

Lessons from the Life of Jacob and Joseph (part 1)

In the second half of Genesis we are introduced to two primary figures—Jacob and Joseph. These men lived very colorful lives. Let's look at them and the lessons their lives have for us.

1. God Knows Who You Are (Luke 12:7, 27-31)

Jacob, because of his conniving, deceitful ways, is estranged from his family. He finds himself out in the middle of the wilderness and on his way to his Uncle Laban's house. God reveals Himself to Jacob when he is by himself out in the wilderness away from everyone who knows him. God comes to him in a vision at night with angels ascending and descending on a ladder and God standing above. God talks to him and promises to bless his life.

Joseph is with his family as a young man. His brothers hate him because he is a tattletale and because he tried to do what was right. Though all those around Joseph despised him, God comes to him at night in a dream and reveals his future. God knows exactly who he is and tells him what his life is going to produce.

God knows who you are. He knows what you are thinking. He knows what your life is all about.

2. God Doesn't Need Your Help (Genesis 16:1-6; 37:5-10)

In the stories of Jacob, Joseph, and Abraham God had promised to do something great. It is interesting that each of them determines to try to help God out so that their dream can be fulfilled. Abraham and Sarah tried to help God out by giving Hagar, Sarah's handmaid, to Abraham as a second wife. This brought problems into Abraham's life that he would have to deal with the rest of his life. We should never violate God's principles in order to accomplish God's will.

Joseph had to tell his brothers the dream. He was not told by God, as far as we know, to reveal the dream to his brothers. Joseph tried to help God out by telling his brothers the dream, and all it did was get him into trouble.

God does not need our help to fulfill His purpose in our life. All He needs is our obedience.

3. God Has Not Forgotten You (Genesis 40:23-41:44)

It is clear from the story of the patriarchs that God does not forget us. Time can go by in our lives and we can think that God has forgotten the promises He made to us. Abraham waited twenty-four years for the birth of Isaac.

Jacob served a deceitful and wicked man, his Uncle Laban. For twenty years, he was separated from his family. During that time, his father grew old and his mother evidently passed away. It would be easy to think during this long period of trial that God had forgotten. God had not forgotten Jacob, and God has not forgotten you.

Joseph was thrown in prison. The Bible says in Genesis 41:1 that he waited in prison for "two full years" with no word at all of his release. During times like these, we can feel that God has forgotten us. We need to remember, God has not forgotten us. Which leads us to the next point...

4. God Has a Plan for Your Life (Jeremiah 29:11, Genesis 32:26-28; 41:46-57)

While Jacob was serving Laban for those twenty years, God's plan had not diminished. God had a plan for Jacob's life, and it would be completed. God promised to bless Jacob, and He did.

Joseph would be used by God to deliver God's people. It would have been easy to divert from that plan while he was working as a slave or while he was imprisoned, but God's plan does not change.

Just as God had a plan for Jacob's and Joseph's lives, God has a plan for yours. Keep being faithful to Him.

