



INTRODUCTION

As your group time begins, use this section to introduce the topic of discussion.

ICE BREAKER QUESTION: Are you ever afraid that God will not provide for you?

We may not slow down in life enough to stop and think about this question very much. We might even initially say “no I trust God will provide”. After really thinking about it, if we can be honest, then we can admit those times that we are afraid. Today, we’re going to look at the next part of the story in Jacob’s life as he is trying to leave Laban and go back to the land that God told him to go. In this story we see a point in Jacob’s life where if he leaves, he will not have very many possessions and he is having to trust God to provide.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. **What is your biggest takeaway? How was your experience with the Life Tool’s this past week?**
2. **What can we learn about Laban with how he responded when Jacob asked to leave?**

We learn some very important pieces to who Laban was and what he believed about God. He made some interesting comments regarding how God blessed Jacob but as we look more into what Laban said we really see where his heart was at. A commentator explained this idea more with the quote below:

Laban was not a man of faith. But he readily discerned and admitted that his blessing was because of association with Jacob. Did this make him hungry for God? Sadly, no. Laban’s only desire was for the prosperity of association. Therefore, he cut to the bottom line: “Name your wages, and I will give it.”¹

- a. **How much do you think our culture believes in superstition? How might we use that to share the Gospel?**

¹ R. Kent Hughes, [Genesis: Beginning and Blessing](#), Preaching the Word (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2004), 383.

There is an underlying lesson to be learned about superstition from this story and how we can address this topic in our culture. This quote from a commentator helps us understand the proper way to approach superstition from scripture:

Jacob's peeled rods, then, are similar to Rachel's mandrakes. The mandrakes did not produce fertility, and neither did Jacob's rods. The Scriptures are explicit that God opened Rachel's womb (cf. 30:22). And they are also explicit that God intervened and gave the livestock to Jacob: "Thus God has taken away the livestock of your father and given them to me" (31:9). Therefore, however it happened and however informed Jacob was, God did it!²

3. What do the blessings in Jacob's life tell us about God? Does God bless believers and non-believers with prosperity?

What we learn about God from this story is simple and explained well with the quote below:

These three uses of the same word, first in the Bethel promise and twice in this story, serve to make the dominant point, which is this: God is the giver of prosperity. And more, what we are now going to see in the greening of Jacob will leave no doubt that it is God who brings prosperity.³

God is the giver of every good thing and of prosperity. We also see from scripture below the same truth:

James 1:17–18 (ESV)

17 Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow due to change.

18 Of his own will he brought us forth by the word of truth, that we should be a kind of firstfruits of his creatures.

As we see in this story and in many others throughout scripture, God blesses believers and non-believers with prosperity and always according to His purposes. The few verses below are great examples of this truth from scripture:

Deuteronomy 8:18–20 (ESV)

18 You shall remember the LORD your God, for it is he who gives you power to get wealth, that he may confirm his covenant that he swore to your fathers, as it is this day.

19 And if you forget the LORD your God and go after other gods and serve them and worship them, I solemnly warn you today that you shall surely perish.

² R. Kent Hughes, [Genesis: Beginning and Blessing](#), Preaching the Word (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2004), 385.

³ R. Kent Hughes, [Genesis: Beginning and Blessing](#), Preaching the Word (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2004), 383.

20 Like the nations that the LORD makes to perish before you, so shall you perish, because you would not obey the voice of the LORD your God.

Philippians 4:19–20 (ESV)

19 And my God will supply every need of yours according to his riches in glory in Christ Jesus.

20 To our God and Father be glory forever and ever. Amen.

a. How has God blessed your life and provided you will many blessings?

Encourage the group to think through their own life and share stories of God’s goodness with the group. The quote below might even describe a few of those in your group.

The believer who has to live among people like Laban faces a great crisis in the faith. There is something incompatible with the acknowledgment of God’s blessing for prosperity and the employment of superstitious customs in order to obtain those divine blessings. How a believer competes with a nonbeliever is important to the faith. It is not a matter of fighting fire with fire, playing his or her game, or turning the tables. Rather, it is a matter of acknowledging that the true source of success is God and then engaging in practices that are compatible with that belief.⁴

4. Is prosperity good or bad? Why or Why not?

The topic of prosperity and when someone has prosperity can be a very hot and tough subject to understand and can easily be misunderstood. Scripture speaks quite often about money, the love of money, and God’s blessings. We see clearly in this story and just earlier with Abraham that prosperity is not in and of itself bad as God blessing Jacob and his grandfather Abraham with prosperity. Ultimately God was fulfilling His promises and purposes by blessing Jacob and Abraham and that prosperity was being used for good.

a. When is prosperity bad?

Prosperity becomes bad when it is acquired through sinful ways or is idolized and we see that in the verses below:

Luke 12:32–34 (ESV)

32 “Fear not, little flock, for it is your Father’s good pleasure to give you the kingdom.

⁴ Allen P. Ross, [*Creation and Blessing: A Guide to the Study and Exposition of Genesis*](#) (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1998), 522.

33 Sell your possessions, and give to the needy. Provide yourselves with moneybags that do not grow old, with a treasure in the heavens that does not fail, where no thief approaches and no moth destroys.

