

## **Why Do We Fight With God?**

**Series: Understanding God Helps You To Understand You.**

**Have you wrestled with God?**

**God always wins, so why do we keep fighting?**

**What Does The Bible Say?**

**The story of Jacob, the man who wrestled with God.**

21 Isaac pleaded with the Lord on behalf of his wife, because she was unable to have children. The Lord answered Isaac's prayer, and Rebekah became pregnant with twins. 22 But the two children struggled with each other in her womb. So she went to ask the Lord about it. "Why is this happening to me?" she asked. 23 And the Lord told her, "The sons in your womb will become two nations. From the very beginning, the two nations will be rivals. One nation will be stronger than the other; and your older son will serve your younger son." (Genesis 25:21–23 NLT)

27 As the boys grew up, Esau became a skillful hunter. He was an outdoorsman, but Jacob had a quiet temperament, preferring to stay at home. 28 Isaac loved Esau because he enjoyed eating the wild game Esau brought home, but Rebekah loved Jacob.

(Genesis 25:27–28 NLT)

41 From that time on, Esau hated Jacob because their father had given Jacob the blessing. And Esau began to scheme: “I will soon be mourning my father’s death. Then I will kill my brother, Jacob.” (Genesis 27:41 NLT)

24 This left Jacob all alone in the camp, and a man came and wrestled with him until the dawn began to break. (Genesis 32:24 NLT)

25 When the man saw that he would not win the match, he touched Jacob’s hip and wrenched it out of its socket. 26 Then the man said, “Let me go, for the dawn is breaking!” 31 The sun

was rising as Jacob left Peniel, and he was limping because of the injury to his hip. (Genesis 32:25–26; 31 NLT)

**When we wrestle with God, there are usually scars we carry the rest of our lives.**

**We fight with God because we think we know better than God.**

**Jacob finally got that he needed God's blessing in his life. We can scheme our path or have true peace and let God control our lives.**

**How Can You Obey**

**Change your perspective to understand God's ultimate plan.**

**God's ultimate plan:**

**The main focus of God's plan is God, not us.**

**To develop people who will serve and worship Him for His glory.**

**To completely dismantle our way of looking at reality and reassemble it.**

**To eliminate sin from the world.**

24 On the way to Egypt, at a place where Moses and his family had stopped for the night, the Lord confronted him and was about to kill him. 25 But Moses' wife, Zipporah, took a flint knife and circumcised her son. She touched his feet with the foreskin and said, "Now you are a bridegroom of blood to me."

26 (When she said "a bridegroom of blood," she was referring to the circumcision.) After that, the Lord left him alone. (Exodus 4:24–26 NLT)

**God does not need us to do His will, and If we are not careful, He will use someone else.**

## **Are you wrestling with God or submitting to God?**

### **Additional Notes:**

If you would like to use your home to disciple others, check out our training at [www.crosswaveschurch.com/host](http://www.crosswaveschurch.com/host). Cross Waves has produced short videos to train you how to use your home to reach others for Christ. So please check it out.

### **Notes:**

This series is originated from the book, Thurman, C. (2017). The Lies We Believe About God: Knowing God For Who He Really Is. Colorado Springs, CO: David C Cook.

### **Notes:**

The Insights to The Biblical World originated from the book, Michael S. Heiser, Brief Insights On Mastering The Bible: 80 Expert Insights On The Bible, Explained In A Single Minute.

## **Explore:**

Isaac and Rebekah waited twenty years for a family, but no children came. The entire Book of Genesis emphasizes the sovereignty of God and the wisdom of His “delays.” Abraham and Sarah had to wait twenty-five years for Isaac to be born; Jacob had to labor fourteen years to obtain his two wives; and Joseph had to wait over twenty years before he was reconciled to his brothers. Our times are in His hands (Ps. 31:15), and His timing is never wrong.

