

CONNECTED

with Pastor Jacquie

In The Beginning Genesis: Lesson Seventeen

Sunday School

October 19, 2025

Can we like Jacob or Rebekah manipulate God's blessings in our life?

All four of them – Isaac, Rebekah, Jacob, and Esau schemed and plotted against each other and against God. In this tragic story, everyone lost. The tragedy was that each of the participants suffered because they insisted on working against God's word and wisdom. If Jacob waited on the Lord as he should have, God would still have given him these things and maybe much better.

Later in Jacob's life, he receives another blessing, but this one came straight from God. (Genesis 32:28). He went from a manipulator to an overcomer.

Beyond the fact that unethical methods are wrong in themselves, they also may reveal the fundamental fears of those who employ them. Jacob's relentless drive to gain benefits for himself reveals how his fears made him resistant to God's transforming grace. To the extent we come to believe in God's promises, we will be less inclined toward manipulating circumstances to benefit ourselves; we always need to be aware of how readily we can fool even ourselves about the purity of our motives.

The root reason people practice deceit to achieve their desired ends is that they have a reliance on self instead of on God. To some people, God is like a genie. We ignore him most of the time, keeping him in a bottle in the back of our closet or drawer. But when we need something, we pull him out and ask him to help us. Or to some people, God is like a parent that we can bargain with. Others try to bargain with God by making foolish oaths without thinking about what they're really saying. Too often, people come before God, but instead of coming to listen to God and seek his will, they try to manipulate him.

Some people try to do that with long prayers, thinking that it will impress God and get him to do things for us. Religion teaches us to approach God based on formulas: “If you do this, God will do this.” But a relationship with God is faith in a person—an almighty, all-knowing, infinitely caring person. When you trust a person, that can never be reduced to a mechanical formula. No man or process can manipulate God because God is not a machine, force, law, or man. He is God and cannot be manipulated by anyone. Instead, we must seek to do His will and enjoy His grace.

APPLICATION QUESTION:

Ask yourself, how do you come before God? Do you come with many words, talking about your plans, your dreams, and your desires? Do you come before God with your complaints about your life and how unfair it is, and ask why he doesn’t do this or that? Quit trying to manipulate God into acting how you think he should; start trusting him to act how he knows is best.

QUOTE:

When we seek our own way, we never get what we wanted and we pay a high price. *Steven Cole*

PRAYER:

Lord, I pray that I will not be like Jacob or Rebekah, or Isaac, thinking that I can somehow manipulate Your blessings in my life. But help me to build my trust in You and leave it all up to You. Amen

Read Genesis Chapter 27