

BIBLE TEACHING AND WORSHIP GUIDE



FOR THE HOME-BASED CHURCH

Produced Weekly

God and an Imperfect Person
Genesis 28:10-22; 32:24-31, 35:9-15

Copy this sheet for the Gathering Time, Bible Study, and Worship Experience leaders for the next meeting of the church.

Leaders' Responsibilities:

Important: Each person who will be leading one of the three parts of a session during a Unit of sessions needs to have access to the "Basic Information for Leading the Unit of Study". That information is often provided at the beginning of that Unit of sessions. The weekly session "Background" located in the Teacher Preparation is much more specific to that day's study.

1. **The Gathering Time Leader** will gather all of the people together and help them prepare their minds and hearts for a wonderful worship experience before God. His/her responsibility is to introduce the congregation to the theme (content) and the Scripture that will be central to their worship experience for the day.

2. **The Bible Study Leader** will then help the people understand what the Scriptures have to say and teach us about the content of the study for the day. He/she will guide the people to make a general application of the study (ie: How does this Bible study apply to people today?)

3. **The Worship Time Leader** has the responsibility to use the theme and Scriptures to guide the congregation to make personal commitments to God's will for each one in regard to the study for the day. He/she will use others to lead in the music, taking the offering, ministry moment comments, and other activities and parts of the **Worship Time** that can aid in participatory worship.

Prior to this Coming Session:

Gathering Time Leader:

Bible Study Leader:

Worship Time Leader:

Use the song, **“Take My Life, and Let It Be Consecrated”** as a reading. Give the material to participants ahead of the worship time. Use the suggested visual aids to heighten the meaning of the words.

Print the Scripture verse to be read at the beginning and end of the devotional message.

Music Sources:

“Take My Life, and Let It Be Consecrated”, *The Baptist Hymnal*, 1991, #277; CCLI #264860.

“O Master, Let Me Walk With Thee”, *The Baptist Hymnal*, 1991, #279; CCLI # 158243.

“Come, Let Us Worship”, *WOW Worship*, 3rd Edition, #105; CCLI # 27329.

“Holy Ground”, *WOW Worship*, 3rd Edition, #147, CCLI # 21198.

1

Copy this section for the Gathering Time leader.

Gathering Time: (Suggested time: 15 minutes)

God and an Imperfect Person

Focal Text

Genesis 28:10-22; 32:24-31; 35:9-15

Background Text

Genesis 28:10 to 33:20; 35:9-15

Main Idea

God in his grace works with and through imperfect people to achieve God's purposes.

Question to Explore

In what ways, both ordinary and extraordinary, have you experienced God?

Teaching Aim

To lead participants to consider the meaning of the ways, both ordinary and extraordinary, in which they have experienced God.

Gathering together:

Choose one or two of the suggested songs given in Music Sources or choose songs enjoyed by your home church.

First thoughts:

Today's main idea "God in his grace works with and through imperfect people to achieve God's purposes" is something that brings hope and encouragement to us – the imperfect people of the world. We have studied the sad story of sibling rivalry between Esau and Jacob. Today's lesson gives a view of Jacob's later life and God's redemptive power in it.

Closing the Gathering Time:

Take time at this point to mention items of prayer concern for the church, announcements of ministry or activities, and anything else that needs to be shared with or by the congregation. Pray for these needs. Remember to praise God in prayer.

Break time! Take five minutes between sessions. Encourage children to use the washroom so that they won't need to leave during the Bible Study time.

Distribute youth/adult Bible study outlines or paper for note-taking, if available.

Also hand out the activity sheets for preschool and younger children to use during Bible Study and/or worship.

Note to the Bible Study Leader: Suggested teaching time for the Bible study should be about 35 minutes. Use the “Teacher Preparation” for your personal study during the week before the session. Use the “Bible Study Plan” for the actual session.

Teacher Preparation

God and an Imperfect Person

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Genesis 28:10-22; 32:24-31; 35:9-15

Background Text

Genesis 28:10 to 33:20; 35:9-15

Main Idea

God in his grace works with and through imperfect people to achieve God’s purposes.

Question to Explore

In what ways, both ordinary and extraordinary, have you experienced God?

Teaching Aim

To lead participants to consider the meaning of the ways, both ordinary and extraordinary, in which they have experienced God.

Introduction to your personal study:

Charles Colson had achieved much. He won a college scholarship. He graduated with honours. He was commissioned a lieutenant in the United States Marines during the Korean War.