Like Abraham, Isaac was a man of prayer; so he interceded with the Lord on behalf of his barren wife. Isaac had every right to ask God for children because of the covenant promises the Lord had made to his father and mother, promises Isaac had heard repeated in the family circle and that he believed. If Rebekah remained barren, how could Abraham’s seed multiply as the dust of the earth and the stars of the heavens? How could Abraham’s

seed become a blessing to the whole world? (Gen. 12:1–3; 13:16; 15:5; 17:6)

It has well been said that the purpose of prayer is not to get our will done in heaven but to get God's will done on earth. Even though every Jewish couple wanted children, Isaac wasn't praying selfishly. He was concerned about God's plan for fulfilling His covenant and blessing the whole world through the promised Messiah (3:15; 12:1–3). True prayer means being concerned about God's will, not our own wants, and claiming God's promises in the Word. The Lord answered Isaac's prayer and enabled Rebekah to conceive.

Warren W. Wiersbe, *Be Authentic*, "Be" Commentary Series (Colorado Springs, CO: Chariot Victor Pub., 1997), 12–13.

**Explore:**

When Isaac is old and blind, the time comes for him to bless his successor (27:1–40). He sends Esau to catch something tasty for a meal. After he has eaten, he will give him the special blessing which passes the promises of God from father to first-born son.

Rebekah has other ideas. While Esau is away, she dresses Jacob in Esau's clothes, disguises his arms and neck with goatskin, and sends him to Isaac with a tasty dish. Isaac is suspicious, but accepts the food and drink. By the time Esau returns, Jacob has received the blessing.

The blessing is unique and non-transferable. There is no question of Isaac taking it back. All he can promise Esau is a life of conflict and discontent. Esau resolves to murder Jacob as soon as he gets the chance.

Andrew Knowles, *The Bible Guide*, 1st Augsburg books ed. (Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg, 2001), 34–35.

## **Explore:**

As Isaac lifted his hands from Esau's head and Esau understood that the blessing that his father had just bestowed on him was, in effect, an anti-blessing because Jacob had stolen his blessing, a murderous hatred gripped Esau's soul. And he began to bide his time until his father's death when he would have the pleasure of killing his thieving brother with his own hands. His hatred was so deep that the thought of killing Jacob brought him comfort. How do I hate thee? Let me count the ways.

Esau was not a man who cared to keep his thoughts private, and his mother Rebekah was not one to miss much of anything. She did not doubt for a moment Esau's homicidal intent. So Rebekah took charge, commanding Jacob to flee to her brother Laban until Esau's fury cooled down and he forgot what Jacob had done to him. How would she ever get Isaac to agree to this?

Easy, if you are as subtle as Rebekah. It was a bitter fact that Esau's two Hittite wives had made life miserable for Isaac and her (cf. 26:34, 35). So she suggested the possibility of new miseries for her and Isaac if Jacob followed Esau's example.

“Then Rebekah said to Isaac, ‘I loathe my life because of the Hittite women. If Jacob marries one of the Hittite women like these, one of the women of the land, what good will my life be to me?’ ” (27:46). Her suggestion so unnerved Isaac that he immediately grasped the logical alternative, imagining that it was his own idea, just as she knew he would.

Jacob was summoned and was commanded not to marry a Canaanite (i.e., Hittite) wife. He was instead told to tread the long journey to Paddan-aram and there marry a cousin from among the daughters of Rebekah's brother Laban. Isaac coupled this command with an extraordinary blessing—extraordinary because it represented a willing reversal of his pro-Esau attitude, now recognizing Jacob as the true heir of the Abrahamic

covenant. In fact, the opening invocation of the blessing—“God Almighty [El Shaddai] bless you” (28:3)—bears the divine name first introduced in 17:1 when the covenant of circumcision was given to Abraham. And the language of the blessing here is covenantal in phraseology and scope: “God Almighty bless you and make you fruitful and multiply you, that you may become a company of peoples. May he give the blessing of Abraham to you and to your offspring with you, that you may take possession of the land of your sojournings that God gave to Abraham!” (vv. 3, 4). Isaac’s blessing recognized Jacob as the third patriarch.

