

Your Name Shall Be Israel

Genesis 32:22-32

## MEMORY VERSE

PSALM 145:18

The LORD is near to all who call upon Him, to all who call upon Him in truth.

## WHAT YOU WILL NEED:

As many phone handout sheets, safety pins, and scissors as the number of children in your class.

A lamp or a strong flashlight.

A broken radio or tape recorder, some broken glass in a jar, a broken pencil, a broken ruler, or other common items that are broken.

## ATTENTION GRABBER!

### Phones

Remember to call upon the Lord with a paper phone. Just cut along the dotted line on the phone handout. Put a safety pin in the hole and pin them on your students' shirts.

Explain that God desires a relationship with us and He wants us to call out to Him; He can always help us, because He's in complete control of every situation. **God wants us to be completely dependent on Him.**

## LESSON TIME!

In this chapter we read about a life-changing encounter that Jacob has as we look more closely at his life. In the beginning of the chapter, Jacob is traveling back to the home he left many years before, and to a brother that had threatened to kill him. On his journey home, Jacob sees a host of angels. He named the place,

Mahanaim, which signifies two companies or groups, possibly one going before him, and one behind him.

What a comfort to Jacob that God was with him and would keep and protect him wherever he went. But our conniving Jacob still resorts to his own efforts to accomplish God's promises in his life. How can a man who is so strong in himself ever come to a place of leaning totally upon God? Truly Jacob's greatest need is to become a broken man before God and be delivered from himself. **God wants us to be completely dependent on Him.**

## Shadows

Bring a lamp or a strong flashlight to class. Turn the lamp on and the lights off. Seat the class in a circle on the floor and ask them one at a time to try to disconnect themselves from their shadows.

Talk about how God is always with us, nearer than our shadows; He will stay with us even if our shadows won't! We can always trust in the Lord! **God wants us to be completely dependent on Him.**

### GENESIS 32:22-23

And he arose that night and took his two wives, his two maidservants, and his eleven sons, and crossed over the ford of Jabbok.

He took them, sent them over the brook, and sent over what he had.

Here we see that Jacob is a man in great distress. He had sent messengers to his brother to announce his coming, but instead of the messengers coming back with good news, they inform Jacob that Esau is already on his way to meet Jacob with four hundred men.

Jacob was worried. He sent his family and all his belongings over the brook "Jabbok." Jacob faced the possibility of losing everything, especially his life. Interestingly enough, Jabbok signifies "emptying." Jacob was emptied of everything.

Can you remember from previous lessons why Jacob was afraid to meet his brother again? He had stolen his birthright and then took off to live with Laban. The last time we see Esau he is threatening to kill Jacob. So what will Esau do when he catches up with Jacob? And what will Jacob do now that he is afraid?

**GENESIS 32:24a**

**Then Jacob was left alone...**

Here we see that "Jacob was left alone." Jacob was alone with God. It was the only true way for Jacob to see himself as he really was. There was no more scheming or conniving here. It was just Jacob and God. How we each need to have that encounter in our own lives.

We need to be "left alone" with God, that we may see ourselves without our excuses or schemes. Everything fades away in the presence of His holiness. Oftentimes, as Jacob we can still have a strong reliance on ourselves. Jacob was now being brought into confrontation with his brother. He was now going to learn the important lesson of total reliance on God.

**GENESIS 32:24b-27**

**...and a Man wrestled with him until the breaking of day.**

**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.**

And He said, "Let Me go, for the day breaks." But he said, "I will not let You go unless You bless me!"

So He said to him, "What is your name?" And he said, "Jacob."

Now we see that a man appeared to Jacob while he was alone, and the man wrestled with Jacob. It is significant that the man wrestled with Jacob, not Jacob with the man. Who was this man and why did he wrestle with Jacob?

In Hosea 12:4, this man is called "the Angel". It is actually a time when Jesus appeared before He came as a baby in a manger. We see several times in the Old Testament when Jesus appeared as the Angel or Messenger of the Lord. Also in verse 30, Jacob states, "For I have seen God face to face."

Jacob was chosen by God to establish the nation of Israel, God's chosen nation. Jacob had to fully know his own weakness, but even more importantly, he must know the power and all-sufficiency of God. We see they wrestled all night. One would think that if it is God wrestling with Jacob, why did it take all night? Was Jacob stronger than God? Of course not. What can we see in this "long" struggle?