He earned a doctorate. He started a legal firm. He got into politics. He served as a special counsel to the President of the United States. He was involved in the illegalities of Watergate. After the scandal became known, a friend of Colson told him of the change that Christ had made in his own life. One night as Colson started backing out of his friend’s driveway he had to stop because he was crying too hard. He prayed, “Just take me, God. Take me the way I am.” He felt a wonderful peace. He went to prison. In a prayer group made up of two dope peddlers, a stock swindler, a former special counsel to the President, and others they saw people give their lives to Christ. This

ambitious, talented, personable individual on his own efforts ended up in prison. With Christ in his heart he became founder of a prison reform effort, an evangelist, a writer, and gives a strong testimony of the power of God in his life.

Background:

Please ask for and read the information contained in the “**Basic Information for Leading the Unit of Study**”, found at the beginning of this Unit. Whoever downloaded this session for you should have that material for you, as well.

Focusing on the Meaning:

Jacob Encounters God Through a Dream (Genesis 28:10-22)

Jacob left home in Beersheba because of his trickery. He had tricked his brother Esau out of his inheritance as the older brother. He had deceived his father Isaac out of the blessing that was rightfully his brother's. Esau held a grudge against Jacob and following the death of their father, he planned to kill him. Jacob in his search for God's blessing through devious methods did not achieve the blessing but brought disharmony to the family and raised Esau's wrath. Mother Rebekah, upon hearing of this plot, warned Jacob. She sent him to her old home, Haran, where her brother, Laban, lived. On the way to Haran, Jacob stopped to rest. Using a stone for a pillow, he went to sleep. He went to sleep to rest. He received more than just rest—he had an experience with the Lord. This came about through a dream.

In this dream he saw a stairway with the bottom step on the earth and the top step in heaven. God's angels were going up and down the stairs. The Lord was standing above the stairway. He spoke to Jacob. He identified himself by saying he was the God of Abraham and the God of Isaac. Jacob sought through human effort to gain God's favour. God looked at his poverty and displayed His own divine mercy and goodness. Jacob had thought that this was an empty and lonely place but God was there. He then promised to give Jacob and his descendants the land on which he was sleeping. God pledged that Jacob's descendants would be a great multitude. They would be like the dust of the earth; they would be spread over all the world and all people would be blessed through Jacob and his offspring. God continued his covenant with Jacob by promising him to be with him wherever he went. He then indicated that he would take him back to Canaan and would not leave him until he had done what he promised.

Upon awakening, Jacob realized that the Lord had been present. He had not been conscious of this presence when he stopped to rest. He had been running because of his deceit and treachery. He had thought it was a lonely and abandoned place. But God was there. At this stop he encountered God and God made a promise to him that he had not deserved. He felt fear. He was aware that he had been in the presence of

God. He felt the majesty of the Lord. He was conscious that as man he had been at the very gate of heaven. He had gone to sleep lonely and abandoned but woke up awed and cheered by his experience with God. In the morning Jacob took his stone pillow and set it up as a column. He poured oil on the top of it. He named the place Bethel. This was the same place as the Canaanite town of Luz.

Jacob responded to the promises of the Lord. He made a vow. He did not ask for power, fame or riches. He agreed that the Lord would be his God if God was going to be with him, watch over him, give him food and clothes, and return him safely to his father's house. Jacob did make an agreement with God. He was not asking for much nor did he make the agreement conditional upon God fulfilling his wishes. He indicated that the column of stone was to be God's house and then promised to give God a tenth of his resources. In this encounter he received God's message through a dream.

Jacob Encounters God Through an Angel (Genesis 32:24-31)

Jacob continued his journey to Haran. Once there, he agrees to work for Laban. He saw Laban's daughter, Rachel, and agreed to work for seven years in order to have permission to marry her. However, after the completion of the seven years, Laban tricked Jacob into marrying Leah, the older daughter. Jacob then agreed to work another seven years and thus he is allowed to also marry Rachel.

After his marriages, he began to accumulate great flocks. Laban's son's felt his increases in riches had come from their father's wealth. Laban's attitude toward Jacob changed. God then commanded Jacob to return to the land of his fathers.

On the journey home Jacob contemplated his reunion with Esau his brother. Out of fear he divided his flocks, servants, and family into two groups and sent them ahead. Jacob then was left alone. It is not known why he remained there by himself. Jacob had left the land of Canaan guilty and subject to the anger of Esau. Now he must re-enter Canaan. He searched his heart to discover the kind of person he was.

