all the people of the place and made a feast. ²³ But in the evening, he took his daughter Leah and brought her to Jacob, and he went in to her. (Verse 19 omitted) ²⁵ And in the morning, behold, it was Leah! And Jacob said to Laban, 'What is this you have done to me? Did I not serve with you for Rachel? Why then have you deceived me?' ²⁶ Laban said, 'It is not so done in our country, to give the younger before the firstborn. ²⁷ Complete the week of this one, and we will give you the other also in return for serving me another seven years.' ²⁸ Jacob did so, and completed her week. Then Laban gave him his daughter Rachel to be his wife. (Verse 29 omitted) ³⁰ So Jacob went in to Rachel also, and he loved Rachel more than Leah, and served Laban for another seven years. ³¹ When the Lord saw that Leah was hated, he opened her womb, but Rachel was barren. ³² And Leah conceived and bore a son, and she called his name Reuben, for she said, 'Because the Lord has looked upon my affliction; for now, my husband will love me.' ³³ She conceived again and bore a son, and said, 'Because the Lord has heard that I am hated, he has given me this son also.' And she called his name Simeon. ³⁴ Again she conceived and bore a son, and said, 'Now this time my husband will be attached to me, because I have borne him three sons.' Therefore, his name was called Levi. ³⁵ And she conceived again and bore a son, and said, 'This time I will praise the Lord.'

Therefore, she called his name Judah. Then she ceased bearing. ^{30:1} When Rachel saw that she bore Jacob no children, she envied her sister. She said to Jacob, 'Give me children, or I shall die!' (Verses 2-13 omitted) ¹⁴ In the days of wheat harvest Reuben went and found mandrakes in the field and brought them to his mother Leah. Then Rachel said to Leah, 'Please give me some of your son's mandrakes.' ¹⁵ But she said to her, 'Is it a small matter that you have taken away my husband? Would you take away my son's mandrakes also?' Rachel said, 'Then he may lie with you tonight in exchange for your son's mandrakes.' ¹⁶ When Jacob came from the field in the evening, Leah went out to meet him and said, 'You must come in to me, for I have hired you with my son's mandrakes.' So, he lay with her that night. ¹⁷ And God listened to Leah, and she conceived and bore Jacob a fifth son. (Verse 18 omitted) ¹⁹ And Leah conceived again, and she bore Jacob a sixth son. ²⁰ Then Leah said, 'God has endowed me with a good endowment; now my husband will honor me, because I have borne him six sons.' So, she called his name Zebulun. ²¹ Afterward she bore a daughter and called her name Dinah. ²² Then God remembered Rachel, and God listened to her and opened her womb. ²³ She conceived and bore a son and said, 'God has taken away my reproach.' ²⁴ And she called his name Joseph, saying, 'May the Lord add to me another son!'"

WHAT DOES IT SAY?

1. What does this passage tell us about Jacob and Laban?
2. What does this passage tell us about Leah and Rachel?

WHAT DOES IT MEAN?

3. How could Jacob mistake Leah for Rachel? Discuss.
4. What does "when the Lord saw that Leah was hated, he opened her womb" (verse 31) mean?

WHAT IS GOD SAYING TO YOU?

5. Discuss a time you were taken advantage of by someone. How did you feel when you discovered their deception?
6. Talk about a job you've had where time went by quickly.
7. How do you define the word, "Love"? Define "Christian love."
8. Have you ever come across a person whose love for you was pure, unselfish, unconditional? Discuss. Do you feel loved? How would you describe God's love for you?

As you spend time praying remember that prayer is meant to be the most natural part of your day. Prayer is a conversation: talking to God and listening to God. The Bible is one of the primary ways God speaks to us. Ask God to help you read, understand, and apply the Bible. Ask God to help you hear Him whenever He speaks to you. Remember that His love is absolute, and that He loves you.