

MOVING BEYOND THE PAST

Lesson 4: Face to Face Encounter with God

Introduction: Jacob is the believer's prototype. Though he had the promise of blessing, he tried to obtain the blessing through his own effort. This resulted in him leading a double life until he had an encounter face to face with God. This experience broke him and he then began to walk in the right way—living for God.

Many times those who have experienced wounding in their past do not even believe they can be blessed to be set free from the wounds of the past. Or they try to get healed from the past in many different ways other than going to God. Some wear masks as if they are okay yet almost anything can be a trigger for them. All need to have a face to face encounter with God just like Jacob had in his own life.

I. What is in a name?

A. Conception—In Genesis 25:19-26 there is the story of the birth of Jacob and Esau. Jacob was struggling even at birth. There are many people who deal with a Spirit of Rejection even at birth. Maybe it turns out that their parents did not want a child or another child. Maybe they were born to addicted parents and were a *crack* baby or fetal alcohol syndrome baby? Maybe they were born out of wedlock, or conceived out of rape. Maybe they were adopted. Whatever is behind their conception there is a message of being rejected.

It needs to be understood that many times individuals were loved in spite of how they were conceived, or the environment of their conception, but they perceived they were not loved.

B. Fulfillment—Genesis 25:27-34—The name Jacob means supplanter, deceiver, schemer or trickster. Many individuals who have been wounded in the past learn to cope with the wounding by being manipulative, controlling, or very deceptive.

C. Struggling with who is in control. In Genesis 27 Jacob lives the life of a manipulator controller, and his mother is an enabler. A lifestyle of nothing less than control and manipulation leads always to looking for enabler to get what you want. Sadly many who have experienced abuse can either become manipulators or enablers. Many times individuals become co-dependent.

II. Jacob's Example

Even when Jacob was a liar and a cunning opportunist, God did not leave him. God will always deal with us to bring change. Remember whatever a man sows he will reap. God deals with Jacob as he allows him to reap some of his own actions from Laban.

If a wounded person deals with their pain by taking advantage of others, by sowing hate and bitterness, by making inner vows and judgments, it will come back on them sooner or later.

A. Jacob makes a deal with God to commit himself to be a faithful tither that he might be blessed. But what is his real motive. He is even a manipulator with God.

Wounded people at times will try to make deals with God. Trying to force the hand of God to do something for them. Or blaming God if He don't do what they want.

B. Jacob meets Laban who became Jacob's father-in-law. Laban was controlled by stubbornness and greed and deceived Jacob many times. The deceiver became deceived. Genesis 29, Galatians 6:7-8.

You will reap what you sow.

C. Jacob bargains with Laban to leave, but Jacob deceives Laban and prospers with increase in his flocks. Genesis 30:25-43. Laban becomes angry and Jacob flees from Laban with his family and all his belongings. Genesis 31. We all will have to answer for our deception; nothing can be hidden from God. He knows just how far to let us go and then He says, "That's enough!"

Just because it appears your unhealthy way of dealing with past appears to work, in the end your unhealthy coping mechanisms will fail you every time. Dealing with pain your way instead of God's way will always lead to consequences. You may be able to fool people, but you cannot fool God. A loving God will not let you get away with it.

III. Jacob's Encounter with God

A. Jacob heard the news of his brother, whom he had stolen the birthright from by trickery, was coming to meet him with four hundred men. Genesis 32:1-12. Fear grips Jacob because he remembers his brother's threats.

B. Jacob sends gifts to Esau in hope that they may help ease the tension and find favor with his brother. Gen 32:13-23.

C. Jacob all alone, goes into agonizing prayer. Jacob begins to wrestle with the Lord. Our personal battles can only be resolved alone with God. That is when God reveals Himself to us. Genesis 32:24-25.

If you want to be completely healed from the past, you must go to God with all your anger, bitterness, fears, unhealthy coping skills, your sin and rebellion-everything. You need to give it all to God. You need to let Him in on every secret closet that is in your heart. You need to lay bare your heart to God. If it takes a

‘wrestling match’, so be it. Just let God win in the end. Let God ‘rip you apart’ and put you back together.

D. Perseverance in prayer brings us to a face-to-face encounter with God. It is then that the deliverance of our soul can take place.

- God changed Jacob’s name to Israel. Genesis 32:28. God will change your identity and you will no longer see yourself as a victim.
- Jacob means deceiver, Israel means ‘prince that has power with God’. After wrestling with God you will find out your identity is in Christ and that you are more than a conqueror.
- God wants to change your name and nature. He wants to make you a completely new creation.

E. God then can help you to make peace with those who you have hurt and offended because of your decisions and actions based upon wounding. Genesis 33:1-4. He can even give you the ability to forgive those who have abused you.

A Time of Honesty

If you want to experience true healing from the past you must get totally honest with God. You must do what Jacob did. Go into agonizing prayer with God. Let God expose the ugliness of your heart. Let God confront your sinful thoughts and actions. Let God do a thorough cleaning. Let God be the LORD of your life. Let God be your Deliverer, not you. Ask God to completely heal you. Ask God to give you a new name-Overcomer, More than a Conqueror, the Redeemed, New Creation in Christ Jesus.