This is a major turning point in his life. He was not, however, a completely bad person before the encounter and he was not completely a perfect person after this experience. Here a man wrestled with Jacob. This adversary had to be an angel of God. Finally the man saw he could not overpower Jacob. Jacob was dealing with the one who had power of life and death. He would not let go till he had the blessing. Out of his weakness, he sought for a power from God. Showing how easy it would have been for the angel to prevail, if he had wanted, the angel touched the socket of Jacob's hip so it was wrenched. The man requested that Jacob let him go but Jacob said he would not release him unless the man blessed him. Jacob chose not to lose the opportunity of a blessing. He was ready to risk his life for God's promise. God's favour was important to him. Jacob would not become a perfect person in this blessing. He would no longer, however, continue to be a mortal living by his own abilities. He would be a man living under God's direction.

The man asked his name and Jacob replied with his name Jacob. The man then said Jacob had a new name. He would be called Israel because he had wrestled with God and man and had been successful in the contest. Jacob requested the man's name but he replied with a question, "Why do you ask my name?" Then the man blessed Jacob.

After the man left, Jacob named the place Peniel (God's face). He recognized that he had seen God face to face, yet his life was spared. As the sun rose, Jacob left Peniel. He walked with a limp because of his hip, a reminder of his encounter with God.

Jacob and a Personal Encounter with God (Genesis 35:9-15)

Jacob had his reunion with Esau and settled down. Later God appeared to him again. He reiterated what the man had told Jacob at Peniel. He told him that although his name was Jacob he would no longer be called by that name. He would be called Israel. God then stated that he was God Almighty. He then told Jacob to be fruitful and increase in number. He further said that a nation and many nations would result. Kings would come from Jacob's body

The land that God had given to Abraham and Isaac was then given to Jacob and his descendants. Jacob's return to Bethel was a fresh formal beginning in his relationship with God and the covenant. God had appeared to him. God renewed the specific promises of the covenant. Those were: a special relationship to him, the heritage of the land of Canaan, and the new name of Israel. God left the place where he had spoken to Jacob. In recognition of the encounter, Jacob built a stone pillar at the place of his conversation with God. He poured out a drink offering on the column, then he poured oil on it also. This was in commemoration of these new displays of God's mercy and faithfulness. In his first experience with God at Bethel, Jacob memorialized the place. In this encounter, he concentrated on God who had appeared to him. It is good to remember past experiences with God, but a fresh, current encounter is needed. We cannot live with only remembered experiences. Jacob dedicated the place of his conversation with God, Bethel (God's House).

Your Goal as the Leader of this Bible Study:

As suggested in the "Teaching Aim" for this session, your goal as the leader consists of leading participants to consider the meaning of the ways, both ordinary and extraordinary, in which they have experienced God. Involve them as much as possible in suggesting ways to experience God's presence and power in ways that are not only memorable—but life changing or refocusing as well.

For Personal Reflection:

What have I learned from this study?

What personal experience does this lesson bring to mind?

What is one action I will take this week to apply this Scripture passage to my life?

Bible Study Plan (Suggested time: 35 minutes)

God and an Imperfect Person

Regroup the church after the Gathering Time and break by singing a chorus that young children can relate to—or another praise chorus if your congregation does not have children. Children who go to their own Bible teaching session should stay with the group until after this song. Have the preschoolers and children accompany the hymn with rhythm sticks, maracas, bells, etc.

Begin by helping the group locate the Focal Text in their Bibles. Also, share with them the Main Idea to be learned from the Scriptures, and the Questions to be Explored by the group.

Focal Text

Genesis 28:10-22; 32:24-31; 35:9-15

Background Text

Genesis 28:10 to 33:20; 35:9-15

Main Idea

God in his grace works with and through imperfect people to achieve God's purposes.

Question to Explore

In what ways, both ordinary and extraordinary, have you experienced God?

Teaching Aim

To lead participants to consider the meaning of the ways, both ordinary and extraordinary, in which they have experienced God.

Connect with Life:

Open with this quiz for the group: Did you ever think of running away from home as a child or youth? Did you ever do it? If so, did you stay gone over night? if so, would you please share your feelings as it became night? Call for responses.

Share with them: It could be frightening in a surrounding other than your own home. It could be lonely. It could be cold. There could be noises that bothered you. Today we are going to look at a young man that had to leave home and the experiences he had.

Guide the Study:

Read Genesis 28:10-22.

Use the “**Teacher Preparation**” section to explain the reasons that Jacob was leaving his father and mother and going to the land where Rebekah called home.

Look for an answer to this: How do you think he felt when he stopped to rest? Possible answers: lonely, hungry, frightened, sorrowful, hard pillow, no blanket.

Urge a response: Whose fault was it that he was in this condition? Wait for responses.

Develop a mental image of the situation for the group: Imagine the scene Jacob saw in his dream. It was giant screen, stereo sound, and in color. The stairs were extending from earth to heaven. Angels were going up and down. God was at the top of the stairway. This could be a dream to remember.

