



### INTRODUCTION

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

**ICE BREAKER QUESTION: Who are you most likely to turn to for advice when you face adversity or conflict? Why?**

At the outset of troubles in life, do you usually: draw closer to God, question God, turn away from God, or something else? This is a tough question to answer and one we are going to look at how was answer by Jacob in today's passage. Have a volunteer read Genesis 31 and then continue on with your discussion questions.

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### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. **What is your biggest takeaway? How was your experience with the Life Tool's this past week?**
  
2. **What do we learn about Jacob from this part of the story in Genesis?**

We learn quite a bit by how Jacob responded not only to God but also to Laban in this story. The commentator's quotes below explain well what we can learn:

*One of the beautiful things about Jacob's flight is that we see that Jacob has made spiritual progress. He actually appears in a favorable light! He is now utterly faithful to God. He begins obediently and does not waver. Here this old deceiver is honest and rightly declares his integrity before Laban. <sup>1</sup>*

*Jacob was looking good, better than he ever had. He still had a considerable way to go, but this was not the heel-grabbing supplanter who double-dealt his brother and duped his father. Jacob was becoming a man of character who kept his word. His exodus from Mesopotamia had been characterized by his faithful obedience to God's word. Jacob understood that his entire deliverance had been wrought by God. Repeatedly he credited God with his success. His placing a stone pillar alongside the heap of stones*

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<sup>1</sup> R. Kent Hughes, [Genesis: Beginning and Blessing](#), Preaching the Word (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2004), 389.

declared his faith in the God of Bethel and his constant provision. Though far from perfect, Jacob had grown in grace, by God's grace.<sup>2</sup>

Now as we consider Jacob's exodus from Mesopotamia, everything is in place. He now has a people—some four wives and eleven children—the genesis of a vast people. His possessions are such that he is remarkably rich. He knows that his people and possessions are from God. God sees that he is ready.<sup>3</sup>

### 3. What does this story in Genesis teach us about God's protection and how he works in people's lives?

This point in Jacob's life is a great picture God's protection and involvement in His children's lives. The commentators quotes below help state what it teaches us:

*The driving point of the narrative of Jacob's escape here in Genesis 31 is that God did it all—through his multiple interventions and constant protection. God would later do exactly the same in Moses' escape from Egypt. And so it now is in the ultimate exodus in Christ. All glory goes to God, "For from him and through him and to him are all things. To him be glory forever. Amen" (Romans 11:36).<sup>4</sup>*

*Genesis 31 delineates how God guided Jacob away from Laban and protected him from danger. The chapter forms the culmination of the Jacob-Laban cycle of stories, explaining that the success of Jacob in his dealings with Laban was due to the Lord's presence with him and that God's intervention in the time of crisis was his only source of strength. The lesson for Israel, and for us as well, is that the one who has experienced the blessing of God and who is obediently following the call of God may be confident of God's protection.<sup>5</sup>*

#### a. How does this story point to Moses and ultimately to Christ?

*Jacob's spiritual progress would also have its parallels in Moses' spiritual development preceding his leading Israel in its great exodus. Christ, the captain of the ultimate exodus, was, as we know, perfect in every way.<sup>6</sup>*

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<sup>2</sup> R. Kent Hughes, [Genesis: Beginning and Blessing](#), Preaching the Word (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2004), 395.

<sup>3</sup> R. Kent Hughes, [Genesis: Beginning and Blessing](#), Preaching the Word (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2004), 390.

<sup>4</sup> R. Kent Hughes, [Genesis: Beginning and Blessing](#), Preaching the Word (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2004), 389.

<sup>5</sup> Allen P. Ross, [Creation and Blessing: A Guide to the Study and Exposition of Genesis](#) (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1998), 533–534.

<sup>6</sup> R. Kent Hughes, [Genesis: Beginning and Blessing](#), Preaching the Word (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2004), 389–390.

#### 4. Do we experience conflict and hard times if we are under God's protection?

As we discussed earlier, we learned that those who follow God, are under His protection. Then the next question is then does that mean that we won't every struggle, experience conflict, or come under hard times. The quotes from a commentator helps answer these questions:

*It is not always that way. The Laban years were sad for Jacob and his family—there was deception, dishonesty, bargaining, theft, animosity, fear, and retaliation. Mutual distrust led to estrangements; and suspicions, to angry accusations. In this chapter, however, in the final phase of the conflict, God spoke to both Jacob and Laban in order to bring about their separation. Then, after their legal dispute, God himself was invoked to watch between them.<sup>7</sup>*

- a. **How does a focus on prayer and reliance on God as sovereign impact our view and practice of evangelism?**

#### 5. READ PSALM 57:1-6. Where did David say he found refuge in times of trouble? Where are some places, we are tempted to take refuge outside of God?

Jacob's life is a great example of God's protection and learning to take refuge in God. We also see that in many other parts of scripture and specifically through King David and what he writes in Psalm 57. Encourage the group to be honest about the areas we are tempted to take refuge in beside God.

#### 6. Where do you currently feel most in need of refuge? How will you seek this refuge in God who is faithful to you?

Encourage the group to share as they feel comfortable and even maybe share yourself first to help start the conversation and give others boldness to share.

#### 7. Do you find it difficult to believe that God is ultimately in control, He protect His children, or God hears and answers your prayers? How can this group help you in that?

These kinds of questions are the most difficult to answer when we are in times of trouble very similar to Jacob in our story today. When we are in those difficult times, we really

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<sup>7</sup> Allen P. Ross, [\*Creation and Blessing: A Guide to the Study and Exposition of Genesis\*](#) (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1998), 534.

know what we believe and where our faith is. The commentators quote below help give us the confidence to answer those questions:

*And for any who have eyes to see, here is the work of an awesome, sovereign God who works amidst the compost of human sin to do his will. Amidst the swirl of deception and intrigue he birthed a people who would become the twelve tribes of Israel. God took a poor man who had been repeatedly enslaved and exploited and made him rich. And now God led him in a glorious exodus as a prelude to his return to the land of promise. Such an awesome God!<sup>8</sup>*

*What comfort for those who desire to grow in grace. Our part is to faithfully follow him.*

*If thou but suffer God to guide thee  
And hope in Him through all thy ways,  
He'll give thee strength, whate'er betide thee,  
And bear thee thro' the evil days.  
Who trusts in God's unchanging love  
Builds on the rock that naught can move.*

GEORG NEUMARK, 1641<sup>9</sup>

- a. **Do you also find it difficult to believe that God will save you or He will satisfy you with His presence?**

## Conclusion

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In the New Testament, the Apostle John makes the same point: “He who is in you is greater than he who is in the world” (1 John 4:4). We do not need to fear, for God will save us in His good time. We should praise God for His mercy and help as this psalm does.

## PRAYER

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God will not allow Satan to snatch any of His children out of His hand, and one of the ways by which He keeps us in His hand is in our prayers for perseverance. We pray for the Lord to protect us from Satan so that we may do God's will and so that we will press on and remain faithful to Him in all times of testing. Let us pray daily for protection from the devil and for the grace to remain faithful to Christ.

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<sup>8</sup> R. Kent Hughes, [Genesis: Beginning and Blessing](#), Preaching the Word (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2004), 395.

<sup>9</sup> R. Kent Hughes, [Genesis: Beginning and Blessing](#), Preaching the Word (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2004), 396.



## **FURTHER STUDY**

### **Devotionals-**

<https://www.ligonier.org/learn/devotionals/god-speaks-jacob>

<https://www.ligonier.org/learn/devotionals/aban-surrenders>