

Jacob: Meets with God and Esau

Genesis 32-33

Read Genesis 32:1-21.

Jacob prayed and sent gifts in preparation for meeting his brother, Esau.

- How did Jacob's attitude and actions toward Esau change after his prayer?
- When has God used His Word and prayer to change your attitude and actions?

Principle: God loves His children enough to change their hearts.

Read Genesis 32:22-32.

Jacob encountered God at Peniel.

- How did Jacob change after his encounter with God?
- How is God changing you into the kind of person He wants you to become?

Principle: God loves His children enough to change them for His purposes.

Read Genesis 33.

Jacob and Esau reconciled.

- How did Jacob show sincere love toward Esau after Peniel?
- When have you failed to see God's presence in your struggle?

Principle: God loves His children enough to change them in their struggles.

Review Genesis 32-33.

- How are you learning to trust God and His purpose for your life?

Main truth: God loves His children enough to change them to be more like Jesus.

Scripture Memory Verse

“Then the man said, ‘Your name will no longer be Jacob, but Israel, because you have struggled with God and with humans and have overcome.’ ” – Genesis 32:28

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Exploring the Christian Faith

An Attribute of God

from this week's passage

Person

God is a person. God is not an idea or an impersonal force. Like us, He has identity and personality. He is one being in three persons. God is Father, Son and Holy Spirit, and all work together to accomplish our salvation. As a person, God has a mind and a will, and He communicates with us. God made people in His image with a mind, a will and the ability to communicate. He speaks to us through His Word, the Bible, and we speak to Him through prayer.

To learn more Attributes of God, visit mybsf.org.

A Basic Truth of the Christian Faith

What does sanctification mean?

Sanctification is the Holy Spirit's work of growing us in holiness to be like Jesus, who is perfectly righteous.¹

Sanctification² also involves our cooperation,³ as we study the Bible, pray, obey and serve God.⁴

Philippians 2:12-13¹; 1 Corinthians 6:11²; 1 Thessalonians 5:23-24³; Ephesians 4:22-24⁴

Think About It

Why do Christians still struggle with sin?

Christians still live in a sinful world and continue to battle their own sinful desires and Satan's temptation. Justification is immediate, but God's work of sanctification is gradual. The Holy Spirit changes us little by little as we yield to Him. Our thoughts, words and actions become more and more like Jesus as we trust and obey Him. This growth process continues until we reach heaven, where we will be completely free from sin and holy like Jesus. Sometimes the Christians who do not reflect Jesus are not actually Christians at all (Matthew 13:24-30).

Would people be more like Jesus if they just tried harder to follow His example?

We do not become more like Jesus by trying harder. Sanctification is more than developing good habits or willpower. While we must discipline ourselves to seek and obey God, sanctification is also God's work in us. God gives us opportunities to depend on Him more and more. He uses every circumstance, good and bad, to train His children. God has a greater purpose than simply our obedience to His Word. His desire is to keep us from experiencing the harm that comes from sinful choices. And God is growing our love relationship with Him to last for all eternity.

What does it mean to die to sin?

We die to ourselves by refusing to sin. Overcoming sin is so hard that the Bible speaks of it as dying to sin or "putting to death" our sinful desires. Over and over again, God's children ask Him for strength to say "no" when tempted to sin (Colossians 3:5). We must love obeying God more than satisfying ourselves. We must believe that God's ways bring us good (Psalm 18:30) and going our own way is destructive (James 1:14-15). God uses His Word to transform our thoughts and our desires (Romans 12:1-2). The Holy Spirit helps us put on new attitudes and actions. When we show love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control, we are living by the Holy Spirit and not being ruled by old sinful desires (Galatians 5:22-23).

To learn more Basic Truths of the Christian Faith, visit mybsf.org.