Ask. What were the elements of the promise (covenant) that God made with Jacob? (Jacob and his descendants would receive the land he was laying on. He would have unnumbered descendants. They would be spread over the earth. All people on earth would be blessed. God would be with Jacob).

Promote discussion with these questions:

What was Jacob's reaction to this dream? Pause for responses.

What actions did Jacob take the next morning? Receive answers.

What did Jacob promise to do as written in verses 20-22? Give time for members to look at the verses and respond.

What had Jacob done to receive this promise from God? Was he deserving of this?

State: We are now going to look at another experience Jacob had with God.

Have a participant read Genesis 32:24-31.

Give the background of this experience using the “**Teacher Preparation**” telling of Jacob's obtaining wives, children, and great wealth and leaving because of conflict with Laban, his uncle.

Ask. Who was Jacob with when he had this experience? (He was alone).

Comment. All genuine experiences with God do not necessarily come when we are in a great congregation. We need to have some “alone” time with God. This wrestling match was not in a great sports complex. Only Jacob and the angel were there.

While we are studying this event, remember that the term “angel” in the Bible always refers to a heavenly being whose purpose is to carry out God’s will, usually to convey a message from God to specific persons at a specific time. They are sent by God—not commanded to come by people. Many stories and legends about angels are interesting but do not reflect what we see of real angels in the Bible. Sometimes we read in the Bible stories of angels appearing in some spectacular form such as to the shepherds at the birth of Jesus or at the tomb on the morning of his resurrection. However, most often, they are described as having taken human form to interact with human beings.

Now encourage the group to share in responding to these questions:

What was the angel’s response when Jacob asked his name? (He announced a name change for Jacob).

What one quality did Jacob exhibit that helped him? (It was his perseverance to obtain a blessing).

How persistent are we in seeking God and trying to obtain a blessing from him? Did Jacob obtain the blessing?

How deserving was Jacob of this blessing?

Why did Jacob name the place Peniel? Wait for answer.

Do you have a place where you meet God face to face?

What was Jacob’s summary of this experience as given in verse 30?

In addition to the blessing, what other thing did Jacob leave with? (A limp).

Comment: We look at another of Jacob’s encounters with God.

Request another person to read Genesis 35:9-15.

Seek opinions on this comparison: How did this encounter with God compare with the other two?

If needed, explain this way: The first experience was a dream, the second was with an angel, and in the third God appeared. In the first and third, land was promised to Jacob and his descendants. In the first and third Jacob’s name was changed to Israel. In all three Jacob named the place: Bethel, Peniel, and Bethel. Jacob’s responses to these experiences: in the first he was conscious of the presence of God, he was afraid, he

built an altar, and made a conditional vow; in the second he persisted until he received a blessing and left with a limp; in the third Jacob memorialized the place by building a stone pillar and poured out a drink offering and poured oil on it.

Ask: How have you come into the presence of God?

Follow up: What happened to you in some of these experiences?

Continue: What have been the results in your life from these experiences. Give time for members to respond to each of these questions.

Encourage Application:

If you have two or more youth, this is the time to give them the **Youth!!! Take Ten** page and allow them to move away from the adults and apply the lesson by and for themselves.

Urge various persons to share in answering the following questions:

What kind of person was Jacob? (Among other answers you should hear: he connived to get what he wanted, he deceived and lied to his father, he tricked Esau).

Was Jacob a perfect person?

How do you explain why God blessed him if he wasn't perfect? (God in his grace works with and through imperfect people to achieve God's purposes).

What does this mean for us today? (God can and wants to work through each one of us to accomplish his purposes).

What can we do to have more life changing experiences with God? (Possible answers: be obedient and do the things we already know God wants us to do; establish a quiet time to read the scripture, pray, and listen to God; pray for God's will to be done in our lives; pray specifically for others; pray for others spiritual welfare).

Now request the following contemplation from the group: Without responding verbally, What one specific thing will you personally do to have more fellowship with God?

Suggest the members write down their resolve in the margin of their Bible.

Lead in prayer thanking God for using imperfect people—asking that God continue to work in us as we make these commitments.

Take a five minute break to separate the Bible Study and Worship Time. Children may need to use the washroom again before worship.

Youth!!! Take Ten

Bible Study Application for Youth

You may wish to move away from the adults for the final five to ten minutes of the Bible study and help each other as youth to apply the lesson to your own needs.

God and an Imperfect Person **Genesis 28:10-22; 32:24-31, 35:9-15**

A youth will lead the following activity and comments. No adults need to be present. If possible, teens should take turns in leading the application time.

