

Jacob Wrestles

Unit 1: God Creates Family

LAST WEEK

God promises that the elderly Sarah and Abraham will have a son to which Sarah laughs in disbelief. God's promise comes true, and with joyous laughter they name their child Isaac (Genesis 18:1-15; 21:1-7).

THIS WEEK

Isaac grows up and has two sons, Jacob and Esau. Jacob deceives Esau and runs away in fear. Years later, as he is returning, he encounters and wrestles with an unknown stranger. He prevails and gains God's blessing, being renamed Israel (Genesis 32:[9-13] 22-30).

Story Summary

While traveling with his family, Jacob meets a stranger who wrestles with him through the night. The stranger strikes Jacob's hip and it is dislocated. However, Jacob does not stop fighting. Come dawn, Jacob is asked by the stranger to stop wrestling. Jacob refuses to stop unless he receives a blessing. The stranger proceeds to reveal themself as God and changes Jacob's name to Israel, or "one who prevails with God," because Jacob wrestled with God and prevailed. This blessing changes Jacob.

Practice: Prayer

Prayer is an honest conversation with God. What is bothering you? What is hard for you to accept or understand about God? What is frustrating you? Talk it out to God without holding back. Let God know your concerns, your emotions, and your frustrations.

The Point

God changes us.

Bible Nuts & Bolts:
Israel's Origin Stories

The Book of Genesis is the first book of the Bible. The word "Genesis" means "beginning," and indeed, Genesis is a book of beginnings. It is the origin story for the people of Israel, from creation to God choosing Abraham and his family to their move to Egypt. It introduces many important stories, characters, and themes that recur throughout the rest of Scripture. Origin stories give people a sense of understanding about where they come from and why things are they way they are. Genesis is the beginning or the origin of the biblical story.

NEXT WEEK

Approximately 400 years later, the descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob—the Israelites—are enslaved in Egypt. God comes to Moses in the form of a Burning Bush and sends Moses to deliver God's people from slavery (Exodus 1:8-14 [1:15–2:10]; 3:1-15).

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Going Deeper

As you hear and study these stories each week, consider what God has to say to you and your family. What is God's message to us? Consider the following basic pattern as a way of forming family devotions:

- ✞ Light a candle to help you focus this time as "God time." Pray a simple prayer together.
- ✞ Take a moment to check in with each other; what are each person's "highs" and "lows" today?
- ✞ Read aloud from the Daily Bible Readings from below. Discuss the questions following each.
- ✞ End with a blessing, by simply tracing a cross on each other's forehead. The Lord's Prayer is a good way to end your devotion time. If you used a candle, extinguish it as a sign of the end of the devotions.

Note: *This is only a suggested pattern. It will vary with your household's context and patterns. What works best for you? First thing in the morning? Over breakfast? Bed time? Be creative and flexible with how you practice and keep your devotions!*

Daily Bible Readings

Sunday –

Read Genesis 32:[9-13] 22-30

Jacob wrestles all night.

- What was Jacob dealing with in his mind and heart before the wrestling match?
- How did the wrestling match prepare Jacob for meeting Esau?

Monday – Read Genesis 33:1-11

Jacob and Esau reconcile after years of separation.

- When have you been surprised by the way someone received you?
- How does Esau's attitude toward Jacob help you in dealing with those who have offended you?

Tuesday – Read Genesis 41:1-24

Pharaoh needs someone to interpret his dream.

- Who gave Joseph the ability to interpret Pharaoh's dreams?
- In what circumstance do you need God's strength or direction?

Wednesday – Read Genesis 41:25-36

Joseph comes to Pharaoh's rescue.

- Joseph was sold, falsely accused, and spent time in prison. In what ways did God change his life through these challenges?
- Who do you turn to for spiritual advice?

Thursday – Read Genesis 41:37-45

Joseph is exalted.

- What difficult situation have you felt will never get better?
- In what ways does Joseph's experience give you hope for what you are going through?

Friday – Read Exodus 1:8-14

The Israelites are captured and enslaved in Egypt.

- What modern day oppression or slavery are you aware of?
- How can you show love to those who are oppressed?

Saturday – Read Exodus 1:15–2:10

A few determined women make a decision that changes history.

- Why did the women take the risk they did with Moses' and their own lives?
- When is it wise to take or not take a risk?

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