

Who Are You?

Chapter 9

Audio Lesson: Old Testament Survey lesson nine



Objective: To discover who God intends for us to be.



Your name shall no longer be called Jacob, but Israel; for you have struggled with God and with men, and have prevailed. And Jacob called the name of the place Peniel: "For I have seen God face to face, and my life is preserved."

—Genesis 32:28, 30

Jacob was grabbing the heel of his twin brother Esau when they were born. As they grew up, Jacob continued to grab, talking Esau into selling the birthright of the first-born son to him and deceiving their father into giving him a blessing intended for Esau. Because of Esau's anger, Jacob had to flee. On his way, he had a dream in which God promised to make Jacob part of the covenant promise God had with Abraham. Twenty years later, on his way back, he had a strange experience, wrestling all night with God. God gave Jacob a new name—Israel—because he wanted Jacob to see his true identity. But before Jacob received his new name, God had to partially cripple him so that Jacob would rely on God and not himself.

Now there is one more item of significance in Jacob's story that we do not want to miss. Because Jacob was such a rascal, God could not bless him until He broke him. Sometimes God cannot get through to us any other way, and so He has to break us - cripple us in some way - forcing us to rely on Him. That is how it was with Jacob. And finally, Jacob got the message. When he finally met up with his brother Esau, he testified and told his brother that all the blessings and children and flocks were because, "God has dealt graciously with me" (Gen. 33:11).

Jacob learned an important lesson that we also need to learn. Jacob learned he was blessed not because he had grabbed them, but because of God's grace and mercy. Grace is when God lavishes upon us blessings we do not deserve. Mercy is when God withholds from us what we do deserve.



Choose one best answer unless instructed otherwise.

1. True or false? God promised to keep Jacob wherever he went and to bring him back to his land.
2. True or false? God blessed Jacob by teaching him his identity and giving him a new name.
3. True or false? If Jacob had not fought and deceived others for God's blessing, God would not have given it to him.
4. Which of the following descriptions is part of God's plan for each one of us?
 - a. who we are to be
 - b. what we are to do
 - c. where we are to be
 - d. all of the above
5. Jacob's name means _____
 - a. faithful
 - b. holy
 - c. honest
 - d. grabber
6. God gave Jacob the new name of "Israel." What does that name mean?
 - a. deceiver
 - b. fugitive
 - c. fighter
 - d. holy
7. What did God have to do to Jacob before He could bless him?
 - a. teach him to be strong
 - b. give him his land back
 - c. break him of self-reliance
 - d. punish him for lying

8. Which direction of life did God teach Jacob?
- to look up
 - to look in
 - to look around
 - all of the above
9. What does Jacob's story teach us about God's grace and mercy? (choose all that apply)
- God lavishes blessings upon us that we do not deserve.
 - God wants nothing to do with people who have sinned.
 - God withholds from us the punishment we truly deserve.
 - God does not have much grace and mercy.
10. What lessons did God teach Jacob that He also wants to teach us? (choose all that apply)
- to rely on Him
 - to confess to God who we really are
 - to grab and deceive to get what we want
 - to submit to God
 - to ask God who He wants us to be
 - to be a part of God's plan for the world



Perhaps your parents, family, or friends have named you or put a label on you that is contrary to the way God sees you. What do you think God says about your identity in Him? (If you do not know, ask God to show you who He thinks you are and wants you to be.)



Thank God for the story of Jacob and ask God to show you who He wants you to be. Thank God that His grace and mercy that He extended to Jacob is also available to you. Ask God to help you to trust Him, to submit to His will in all the areas of your life to become the person He wants you to be, and to stop trying to grab and manipulate to get your own way.



Going Deeper

1. What great idea did God wrap in the person of Jacob? _____

2. What three life perspectives did God teach Jacob when he wrestled with the angel? (Genesis 32) _____

3. Why did God change the name of Jacob to Israel? _____

4. Why did God have to cripple Jacob before He could crown him with His blessing? _____

5. What can we learn by comparing the way Jacob answered Isaac's chapter 27 question, "Who are you?" with the time when God asked the question, "What is your name?" in the wrestling match that is discussed in Genesis 32? _____

6. What did Jacob mean when he met Esau after 20 hard years with his Uncle Laban and said to his brother, "The Almighty has dealt graciously with me"? _____

7. What are the devotional and practical applications you can make to your own life from the study of the character of Jacob in the book of Genesis? _____
