



We have little trouble identifying with Jacob. He is one of the most human and understandable people in the Bible. In eight chapters of Genesis, we see God saving Jacob, God subduing Jacob, God separating Jacob, and God sanctifying Jacob. The actual story is spread over twenty or thirty years of Jacob's life, for God never hurries and never skimps His work in a human soul. He is working for eternity.

John Phillips

**From Zero to Hero – Jacob's Growing Faith
Hebrews 11:21**

Hebrews 11:21 (NIV)

"By faith Jacob, when he was dying, blessed each of Joseph's sons, and worshipped as he leaned on the top of his staff.

I. Rebellious against the Plan of God

- He Defrauded His Brother

Genesis 25:29-34 (NIV)

When Jacob was cooking some stew, Esau said to Jacob, "let me have some of that stew! I'm famished!" Jacob replied, "First sell me your birthright. Esau said, "What good is the birthright to me?" So he swore an oath, selling his birthright to Jacob. Then Jacob gave Esau some bread and some stew. He ate and got up and left. So Esau despised his birthright.

- He Deceived His Father

Genesis 27:15-19 (NIV)

"Then Rebekah took the best clothes of Esau and put them on Jacob. She also covered his hands and neck with goatskins. Then Jacob went to his father and said, "My father. I am Esau your firstborn. I have done as you told me. Please sit up and eat some of my game so that you may give me your blessing."

- He Displeased His Lord

Galatians 6:7-8 (NIV)

Do not be deceived: God cannot be mocked. A man reaps what he sows. The one who sows to please his sinful nature, from that nature will reap destruction;

II. Awakened in the Presence of God

Genesis 28:10-22 (NIV)

Jacob left and stopped for the night and lay down to sleep. 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. 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. 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. I will not leave you until I have done what I have promised you." When Jacob awoke from his sleep, he thought, "Surely the LORD is in this place, and I was not aware of it." He was afraid and said, "How awesome is this place! He called that place Bethel. Then Jacob made a vow, saying, "If God will be with me and will watch over me on this journey, then the LORD will be my God and this stone that I have set up as a pillar will be God's house, and of all that you give me I will give you a tenth."

Genesis 32:9-12 (NIV)

Then Jacob prayed, "O God of my father Abraham, God of my father Isaac, O LORD, I am unworthy of all the kindness and faithfulness you have shown your servant. Save me, I pray, from the hand of my brother Esau, for you have said, 'I will surely make you prosper and will make your descendants like the sand of the sea...'"

Genesis 35:24-31 (NIV)

So Jacob was left alone, and a man wrestled with him till daybreak. 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. Then the man said, "Let me go, for it is daybreak." But Jacob replied, "I will not let you go unless you bless me." The man asked him, "What is your name?" "Jacob," he answered. Then the man said, "Your name will no longer be Jacob, but Israel, because you have struggled with God and with men

and have overcome." Then he blessed him there. So Jacob called the place Peniel, saying, "It is because I saw God face to face, and yet my life was spared." The sun rose above him as he passed Peniel, and he was limping because of his hip.

III. Transformed by the Power of God

Hebrews 11:21 (NASB)

"By faith Jacob, as he was dying, blessed each of the sons of Joseph, and worshiped, leaning on the top of his staff."

Important things to learn from Jacob:

- Walking with God is always *better* than Running from Sin
- Sometimes we have to be broken *before* we can be blessed.
- Let the past be the past and *GO ON* with God.

Romans 8:29 (NIV)

"For those God foreknew, He also predestined to be conformed to the likeness of his Son."