

# **THE BEGINNING**

## **THE STORY OF JACOB [GENESIS 32]**

Time and time again in the Genesis story, we have seen the primary individuals in the story choose their own way over God's way...

- Adam and Eve chose to eat the fruit from the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil.
- Cain chose to murder his brother and pretend he didn't know anything about it.
- The corrupt people chose to build the Tower of Babel to make a name for themselves rather than trust God.
- Abraham chose to have relations with a servant woman because he didn't trust God's promise.
- Isaac preferred Esau over Jacob, the son through whom God had chosen to continue the promised blessing He had given to Abraham.

While the theme of choosing man's way over God's way is a consistent theme in the book of Genesis, the story of Jacob exaggerates this reality to a whole new level. In short, Jacob spends a great deal of time, energy, and effort trying to lie, steal, and deceive his way into receiving the blessing that God had already promised. Even as a baby, Jacob was wrestling with his brother, Esau in the womb...he even was born grabbing Esau's heel!

One of the ways the Bible describes Jacob's actions is through the word, "wrestling." In fact, when God changes Jacob's name to Israel, the new name itself means, "those who wrestle/struggle with God."

There is however, a difference between wrestling AGAINST God, wrestling WITH God, and wrestling FOR God. All of us who are in relationship with God, like Jacob, will wrestle. There is no question there. The question is: Will we wrestle AGAINST God? WITH God? Or FOR God?

### Discussions Questions:

1. As a group, spend 5-10 minutes retelling the story of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob – up to the point of this week's passage in Genesis 32. This will help set the stage for conversation.
2. In your own words, explain the differences between wrestling AGAINST God, WITH God, and FOR God. Which best describes where you're at right now? Why?
3. Why do you believe Jacob felt the need to work so diligently to steal what was already promised to Him? In what ways do we see similar themes in our lives today?
4. Discuss some of the strange components of Jacob wrestling with God...Was the man really God? Was it an angel? Why did they wrestle for so long? Did the man "touch" Jacob or "strike" him? Why did Jacob get hurt?
5. What is the significance of the meaning of the name, Israel? Does it have any significance on our lives today?
6. Share any other thoughts/comments from the passage.