



Jacob: New Heart, New Start - Week 2 DISCUSSION GUIDE

OVERVIEW

In this message of the series, **REnamed**, we learn what happens when people who need a redirection in their life encounter God. When people meet God, He *REnames* them. He changed Abram to Abraham, Simon to Peter, and Jacob to Israel. When we come to Christ, He changes our names from unclean to clean, unrighteous to righteous, purposeless to purposeful.

DISCUSSION

The grandson of Abraham, Jacob was also the father to twelve sons who would eventually form the tribes of the nation of Israel. Jacob came out of the womb literally grabbing his brother's heel. The name Jacob translates to "heel catcher, supplanter, deceiver, and con man"—which is exactly who he became.

In Genesis 25, we see Jacob's conniving ways when he took advantage of his brother Esau, manipulated the situation, conned him, and stole the birthright. In Hebrew culture, there was a tradition where the firstborn son received at least a double portion of the inheritance compared to the other children. So in Genesis 27, when Isaac, their father, was old, blind, and ready to convey this once-in-a-lifetime blessing, Jacob partnered in a manipulative scheme with his mother. He pretended to be Esau (the firstborn), and Isaac laid his hands on and blessed dishonest Jacob instead of Esau.

The problem is—after Jacob got the blessing—it didn't satisfy. There might be a little Jacob in all of us. We, at times, believe that if we can just get our hands on this one thing—life would be all it was meant to be. So, we do all we can to get "it" – then when we do, we end up disappointed and dissatisfied.

- What's something you tried everything to get, but in the end, wasn't worth it?

Esau threatens to kill Jacob, so Jacob fled to Haran, where he spent two decades living in a difficult family environment, which included his deceiving uncle. Eventually he ran from his uncle back to his home to face his past where he had an encounter with God. Jacob experienced a new heart, a new start, and a new direction in his life. It's here, God **REnamed** Jacob.

Four Steps to a Fresh Start:

1. The divine **setup**.

Genesis 32:6-7, 24: ...“We came to your brother Esau, and he also is coming to meet you, and four hundred men are with him.” So Jacob was greatly afraid and distressed... Then Jacob was left alone... God strategically brings all of us to these lonely places. We all need to come to the end of ourselves and come face-to-face with God. We have a choice to yield to God or our life circumstances will crush us.

- Share a time when God brought you to a lonely place where you had an encounter with Him.
- Why do you think God brings us to these lonely places?

2. The wrestle.

Verse 24: ...a Man wrestled with him until the breaking of day. Jacob wrestled with God. **Verse 25: Now when He saw that He did not prevail against him, He touched the socket of his hip; and the socket of Jacob's hip was out of joint as He wrestled with him.** We see that God breaks Jacob, so He can ultimately bless him. Jacob was no longer able to run and couldn't run from God. When we surrender to God it may seem like we are losing, but we ultimately win. In God's kingdom, the way up is down. God exalts the humble. When we surrender, we go from resisting to resting.

- Have you ever wrestled with God? Share.

3. The ownership moment.

Genesis 32:26: ...“Let Me go, for the day breaks.” But he said, “I will not let You go unless You bless me!” God pivots and, instead of addressing Jacob's request for blessing, he asks in **verse 27: ...“What is your name?” He said, “Jacob.”** God already knows the answer to this question, but He is getting down to the core issue: Jacob's deceptive heart and self-reliance. In disclosing his name, Jacob is doing more than sharing information, He is confessing the appropriateness of his name. You can't be REnamed until you own up to what you have become.

- Why is it important to admit our faults with God, even though He already knows?
- What old name do you need to own and then allow God to rename you? (Examples: Lustful, Proudful, Worthless, Manipulator, Deceiver, etc.)

4. The new name.

Genesis 32:28: ...“Your name shall no longer be called Jacob, but Israel; for you have struggled with God and with men, and have prevailed.” Jacob's new name, “Israel,” is rich with meaning. It means: “Prince with God”, or “Governed by God”. Jacob's no longer going to do life his way; he's going to do it God's way. And with God, he will overcome. Jesus did the same for us at the cross. When we put our faith in Christ, the Apostle Paul said in **2 Corinthians 5:21: For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.** In Christ, you have a new name – you're “Pure”, you're “Righteous”, you're “New”. Your past doesn't have to name you. God can transform and REname you.

LIFE CHALLENGE

What is holding you back from trusting God, looking at Him face-to-face and experiencing His life-changing love and transformation? Let us with great boldness and self-awareness, own our stuff, respond like Jacob, and let God REname us.

Identity Declaration:

I am new in Christ. 2 Corinthians 5:17
I am forgiven in Christ. Ephesians 1:7
I am redeemed by Christ. Galatians 3:13
I am accepted in Christ. Ephesians 1:6
I am free in Christ. Galatians 5:1
I am pure and holy in Christ. 1 Peter 1:15
I am righteous in Christ. 2 Corinthians 5:21
I am adopted by God. John 1:12
I am not condemned. Romans 8:1
I am no longer a slave to sin. Romans 6:6