

Jacob: Family Crisis and Return to Bethel

Genesis 34-36

Read Genesis 34.

Jacob's daughter Dinah was hurt in Shechem, and his sons avenged her.

- What troubles resulted from Simeon and Levi's sin, and how did Jacob respond?
- What do you think it means for us to wait for God to make things right?

Principle: God never wants us to sin to provide justice.

Read Genesis 35.

God called Jacob to return to Bethel.

- Why did Jacob tell his family to repent?
- What is God showing you about repentance and forgiveness of sin?

Principle: Sin requires repentance and cleansing.

Read Genesis 36.

The record of Esau's descendants is given.

- What are some blessings God gave Esau and his descendants?
- Why do you think the Bible includes stories about very difficult and tragic situations?

Principle: Only God can save us from the power of sin and death.

Review Genesis 34-36.

- How does this week's study challenge or confirm your beliefs about God?

Main truth: Only God can save us from the power of sin and death.

Scripture Memory Verse

“So Jacob said to his household and to all who were with him, ‘Get rid of the foreign gods you have with you, and purify yourselves and change your clothes.’ ... Then they set out, and the terror of God fell on the towns all around them so that no one pursued them.” – Genesis 35:2, 5

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Exploring the Christian Faith

An Attribute of God

from this week's passage

Omnipotent (All-powerful)

God has unlimited power, authority and influence. He does all He wants and intends to do. God's powerful Word spoke creation into being from nothing. God is the source of all power whether atoms, energy, life or human strength and authority. Without God's power, everything would fall apart. His power holds the stars in the sky and sustains human lives. Nothing can stop God. Evil and death will not win. God has promised a day when He will raise all His children to life that does not end, and God has the power to keep His promise.

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A Basic Truth of the Christian Faith

Why do God's children still sin?

God's children are tempted to sin by their own sinful nature and by Satan.¹ Even though the Holy Spirit helps His children know the joy of obedience, they are still weak.² God always listens when we ask Him to help us not to sin.³ When God's children sin, the loving Father disciplines and holds them responsible for their sin.⁴

Galatians 5:17¹; Matthew 26:41²; 1 Corinthians 10:13³; Hebrews 12:6⁴

Think About It

If I am really a Christian, why do I still struggle with sin?

Sin no longer controls God's child, but the battle with sin will not be over until heaven. The indwelling Holy Spirit gives the believer new desires to please God. The sinful nature that remains while we live in this world fights against the believer's new Christ-like nature. The struggle against sin is evidence of the Holy Spirit's work. Believers do not lose their salvation when they sin (Romans 8:1, 38-39), but they should confess all sin to God who makes the sinner clean (1 John 1:9).

Is Satan responsible when I sin?

Satan is real and tempts God's children, but he cannot make them sin (Ephesians 6:11). God has given His children the Holy Spirit, His Word and a new nature that loves God. God even uses Satan's temptations to make His children grow stronger (James 4:7-8). Our loving heavenly Father will not allow any temptation to come near His children without providing a way to escape (1 Corinthians 10:13). We must resist Satan with the power of God the Holy Spirit. This may be as simple as turning off a movie with wrong ideas or pictures. God does not promise resisting temptation will be easy. Jesus resisted Satan (Matthew 4:1-11). Resisting temptation shows God's worthiness and brings joy.

How does obeying God bring joy?

Obedience brings us joy as we draw upon God's grace to resist temptation. Obedience is not easy, and the blessings of obedience may be delayed. Joseph resisted temptation and was put in prison. But the Lord was with him and showed him special kindness (Genesis 39:21-23). Although obedience was difficult, Joseph grew in faith and love for God. Joseph came to understand God planned his imprisonment not only for his own good, but also for the good of his family and all people. This gave Joseph joy and brought God glory (Genesis 50:20). Obeying God is always better than the temporary pleasure of sin.

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