Jacob had a lot of "self" left in him. As we saw earlier, Jacob was a very strong, self-reliant man. He would not give up easily. Yet, we also see a beautiful picture of God's long-suffering and forbearance with us. God sees our "struggles," but He accomplishes His purposes in our lives as He patiently gives us His grace.

In verse 25, we see that the Lord "touched the socket of his (Jacob's) hip; and the socket of Jacob's hip was out of joint as he wrestled with him." This shows us how God could have ended the struggle in two seconds if He had chosen to do so. With just one touch Jacob became powerless.

God so desires to bring us to the end of ourselves, to show us our own powerlessness, to teach each of us to have no confidence in our flesh, so that He could be our strength in our weakness. **God wants us to be completely dependent on Him.** When the thighbone is thrown out of joint, a man is utterly disabled. Jacob, by one touch from his wrestling opponent, could no longer stand alone, but he clung to the one who conquered him; to rely only on the One who is mightier than Jacob.

Then in verse 26, the "visitor" wants Jacob to let him go. Jacob refuses until the Lord blesses him. It is at this point, when his thigh has been disabled, that Jacob cries out "I will not let you go" and Jacob adds "unless you bless me."

Then the Lord asked Jacob his name. Did the Lord not know his name? Yes, He did, but as Jacob told God who he was, he was no doubt reminded what his name means: heel catcher or deceiver. Jacob had a history of deception and manipulation and even his name brought that out. Now he was disabled, dependent upon another, and seeking a blessing. But God was about to change things for Jacob.

### **GENESIS 32:28-29**

**And He said, "Your name shall no longer be called Jacob, but Israel; for you have struggled with God and with men, and have prevailed."**

**Then Jacob asked Him, saying, "Tell me Your name, I pray." And He said, "Why is it that you ask about My name?" And He blessed him there.**

Here a wonderful thing happened to Jacob. God now calls him, who had been called "deceiver," "Israel". He is no longer to be the "deceiver" but the one who is "ruled by God." The name Israel means "governed by God." Jacob would go from being a person

who tried to manipulate things by deceit to a man who was in submission to God in all things.

Jacob would now see that he was not to command his own life, but it was God who would. Jacob had prevailed, but now as Israel, God would command and it would be God who would prevail.

It is only when we realize our nothingness and absolute helplessness that we are finally very willing and ready for God to command and take control of our lives. Jacob then asked the “Man” his name, and the “Man” asked him a question, "Why is it that you ask about my name?" Then the “Man” “blessed him there." We can see that as we submit ourselves to God to be commanded by Him, blessings flow to us. **God wants us to be completely dependent on Him.**

#### GENESIS 32:30-32

And Jacob called the name of the place Peniel: "For I have seen God face to face, and my life is preserved."

Just as he crossed over Penuel the sun rose on him, and he limped on his hip.

Therefore to this day the children of Israel do not eat the muscle that shrank, which is on the hip socket, because He touched the socket of Jacob's hip in the muscle that shrank.

Jacob named the place of this occurrence “Peniel”; the face of God. Jacob had been allowed to see and touch God, and was still alive to share the experience. For this to be possible, God veiled Himself in human form (Exodus 33:20; 1 Timothy 6:16). The name of the place was not forgotten, though changed to Penuel. It was known by that name until at least the days of the divided kingdom (1 Kings 12:25).



Jacob was left with a permanent monument, his limp, reminding him of all that God had overcome in Jacob's life. God overcame Jacob's self-will. When we see Jesus, we will see the scars in His hands and feet to remind us throughout all eternity that He has overcome sin and death for each of us. **God wants us to be completely dependent on Him.**

Some people fight with God and refuse to lay down their wills. God will always win. When we refuse to give our lives to the Lord we will only produce misery in our lives. But when we allow the Lord to rule in our lives then good things will be produced. Let's always remember to give our lives to the Lord and become completely dependent upon Him.

## **Crutch Friends**

"Broken" can mean many things. Bring a broken radio or tape recorder, some broken glass in a jar, a broken pencil, a broken ruler, or other common item that is broken. Have the children examine the broken items.

Explain that it is usually more difficult to tell when people are broken. Talk about being broken before the Lord. Explain that brokenness before God, no matter what the actual infirmity, will cause us to be dependent on Him.

Have your children form pairs. Have each take turns pretending to have a broken leg. Have the other partner help the one with the "broken leg" around. Have them switch. Explain how this illustrates the connection between brokenness and dependency.

## **PRAYER**

Lead the children in a prayer of thanksgiving for God's perfect love. If there are any children who have not yet responded to the gospel, give them opportunity to do so.



Template - Phones

