

GROWING IN FAITH



So Jacob was left alone, and a man wrestled with him till daybreak. When the man saw that he could not overpower him, he touched the socket of Jacob's hip so that his hip was wrenched as he wrestled with the man. Then the man said, "Let me go, for it is daybreak." But Jacob replied, "I will not let you go unless you bless me." The man asked him, "What is your name?" "Jacob," he answered. Then the man said, "Your name will no longer be Jacob, but Israel,^[1] because you have struggled with God and with humans and have overcome." Jacob said, "Please tell me your name." But he replied, "Why do you ask my name?" Then he blessed him there. So Jacob called the place Peniel,^[2] saying, "It is because I saw God face to face, and yet my life was spared."

Genesis 32:24-30

GOING DEEPER

After wrestling with God Jacob finds he is a changed man.

What signs do you see that Jacob has grown in the last 20 years? As you look back at your life what indicators are there that God has been at work in your life?

Jacob is a person of great faith and yet he is filled with fear as he prepares to meet his brother, Esau after all these years.

Does fear show a lack of faith? When you feel fear what is it in your relationship with God that calms your fears?

Jacob wrestles with God until dawn and finally receives a blessing.

Have you ever wrestled with God? If so, what led you to wrestle with God? What was the outcome and what marks of the struggle do you still carry with you?

Reconciliation is a major theme of this last lesson in which Jacob is finally reunited with his brother, Esau.

What spiritual and emotional choices does it take to keep the past from blighting the present?