

Mental



✔ Prepare in Advance

- Have the *Bible Background Video* ready to view.
- Retrieve, review, and have ready the videos listed below (links are provided on this session's webpage).

✔ Begin

As you begin, ask the following introductory questions:

- At what times in your faith journey do you feel you have “wrestled” with God?
- Have someone read Genesis 32:22-31 aloud, then show the *Bible Background Video*.

✔ Discuss

Use the following information and questions to encourage discussion.

- Why do you think Jacob decided to send everyone else across the river, and to remain alone that night?
- What internal struggles was Jacob likely dealing with that night as he prepared to meet his brother Esau?
- At what point do you think Jacob realized that he was wrestling with God or an emissary from God?
- Jacob's adversary renamed him Israel, because he had “striven with God and with humans” and had “prevailed” (v. 28). By “prevailed” or “overcome,” do you think he means that Jacob won the wrestling match? What else could it mean?
- This wrestling match was a tangible symbol of a very real spiritual struggle. From your own knowledge of Jacob's history, how had he “struggled” with humans? How had he struggled with God?
- Do you think it was necessary for Jacob to “wrestle” with God spiritually for these blessings? How else might he have received them?
- Why is it significant that Jacob walked with a limp after this encounter? What lesson had he learned that the limp would later remind him of?

✔ Apply

Ask the following questions to help close the discussion:

- Christian people today sometimes talk of “wrestling” with God in prayer over something. Is this the same kind of wrestling Jacob did throughout his life? Why or why not?
- In what ways do we, as God's people, often find ourselves wrestling with God for blessings like Jacob did?
- Is God hesitant to give out blessings, or is there another way for us to receive them?

✔ Closing

In closing, say: Let's take time to reflect silently on what we've heard today. Ask God to help you identify one area in which you wrestle for God's blessing. Ask God to show you one way you can begin to give up and begin accepting it.

by Jon Parks

