

**OT Narratives Bible Study Series**  
**Genesis 25-35 - Jacob**

**For Discussion:**

-Have you ever had to "learn something the hard way"? Have there been times of hardship in your life that have helped shape you into the person you are today? Looking back, how do you see God working in your life through those times? Did you feel the same way as you were going through the hardships?

**Read Genesis 25:19-34 and 27:1 - 28:22**

-What kind of man was Jacob?

-What was the significance of Esau's "birthright", and why does Scripture condemn him for selling it? (cf. Hebrews 12:16-17)

**Read Genesis 29:1 - 31:21; 32:1 - 33:20; and 35:9-15**

-What do you think God was up to in the life of Jacob (and his family) in the years he was with his uncle Laban?

-In what ways has Jacob changed as he returns home after his time with Laban? In what ways hasn't he changed?

-What was going on in the episode when Jacob wrestled 'a man' through the night (32:22-32; cf. Hosea 12:3-5)? In what sense did Jacob (now renamed Israel) strive with God and prevail (32:28)?

-What do we learn about God through his dealings with Jacob and Esau? (time permitting, you might also consider Romans 9:6-13)

-What encouragements - and warnings - can we take away from the account of Jacob & Esau in these chapters?

### **For further reflection**

In the life of Jacob, we see the interplay between divine sovereignty and human responsibility. Although he had already been chosen by God from the womb (25:21-23), Jacob sought to advance his own interests through deceit and cunning. In so doing, he reaped the consequences of his actions, being forced to flee to his uncle Laban, where he was himself deceived into marrying Leah, resulting in 7 extra years of hard labor and a home life filled with bitterness and strife. Through it all, however, God was faithful to His covenant with Abraham and Isaac, appearing to Jacob at Bethel and to promising to watch over him and to bring him back to the land that he and his descendants would inherit (28:13-15). In His sovereignty, God allowed Jacob to reap what he had sown, using Laban's schemes to discipline and shape him. At the same time, however, God used these same difficult circumstances to bring about fulfillment of His promise to make Jacob's descendants "like the dust of the earth" (28:14), and to give birth to the nation of Israel. He also placed limits on how far Laban could go, enabling Jacob ultimately to prosper in spite of Laban's efforts to the contrary (31:11-12). For his part, Jacob continued to struggle "with God and with men" (32:28), until God completely broke him, so that he could do nothing more but cling to God and, weeping, beg for His favor (Hosea 12:4). In his brokenness, Jacob clung tenaciously to God as his only hope and prevailed, receiving God's blessing and a new identity.

God's dealings with Jacob serve both as a warning and an encouragement to us today. When we face God's discipline in our lives, we should not grow impatient nor lose heart, but rather cling to Him, submitting ourselves to Him and to His shaping work in our lives, because we know that He disciplines those He loves, and that His discipline ultimately yields a harvest of righteousness and peace for those who have been trained by it (Heb. 12:5-11).

### **Additional Resources**

CGYG/LIFE website: [www.cgygfellowship.com](http://www.cgygfellowship.com) (Resources section)

- Genesis Bible study series: [http://www.cgygfellowship.com/BBS\\_Genesis.shtml](http://www.cgygfellowship.com/BBS_Genesis.shtml)
- OT Daily Devotional series

CGC website: OT Survey and Genesis adult Christian education materials: <http://www.cgctorenglish.chinesegospelchurch.ca> (Resources section)