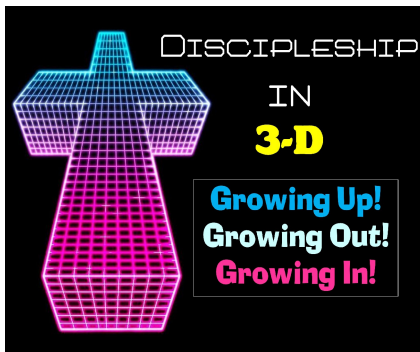


The Year of Discipleship in 3-D

(Further Developing Devoted Followers of Christ)



Welcome! Thanks for choosing to dive more deeply, as a Christian, into a three-dimensional discipleship! Using the diversity and wonder of God's Word, powered by the Holy Spirit and the witness of one another, this time together seeks to raise up more fully-devoted followers of Christ.

Our prayer is that we might all:

Grow Upward in an ever-maturing personal relationship to Christ by becoming more fluent in the "first language of the faith," God's Word!
Grow Outward to neighbor and world – learning to love well, to share faith and witness to others we encounter, and to lead in more in that which matters to God!
And, **Grow Inward** by discovering a more contemplative prayer and devotional life enriched by silence, listening, and quiet reflection!

The Scripture for Sunday, September 26, 2021

[STUDY LESSON 3]

THE OLD TESTAMENT READING:

Genesis 27:1-4, 15-23; 28:10-17

{1} When Isaac was old and his eyes were dim so that he could not see, he called his elder son Esau and said to him, "My son"; and he answered, "Here I am." {2} He said, "See, I am old; I do not know the day of my death. {3} Now then, take your weapons, your quiver and your bow, and go out to the field, and hunt game for me. {4} Then prepare for me savory food, such as I like, and bring it to me to eat, so that I may bless you before I die." . . .

. . . {15} Then Rebekah took the best garments of her elder son Esau, which were with her in the house, and put them on her younger son Jacob; {16} and she put the skins of the kids on his hands and on the smooth part of his neck. {17} Then she handed the savory food, and the bread that she had prepared, to her son Jacob.

{18} So he went in to his father, and said, "My father"; and he said, "Here I am; who are you, my son?" {19} Jacob said to his father, "I am Esau your firstborn. I have done as you told me; now sit up and eat of my game, so that you may bless me." {20} But Isaac said to his son, "How is it that you have found it so quickly, my son?" He answered, "Because the LORD your God granted me success." {21} Then Isaac said to Jacob, "Come near, that I may feel you, my son, to know whether you are really my son Esau or not." {22} So Jacob went up to his father Isaac, who felt him and said, "The voice is Jacob's voice, but the hands are the hands of Esau." {23} He did not recognize him, because his hands were hairy like his brother Esau's hands; so he blessed him. . .

. . . {28:10} Jacob left Beer-sheba and went toward Haran. {11} He came to a certain place and stayed there for the night, because the sun had set. Taking one of the stones of the place, he put it under his head and lay down in that place. {12} And he dreamed that there was a ladder set up on the earth, the top of it reaching to heaven; and the angels of God were ascending and descending on it. {13} And the LORD stood beside him and said, "I am the LORD, the God of Abraham your father and the God of Isaac; the land on which you lie I will give to you and to your offspring; {14} and your offspring shall be like the dust of the earth, and you shall spread abroad to the west and to the east and to the north and to the south; and all the families of the earth shall be blessed in you and in your offspring. {15} Know that I am with you and will keep you wherever you go, and will bring you back to this land; for I will not leave you until I have done what I have promised you." {16} Then Jacob woke from his sleep and said, "Surely the LORD is in this place—and I did not know it!" {17} And he was afraid, and said, "How awesome is this place! This is none other than the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven."

DISCUSSION GUIDANCE AND QUESTIONS:

For an overview of Genesis 12-50 consider watching: <https://bibleproject.com/explore/video/genesis-12-50/>

1. Open (*or have someone in the group open*) with a prayer inviting the work of the Holy Spirit to open up the hearts and lives of any and all to shape believers into more fully devoted following of Christ.
2. Read (*or have one or more persons read*) the passage printed above (*or from a bible*).
3. Where or when have you played a practical joke on someone or when someone(s) did that to you? What was the experience like?
4. Recall or share a time when you have witnessed some aspects of favoritism? In the family? In the workplace? In athletics or some other “team” activity? In some other arena where promotion or competition exists? How did you feel as a result?
5. What are some of your reactions to a story such as this which almost seems to celebrate deception, trickery, and even outright theft (of a father’s cherished blessing)?
6. Esau (a favorite of his father, Isaac) and Jacob (a favorite of his mother, Rebekah) were twin brothers. Esau, the firstborn, had already surrendered his rightful inheritance/birthright in a moment of weakness and for a bowl of stew. Now he would lose the firstborn rights to his father’s blessing by deception. How do you react and feel about these two brothers?
7. Fearing for his life due to his brother’s anger, Jacob flees from Beer-sheba to Haran for his own safety. There, while asleep, he experiences a vision of a ladder reaching to the heavens with angels ascending and descending. Have you ever had a dream you might describe as “from God?”
8. Should we live life and faith anticipating the possibility of God’s activity through dreams or visions?
9. How might following Christ as a disciple allow for God to speak to us in ways “out of the ordinary?” One can assume a degree of silence in Jacob as this dream/vision unfolded. What has been your experience with silence and solitude followed by a sense of God’s presence and even God’s voice during those times?
10. Are there any certain “places” or “spaces” where you have sensed “The LORD is in this place?”
11. Spend some time talking about how or reflecting upon God’s blessings and promises inform your discipleship. If willing, share (*or personally identify within yourself*) an aspect of your life where you believe God has kept a particular promise or has blessed you in ways you could not have anticipated.
12. What is your main discipleship “takeaway” from this text?
13. Can you identify any particular ways your Christian faith and following might be inspired to change in light of this passage from the Bible (and any discussion and/or reflection that may have taken place)?
14. (*Optional*) Read the passage once more. Then, take some time to close (or have someone close) with a prayer.