

07 WRESTLING WITH GOD

KEY TEXT: GENESIS 32:22-32

CENTRAL truth

Jacob's wrestling match with God presents a powerful image of just how personal God is. As a result of this encounter with God, Jacob was marked for the remainder of his life. Jacob left limping but with a new identity. Though it was painful, it was good news for him. In fact, it's good news for us as well. It teaches us that **when we encounter God, He changes us.**

key question

Have you ever wrestled with God spiritually? What difficulty or question initiated this experience?

Though we probably won't ever get into a physical wrestling match with God, He still invites us to wrestle with Him. As doubt and skepticism creep into our minds and hearts, we may be tempted to deal with them elsewhere before returning to the Lord. Rarely do we give students space to voice their hesitations and spiritual anxieties. This is an opportunity to give them that space. The wrestling and the testing of their faith will lead to greater spiritual resilience.

keep in mind

- Jacob left his encounter with the Lord both injured and blessed. It can be difficult for some students to see God as One who both injures and blesses in this account. However, this is a theme within Scripture that reaches its pinnacle in Jesus. It is through His injuries that the world finds blessing. God is not unfamiliar with the experience of injury and blessing, and we can find refuge in that reality.
- In our day and age, it is common for students to receive signals that their identities are something they're solely responsible for cultivating. Identity, as well as where we derive it, is central in this week's Scripture. It's important to note that those who follow Jesus are given a new identity, one that is unchanging. Our primary identity through the work of Christ is that we are children of God. Do not be shocked if this thought challenges some students and be prepared to work through this with them.

application

How does the story of Jacob wrestling with God demonstrate that God is personal and active in our lives?

the win

FOR THE STUDENT: Students should understand that we do not have a God who is unwilling to wrestle with our questions and doubts. Running to the Lord offers opportunity for transformation and spiritual resilience.

FOR THE LEADER: Rarely are students given the space to be honest about their questions and doubts. You do not have to be an expert to create a space where students feel safe to be authentic. As you listen, ask the Lord for wisdom to speak, pray, and follow-up.

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