34 For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.

Scripture talks about how money is not evil but it's the love of money with the verse below:

1 Timothy 6:10 (ESV)

10 For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evils. It is through this craving that some have wandered away from the faith and pierced themselves with many pangs.

5. Do you really trust Him to meet your needs from day to day, both spiritually and physically?

The duty of every believer in every age is to trust God and to obey His commandments. This was true in Israel, and it is true in the church today. As children under His care, we must walk by faith, trusting that He will provide what we need for our daily sustenance, both physically and spiritually. It is of course much easier to state what we know from scripture, and it is another to live it out. There is a great verse to memorize to help when it comes to those moments of trusting God to provide. It is Matthew 6:31-34:

Matthew 6:31–34 (ESV)

31 Therefore do not be anxious, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?' **32** For the Gentiles seek after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them all. **33** But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you. **34** "Therefore do not be anxious about tomorrow, for tomorrow will be anxious for itself. Sufficient for the day is its own trouble.

God is always with us and He knows what we need and will provide. The truth from this passage of scripture can be seen right from this story of Jacob. The commentator's quote below help paint that picture:

Through all the ups and downs in his battles with Laban, Heaven's commerce in his behalf had never ceased. The angels ascended and descended in both his humiliations and triumphs. God had been with him in every place. Along with this was the promise from the Lord of the ladder of a people, prosperity, and a place.⁵

a. Are you putting obedience to Him first, or do you make sure you have provided for your needs before you consider God's commands?

⁵ R. Kent Hughes, [*Genesis: Beginning and Blessing*](#), Preaching the Word (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2004), 386.

This is another great question to ask yourself to help you think through whether you trust God to provide and trust Him with your money. Encourage the group to really think through that answer for themselves and share if they feel comfortable.

6. Do I live in fear of losing my comfort? Whether in prosperity or need, is Jesus enough?

If we desire worldly comforts, and fear earthly loss more than we fear God, then we will likely make decisions and plans according to what we think will keep our lives most comfortable. Looking back, maybe you can see the Lord's severe mercy in overturning the plans we had set for our lives. He might have removed some of your earthly means to find comfort and security in this world. It was painful, yes, but it was also freeing.

As our eyes become increasingly fixed on fearing the Lord and trusting his promises for us, we can live in greater freedom to plan and live wisely according to God's plan, rather than living in bondage to our own.

We should plan and save — but is Christ enough if he chooses to take it all away? In comfort, there is a constant temptation to put our confidence and joy in the false security that wealth gives us. If we desire to honor Christ with all that we had, it was easier to not get distracted by the excess.

In whatever season you find yourself, hold firmly to the truth that Christ is and will always be enough (Philippians 4:19). He is a greater treasure than anything else this world can give. Sometimes, it may take losing everything on this earth to truly come to believe that with every ounce of our being.

7. How does this story about God providing for Jacob point us to the Gospel?

This story also foreshadows others in scripture, namely the Hebrews being enslaved in Egypt and God using Moses to free them. In Genesis we see Laban who is trying to home on to Jacob and his family and then God comes in to help free Jacob from Laban and allow him to plunder Laban's wealth. In exodus we see a similar pattern with God freeing the Hebrews from Egypt and allowing them to plunder Egypt's wealth. This story finally points to the ultimate freedom that God provides for us as a believer from our sin and provides for us. The commentators quote below help explain it well:

*And more, it was the ultimate Israel (Christ himself) who would be called out of Egypt (Matthew 2:15). And it is Christ who effects the ultimate spiritual exodus, who calls a people, who prospers their ways and leads them to the land.
We must never forget that the pattern for our salvation began long ago and is fulfilled in Christ.*

*All glory to his name.*⁶

a. What legacy am I leaving with how I view my money?

Where we pour our time, energy, and money is a part of building the legacy that we will leave when we are gone. Are we working so many hours for our family's comfort but are never there to invest in them spiritually and relationally? Are we so focused on planning for the future that we miss how God is calling us to live radically in the present? Or, does our lifestyle suggest that this earth actually *is* our home?

I am not saying we should not enjoy the gifts that God has given us, but we are commanded to be good stewards of what God has entrusted to us. We should be frequently asking the Holy Spirit to examine our hearts and show us where earthy treasures are motivating us more than eternal ones, that we might pursue righteousness above all else (Matthew 6:33).

Conclusion

When you put your faith in Christ, God commissions himself to protect, provide, and care for you (Philippians 4:19). God always provides for his children, though often it is not in the way we expect or hope.

The challenge is for us to see his provision and care, even when it is different than we expect. Because God is God, his ways are higher than our ways -

Isaiah 55:9 (ESV)

9 For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts.

But he graciously gives us insight into what he is doing in the Scriptures.

PRAYER

Pray for this week to be a great reminder of where ultimately our hope in life should be and not in what this world offers. Pray for God to continually remind us that he is the source of any and all prosperity and blessing in our lives and challenge us to respond in gratitude.

⁶ R. Kent Hughes, [*Genesis: Beginning and Blessing*](#), Preaching the Word (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2004), 387.



FURTHER STUDY

Devotionals-

<https://www.ligonier.org/learn/devotionals/trust-in-gods-provision>

Article –

<https://www.desiringgod.org/articles/four-truths-about-gods-provision>

Videos-

<https://www.desiringgod.org/articles/god-will-give-you-everything-you-need>