



TURN *the* PAGE

SESSION 3 – FROM STRIVING TO SURRENDERED

MESSAGE BIG IDEA

“Turn the Page” by surrendering control of your life to God.

SCRIPTURE

Genesis 31-33, Hebrews 13:5

ICE BREAKER & OPENING THOUGHT

1. The zombie apocalypse is coming, who are three people you want on your team?
2. As we talk about surrendering control of our life to God, what do you think it means to have control of your life?

BIBLE DISCUSSION

3. Read Genesis 32:22-32. A lot is happening in this passage. What did you notice?
4. The text says God (in the form of a man) could not overpower Jacob. Jacob would have been 97 at this point in his life, so that statement probably shouldn't be taken to mean something physical, but spiritual. What do you think it might mean that God doesn't overcome Jacob?
5. God picks the fight with Jacob and blesses him even though Jacob won't give in. God changes Jacob's name to Israel which means God fights. In what way does God "fight?" How might God fight for us or even wrestle with us?

LIFE APPLICATION

6. In what ways can you relate to Jacob's story? Has there ever been a time when you felt challenged by God, but weren't open to change? Explain.
7. Jacob spent most of his life deceiving and striving to get what he wanted rather than trusting that God would be with him. Similarly, God wants us to put our trust in him. In what ways can you surrender more of your life to God?

CHALLENGE

In Hebrews 13:5 we read, “Never will I leave you, never will I forsake you.” Jacob heard that same promise from God – that God would fight for him (Gen 31:3). We have that same promise today. Let's spend a few moments in prayer surrendering ourselves to God so that we might walk more confidently in him.



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ICE BREAKER & OPENING THOUGHT

These questions will get your group talking about the main idea of the discussion. Have them explore what it means to have control of your life. We may easily use that language, but what does it mean and what could it mean to allow God to have that control instead?

BIBLE DISCUSSION & LIFE APPLICATION

A lot is happening in this passage, so to help bring some clarity and direction for discussion and life application, we’ve included a portion of John Goldingay’s commentary (Genesis for Everyone) on Genesis here as a resource to you.

“So why is God wrestling with Jacob? God has been doing that all Jacob’s life, trying to turn Jacob into the man God wants him to be but failing. Here is God trying again but succeeding only by cheating, which means the victory is hollow. Perhaps one reason God appears as just a man is that this makes it a fair fight. If God overwhelms us simply through having superior firepower, it’s not much use as a victory. God has to “win us,” as we say. We have to want to yield to God’s purpose and God’s vision for us if the change in us is to be authentic. But Jacob does not want to yield, and never does.

“God does bless him and gives him a new name that epitomizes his nature. As is often the case, the comment about the names has some subtleties about it. It links Jacob’s new name with the fact that he is the great fighter. And yes indeed, Jacob is a person who keeps fighting with God to stay the man he is. In the end, God lets him do that because even God cannot force people to change. God strives to get a person like Jacob to become the kind of person he could be and should be and that God wants him to be, and keeps at it in this struggle with Jacob.

“Once more we need to recall that the audience of this story is Jacob, is Israel. And insofar as the church comes to share in Israel’s relationship with God, we recall that we too are Jacob, we are Israel. We are a people whose nature is to struggle with God to avoid becoming the people we could be and a people with whom God continues to struggle to try to take us there.”

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