

LIMPING with God STUDY GUIDE



Week 5: Once a Prodigal...

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 looked up and there was Esau, coming with his four hundred men; so he divided the children among Leah, Rachel and the two female servants. ² He put the female servants and their children in front, Leah and her children next, and Rachel and Joseph in the rear. ³ He himself went on ahead and bowed down to the ground seven times as he approached his brother.

⁴ But Esau ran to meet Jacob and embraced him; he threw his arms around his neck and kissed him. And they wept.

Genesis 33:1-4

1. What are the possible scenarios that could happen when these two brothers reunite?
2. Compare the tearful reunion of Esau and Jacob with the father's reunion with his son in Luke 15:20-24. What details are the same? How does this encounter alter your view of Esau?

⁵ Then Esau looked up and saw the women and children. "Who are these with you?" he asked.

Jacob answered, "They are the children God has graciously given your servant."

⁶ Then the female servants and their children approached and bowed down. ⁷ Next, Leah and her children came and bowed down. Last of all came Joseph and Rachel, and they too bowed down.

⁸ Esau asked, "What's the meaning of all these flocks and herds I met?" "To find favor in your eyes, my lord," he said.

⁹ But Esau said, "I already have plenty, my brother. Keep what you have for yourself."

¹⁰ “No, please!” said Jacob. “If I have found favor in your eyes, accept this gift from me. For to see your face is like seeing the face of God, now that you have received me favorably. ¹¹ Please accept the present that was brought to you, for God has been gracious to me and I have all I need.” And because Jacob insisted, Esau accepted it.

¹² Then Esau said, “Let us be on our way; I’ll accompany you.”

¹³ But Jacob said to him, “My lord knows that the children are tender and that I must care for the ewes and cows that are nursing their young. If they are driven hard just one day, all the animals will die. ¹⁴ So let my lord go on ahead of his servant, while I move along slowly at the pace of the flocks and herds before me and the pace of the children, until I come to my lord in Seir.”

¹⁵ Esau said, “Then let me leave some of my men with you.”

“But why do that?” Jacob asked. “Just let me find favor in the eyes of my lord.”

¹⁶ So that day Esau started on his way back to Seir. ¹⁷ Jacob, however, went to Sukkoth, where he built a place for himself and made shelters for his livestock. That is why the place is called Sukkoth.

Genesis 33:5-17

3. Talk about the speech and behaviour of Jacob when he meets Esau. How does he react, both before, during, and after this encounter? Why does he go north after he had agreed to go south to meet up with his brother? Discuss how we are like Jacob. Give specific examples.
4. Talk about the ramifications of this statement for our discipleship and Christ’s grace: “If you, as a disciple of Jesus, find yourself, five or ten or even fifty years after you started following Jesus, still weak in the same areas of life, still struggling with lust or anger or greed or hatred, then welcome to the Club of Discipleship, commonly known as The Church.”
5. Share your changed impressions of Jacob over the course of this series. Do you think more/less of Jacob? Do you think more/less of God? Do you think more/less of yourself and your journey as a disciple of Christ?

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.)