All hopes of Esau’s elevation were now out of the picture.

Parenthetically, the account tells us that Esau saw all of this (perhaps he had been watching in unseen malevolence) and that when Esau perceived that his Hittite wives were displeasing to his father, he too decided to marry a cousin, a daughter of Isaac’s half-brother Ishmael. Unspiritual, immoral Esau was

slow to connect the dots. Esau was so clueless that he thought imitating Jacob's marriage might curry his father's blessing.

Instead it demonstrated that he had no idea at all as to what God was about. An Ishmaelite wife (the daughter of Abraham's cast-out son) was not the way back to blessing! Kidner rightly comments, "Like most religious efforts of the natural man, [this was] superficial and ill-judged."

Here we must remember that while it is true that neither Jacob nor Esau had acted well anywhere in the narrative, there was a polar difference between the two. Esau had only a surface interest in the promise and was faithless. But Jacob believed in God's word and treasured the promise. Yet his faith was incomplete, because he did not believe that the promise would be his apart from his own self-directed actions. As a result, the next twenty years were going to be necessarily hard on him.

R. Kent Hughes, *Genesis: Beginning and Blessing, Preaching the Word* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2004), 357–358.

**Explore:**

28:1–5. Again Isaac blessed Jacob and told him, Do not marry a Canaanite woman. The Canaanitish people were a mixed breed—they incorporated dozens of groups and clans into their society by treaties and marriages. The family of Abraham would resist such mixing (cf. Abraham’s refusal to give Isaac a Canaanite wife, 24:3). The reason for marrying within the clan was a desire for maintaining purity of the line and being loyal to one’s family. The surest way to lose tribal distinction was to intermarry with people of mixed elements. Moses’ telling the Israelites again and again that their ancestors resisted marriage to the Canaanites certainly sounded a note of warning. To marry Canaanites would destroy the purity of the line, to be sure, but

more importantly it would destroy the purity of the Israelites' faith.

Before Jacob departed, Isaac gave him the pure and legitimate blessing. There was no holding back now; Isaac V 1, p 74 specifically passed on to Jacob the blessing God had given both Abraham and Isaac. Isaac reiterated the blessing from God Almighty ('ēl šadday; see comments on 17:1) pertaining to prosperity and the land (28:3–4; cf. 15:5, 18–20), and urged his son to go to Paddan Aram. Those inheriting the blessings of the Abrahamic Covenant were not to endanger those blessings by intermarriage with Canaanites. Spiritual purity should be maintained in all generations.

28:6–9. In a contrasting anticlimax Esau, trying to please his father, married a descendant of Abraham through Ishmael.

Mahalath, a daughter of Ishmael, was thus a cousin of Esau.

Ironically the unchosen son of Isaac married into the unchosen

line of Ishmael! So Esau tried to better his marital reputation by marrying a third wife (cf. 26:34). Esau had no understanding of the Abrahamic Covenant and its purity. He was still living on the human level.

Allen P. Ross, "Genesis," in *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures*, ed. J. F. Walvoord and R. B. Zuck, vol. 1 (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1985), 73–74.

### **Question 1 of 5**

What do we do when something taught in the Bible comes into direct conflict with a deeply-held cultural value? For example, what do we do with the Bible's teaching that sex outside of marriage is wrong, and yet our culture embraces the value of sexual freedom and casual sex?

### **Question 2 of 5**

Why can Christianity prosper within any culture or government?

**Question 3 of 5**

Talk about ways you have “spiritual oppositional defiant disorder” in that you fight with God rather than cooperate with Him in His efforts to help you grow and change?

**Question 4 of 5**

When you have resisted God’s efforts to help you mature, how did things turn out?

**Question 5 of 5**

Why is it smart to follow God completely in all areas of life?