

Wednesday, May 5

The values and outlook with which you approach life will influence not only you but also everyone around you. In today's reading, Rachel and Leah demonstrated the jealous, competitive, and manipulative behavior that can result when one seeks purpose in life through another person, role, or function rather than through God. When your character is not godly, your focus will shift to the wrong priorities.

Genesis 29:31—30:43

- Whom did Rachel and Leah's race to have children affect? What competition arose between Jacob and Laban?
- Think about the priorities, values, and outlook you demonstrate at home, at work, or in your community. Will these expressions of your character most likely create blessings or pain in the future?

Thursday, May 6

Although far from totally transformed in character himself, Jacob finally had his fill of his father-in-law's selfishness. Under God's direction, and with the support and cooperation of his wives, Jacob headed home to Canaan. In some situations, a clean break is necessary to protect future generations from negative patterns, but listening and following God's direction to make positive steps toward change is right in every situation.

Genesis 31:1—55

- What examples of the family pattern of dishonesty and deception can you identify in today's verses?
- Every family has negative patterns that need to change and be aligned with God's will and purpose. What patterns in your family need to be adjusted or broken? What first positive step could you take?

Friday, May 7

After twenty years of remembering Esau's hatred, Jacob felt guilt and terror as he finally faced his wronged brother. After making his own plans to meet Esau, Jacob encountered God in a whole new way that left him with a physical reminder of God's power and provision. The wounds you carry from broken relationships and failures become powerful reminders of your inability to do life on your own and your need for God's transformational power. Only God can make the difference in you and in the lives of those you have wronged.

Genesis 32:1—33:20

- What changes in character appear to have taken place in Jacob? In Esau?
- Over what have you wrestled with God? What was the outcome?

Saturday, May 8

Like Jacob, you are a work in progress. Perfection is not equivalent to being flawless. It is an indicator of your consistent growth in character and maturity, increasingly reflecting Christ's values through obedience. As you mature spiritually, so will your attitudes, behavior, and capacity to love as God loves.

Matthew 5:38—48 and Psalm 15:1-5

- What do today's verses say about what God wants from and for you as you live out your spiritual relationship through Jesus?
- Which of the instructions in today's verses is most challenging for you to follow?