

## SESSION 3

# DYSFUNCTION



### **READ**

**Genesis 32:20-33:4**

Besides being one of the patriarchs of the Israel nation, Jacob is most known for his dysfunctional tendencies. His family's dysfunction is evident from Jacob's birth – we need not look further than his parents' favoritism and power plays (Genesis 25:21-28; 27:5-13). It comes as no surprise to us, then, that Jacob's life is riddled with similar patterns of behavior. His reckless behavior is epitomized by the fact that he wrestles with a complete stranger in the middle of the night (Genesis 32:22-32). Yet, it is through this divine encounter Jacob finally resolves to confront his past and own his mistakes. As a result of this wrestling match with God, Jacob breaks free from his past.

One of the assessment pieces from the emotional health inventory involves breaking free from the "power of the past" (Principle 2). Understanding our family dynamics can help us develop spiritually. Many times, we can be completely unaware of the dysfunctional patterns of behavior that have become ingrained in us since we were young. And as a result, it's important for us to assess the values, habits, sins, and tensions that have been passed down to us through our families.

This week, take turns describing your home life with a trusted individual. As much as you are comfortable, share a brief sketch of your family. What were your parents or primary caregivers like? What did their relationship with each other model to you? How did you relate with your siblings or other people who lived with you? What was the underlying emotional tone?



### **PRAY**

After you have both shared, say a prayer for each other. Thank God for the blessings and pray for the wisdom to let any residual hurt go. Pray God would help you break free from any family cycles that rule your thoughts and practices.