

LIMPING with God STUDY GUIDE



Warm-Up

Share Highs/Lows since the last time you met.

What insights from the first study have you reflected on this past week?

How has God surprised you this past week?

Work Out

⁴² When Rebekah was told what her older son Esau had said, she sent for her younger son Jacob and said to him, “Your brother Esau is planning to avenge himself by killing you. ⁴³ Now then, my son, do what I say: Flee at once to my brother Laban in Harran. ⁴⁴ Stay with him for a while until your brother’s fury subsides. ⁴⁵ When your brother is no longer angry with you and forgets what you did to him, I’ll send word for you to come back from there. Why should I lose both of you in one day?”... **28** ¹ So Isaac called for Jacob and blessed him. Then he commanded him: “Do not marry a Canaanite woman. ² Go at once to Paddan Aram, to the house of your mother’s father Bethuel. Take a wife for yourself there, from among the daughters of Laban, your mother’s brother. ³ May God Almighty bless you and make you fruitful and increase your numbers until you become a community of peoples. ⁴ May he give you and your descendants the blessing given to Abraham, so that you may take possession of the land where you now reside as a foreigner, the land God gave to Abraham.” ⁵ Then Isaac sent Jacob on his way, and he went to Paddan Aram, to Laban son of Bethuel the Aramean, the brother of Rebekah, who was the mother of Jacob and Esau
Genesis 27:42-45, 28:1-5

1. What are some significant, milestone "Goodbyes" that you have experienced? Moving from known to unknown, from certainty to doubt can be a time of exile. What gives you hope, or causes you fear, as you move forward toward a time of exile?
2. Jacob goes into exile with the blessing of Issac in Genesis 28:3-4. What is the content of that blessing? How would this sustain Jacob? What promises of Christ do you hold onto when heading into exile?
3. Discuss the variety of exiles that we experience. What was God doing with Jacob in his exile? What is the Lord doing in our own? What main truth is he teaching us during those times of trial and tribulation?

¹⁰ Jacob left Beersheba and set out for Harran. ¹¹ When he reached a certain place, he stopped for the night because the sun had set. Taking one of the stones there, he put it under his head and lay down to sleep. ¹² He had a dream in which he saw a stairway resting on the earth, with its top reaching to heaven, and the angels of God were ascending and descending on it. ¹³ There above it stood the Lord, and he said: "I am the Lord, the God of your father Abraham and the God of Isaac. I will give you and your descendants the land on which you are lying. ¹⁴ Your descendants will be like the dust of the earth, and you will spread out to the west and to the east, to the north and to the south. All peoples on earth will be blessed through you and your offspring. ¹⁵ I am with you and will watch over you wherever you go, and I will bring you back to this land. I will not leave you until I have done what I have promised you."
¹⁶ When Jacob awoke from his sleep, he thought, "Surely the Lord is in this place, and I was not aware of it." ¹⁷ He was afraid and said, "How awesome is this place! This is none other than the house of God; this is the gate of heaven."

Genesis 28:10-17

4. What is the longest period of time when you have been utterly alone? What are the challenges, pitfalls, and blessings that can come from being alone? What can we learn from Jacob's time of being alone?
5. How is it helpful to remember that Jacob was not looking for God when God came looking for him? What are some occasions when the Lord might show up in an unexpected way in our lives? Think of the examples of Abraham (Gen. 18: 1-15); Zacchaeus (Luke 19:1-10); and Paul (Acts 9:1-19). How does Christ's visit to Paul exemplify the fact that these divine visitations are not always pleasant experiences?
6. How do these four words: "God gives, we receive" encapsulate our lives as followers of Jesus? Reflect on 1 Corinthians 15:10. Apply this to your life and your vocations. How does the grace of Christ shape every part of our lives as disciples?
7. What are some of the specific promises that God speaks to Jacob? How do these align with some of the same promises spoken to Abraham and Isaac? Why is it so necessary for us to hear, over and over, the promises of God?
8. Talk about what difference it makes if we see God standing "above the ladder" or "beside Jacob." Do you think of Christ as far off, near, or sometimes both? What does he promise in Matthew 28:18-20?
9. Discuss what mercy is and how God shows us mercy (see Ps. 51:1; Eph. 2:4-8; Luke 18:13). Did Jacob deserve mercy, or do we deserve it? How does this incident contradict the caricature of God in the OT as mean and hardhearted?

Cool Down

Pray as a group for each other and for your study of God's Word.
(If no one feels comfortable, pray the Lord's Prayer together.)