

# LIMPING with God STUDY GUIDE



## Week 4: Live to Tell the Tale

### Warm-Up

Share Highs/Lows since the last time you met.

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

How has God surprised you this past week?

### Work Out

Jacob also went on his way, and the angels of God met him. <sup>2</sup>When Jacob saw them, he said, “This is the camp of God!” So he named that place Mahanaim.

<sup>3</sup>Jacob sent messengers ahead of him to his brother Esau in the land of Seir, the country of Edom. <sup>4</sup>He instructed them: “This is what you are to say to my lord Esau: ‘Your servant Jacob says, I have been staying with Laban and have remained there till now. <sup>5</sup>I have cattle and donkeys, sheep and goats, male and female servants. Now I am sending this message to my lord, that I may find favor in your eyes.’”

<sup>6</sup>When the messengers returned to Jacob, they said, “We went to your brother Esau, and now he is coming to meet you, and four hundred men are with him.”

<sup>7</sup>In great fear and distress Jacob divided the people who were with him into two groups, and the flocks and herds and camels as well. <sup>8</sup>He thought, “If Esau comes and attacks one group, the group that is left may escape.”

**Genesis 32:1-8**

1. How does Edgar Allan Poe's gothic short story, *The Tell-Tale Heart*, exemplify what is happening during this episode of Jacob's life?
2. Does something you did years ago, even decades ago, still bother you? What are some less-than-helpful ways of dealing with these bad memories? How did Jacob attempt to deal with his?
3. Read Psalm 32:1-5. How does the psalmist describe his pre-confession, pre-forgiveness life? How does he describe his life after confession? Discuss what we can learn from this.
4. Read James 5:16 and John 20:19-23. From whom do we seek forgiveness? How can we make confession and forgiveness more central in our lives as followers of Jesus?

<sup>22</sup> That night Jacob got up and took his two wives, his two female servants and his eleven sons and crossed the ford of the Jabbok. <sup>23</sup> After he had sent them across the stream, he sent over all his possessions. <sup>24</sup> So Jacob was left alone, and a man wrestled with him till daybreak. <sup>25</sup> When the man saw that he could not overpower him, he touched the socket of Jacob's hip so that his hip was wrenched as he wrestled with the man. <sup>26</sup> Then the man said, "Let me go, for it is daybreak."

But Jacob replied, "I will not let you go unless you bless me."

<sup>27</sup> The man asked him, "What is your name?"

"Jacob," he answered.

<sup>28</sup> Then the man said, "Your name will no longer be Jacob, but Israel, because you have struggled with God and with humans and have overcome."

<sup>29</sup> Jacob said, "Please tell me your name."

But he replied, "Why do you ask my name?" Then he blessed him there.

<sup>30</sup> So Jacob called the place Peniel, saying, "It is because I saw God face to face, and yet my life was spared."

<sup>31</sup> The sun rose above him as he passed Peniel, and he was limping because of his hip. <sup>32</sup> Therefore to this day the Israelites do not eat the tendon attached to the socket of the hip, because the socket of Jacob's hip was touched near the tendon.

**Genesis 32:22-32**

5. This "man" with whom Jacob wrestled is also called God and an "angel" ( which is more accurately translated as "messenger"). This messenger, commonly called the messenger of Yahweh (e.g., Genesis 16:7-16 and Exodus 3:1-6), is the Son of God. Reflect on the importance of Jacob wrestling with the Son of God.
6. Read Philippians 2:5-11. How do these verses reflect and expand upon what was happening with Jacob and this "man"?
7. When a woman changes her last name in marriage it becomes a signal that God has woven two lives together. What other examples come to mind of life-altering decisions, relationships, or actions that forever thereafter define us, so that we can't tell "our story" without also telling someone else's?
8. Discuss this statement and its implications for our lives as disciples: "Anyone who tells you that becoming a disciple of Jesus will make your life easier is a false teacher, a charlatan, or quite simply a madman." Why is this so?
9. When you think about your own scars or limps, what comes to mind? Talk about how the life of disciple-ship is not about us getting stronger; rather, it's about growing increasingly aware of our weakness and the

### 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.)