

## Wrestling with God

### Word

#### Scripture Reference

Genesis 32:22-32

#### Discussion Questions

1. What kind of problem bothers you the most?
2. It is a reality that although we pray that God would bless us with a life that runs smoothly, there are “screws” on the road that would damage us, slow us down, and prevent us from accomplishing what God wants us to do. These “screws” could be in the form of our past, present, and future. Discuss how your past affects your present life. Do you remember a time in your life when you felt deflated? What are you most unsure about the future?
3. Read Genesis 32:22-32. Jacob was deflated, stressed, and scared because he would be facing his brother Esau whom he had not seen for about 20 years. The last time Jacob saw Esau, Esau was so angry and wanted to kill him because he deceived Esau to get the blessing from their father as the first-born son. After 20 years, God wanted Jacob to return home and deal with this very scary and difficult situation. Is there anything in your life that you find difficult to deal with? How do you respond to life’s difficulties such as finances, decision-making, work, or relationships, in a manner that would glorify the Lord?
4. From this passage, we discover biblical perspectives that will help us understand how God works in our lives and learn the prerequisites to the kind of life that God blesses:
  - a. **God places you in situations where He can change you (v. 22-24).** Someone said that the greatest battles you fight are the battles you fight alone. Sometimes you can be like Jacob, fighting great battles by yourself. What was the dilemma that

Jacob went through? How did he deal with it? Was Jacob really alone in dealing with his battle? Share how you know that God is there when you deal with all kinds of issues in your life.

- b. **God oftentimes breaks you so that you could learn to rely on Him fully (v. 24-25).** God taught Jacob that if he wanted to be blessed by God, he had to do things according to God’s ways, not his own ways. Discuss the possible implications of Jacob having a dislocated hip in facing his problem at that moment. How does God “dislocate” things for you (i.e. when your desires are not compatible or aligned to His ways)? Share how God has broken you in order for you to fully rely on Him.
- c. **God’s blessing often comes after our surrender (v. 26-29).** After wrestling with God for a long time, Jacob finally surrendered, and as a result God blessed him. Jacob need not deceive people anymore, nor did he stayed stuck with his past. He was free from the shame of his identity as a deceiver because God had blessed him. This also meant that he would survive his meeting with his brother Esau. Discuss why surrendering your struggles to God will actually give you victory, peace, and inner joy. Why does letting go seem harder at times? Why would looking at the cross instead of looking at your sins give you victory in the Lord?
- d. **An encounter with God should always lead to personal transformation (v. 30-32).** In thanksgiving and commemoration of his life-changing encounter with God, Jacob named the place Peniel, which literally means the “Face of God,” to remember that he had a personal encounter with God in that place. As a result of that encounter, Jacob was never the same again. Name some of the characters in the Bible whose life transformation was so evident because of their encounter with God. Why would understanding the grace, love, and mercy of God transform one’s life?

## *Walk*

We recognize some obvious changes in Jacob's life as results of his encounter with God (v. 31):

1. Before his wrestling match with God, he was a desperate man, full of fear and apprehension, but now, we see a renewed Jacob, blessed and thankful.
2. Before his wrestling match with God, we see Jacob trying to overpower God by using all his strength, but now we see a Jacob who's limping but no longer deflated in spirit, because after surrendering to God, he was transformed.

Is there any area in your life in which you are wrestling with God? What keeps you from surrendering it to Him? Expect transformation once you have done so!

## *Worship & Prayer*

Heavenly Father, You indeed know what is best for me. Sometimes, You allow me to "wrestle" with You in my weakness because You know what would turn me around. You would place me in situations where You can change me. Or sometimes, You would break me so that I would learn to fully rely on You. Thank You because blessings come and transformation happens when I surrender to you. Lord, give me a teachable spirit. In Jesus' name. Amen.