Encounters of a Celestial Origin

On a large piece of paper or white board write the words **Encounters of a Celestial Origin**. Underneath write Encounter #1, Encounter #2 and Encounter #3. Under each heading write pertinent facts such as you heard in the study:

The first experience was a dream, the second was with an angel, and in the third God appeared. In the first and third, land was promised to Jacob and his descendants. In the first and third Jacob's name was changed to Israel. In all three Jacob named the place: Bethel, Peniel, and Bethel. Jacob's responses to these experiences: in the first he was conscious of the presence of God, he was afraid, he built an altar, and made a conditional vow; in the second he persisted until he received a blessing and left with a limp; in the third Jacob memorialized the place by building a stone pillar and poured out a drink offering and poured oil on it.

Discuss how God encounters people today. Share, if appropriate, a time or situation when you felt God speaking to you.

Worship Time (Suggested time: 30 minutes)***God and an Imperfect Person***
Genesis 28:10-22; 32:24-31, 35:9-15**Beginning the Service:**

Use the hymn “**Take My Life, And Let It Be Consecrated**”, as a reading to begin the worship time. Do not hesitate to repeat meaningful worship experiences as they will only be more meaningful a second time.

Sing “**Come, Let Us Worship**”, *WOW Worship*, 3rd Edition, #105; CCLI # 27329.
“**Holy Ground**”, *WOW Worship*, 3rd Edition, #147, CCLI # 21198.

Offering:**Ministry Moment:**

Pray for the Southern Yemeni Arabs who live in the mountainous areas of southern Yemen. Like most Arabs, the Yemeni Arabs are extremely hospitable and generous. Most are Sunni Muslims, although there are small populations of Suffis and Shiites. Aden is the urban center of southern Yemen and an important shipping port connecting Yemen to the rest of the world. Aden was once the capital of the separate country of South Yemen.

Sharing Guide:

This sharing guide is written to assist the person who directs the worship time to reemphasize the teaching for the day and help guide the congregation to respond to God’s call and will for their lives in regard to the scripture studied. The leader may choose to follow the guide closely. Or, he or she may wish to only use it to give direction and a concept for preparing an original message. The leader is free to choose other ways to communicate and share the concepts presented here.

Take My Life

Introduction

(Give a copy of the Scripture verse to each participant. Read it together to begin and end the worship time).

Genesis 28: 16 “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! This is none other than the house of God; this is the gate of heaven’”.

Awaking from sleep

Jacob awoke from his sleep after having experienced a dream in which God spoke to him and gave him the promise He had earlier given Abraham and Isaac. The Lord promised unnumbered descendants who would bless the people of the earth.

Nothing in Jacob’s past made him worthy of this promise. He was an instrument in the Lord’s hand and his awakening from sleep was not only a physical awakening but a spiritual one as well.

It is an amazing thing when an adult comes to Christ. It is truly “an awakening from sleep”. There is often a passion for sharing the good news of Christ which inspires others.

Surely the Lord is in this place and I was not aware of it

It is a sad commentary on Jacob’s life that he was not aware of the presence of the Lord. He had done just what he wanted for all of his life. He was his mother’s favourite; he connived to receive the blessing which belonged to his brother; he never really heard the stories his grandfather Abraham and his father Isaac must have told him of the Covenant promise of God. He had to be away from home, on a journey to a place and people he didn’t know, and sleeping with a rock for a pillow in a desolate place for him to understand and know the presence of God.

Sad as Jacob’s story may be, it encourages us to know that God pursues and speaks to those who have never really acknowledged his presence before. Parents who are praying for adult children who seem to have little concern for spiritual things may be encouraged by this reality. Friends who long for the salvation of some one they care for may know that God’s spirit is seeking that very person.

How awesome is this place! This is none other than the house of God; this is the gate of heaven.

Can you remember those times and places when you truly were aware of the presence of God. This writer remembers the conference and the place where God first called her to full time Christian service at age seventeen; the balcony seat in the crowded auditorium where God confirmed that she would share life with a certain man and the

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God and an Imperfect Person – 09-26-08-en

18

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walk from the choir loft when she responded to God's call to missionary service. Those holy moments made those places awesome; they truly became the house of God and the gate of heaven. Whatever else heaven may be like it will have that wonderful excitement of knowing the presence of God.

Call to Commitment:

Concluding the Service:

Have the scripture verse written on pieces of paper so that each participant can say it together to begin and end the worship time. Make copies of it from the final page of this session.

Genesis 28: 16 "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! This is none other than the house of God; this is the gate of heaven'".

Take My Life, and Let it Be Consecrated

Reader 1:

Take my life and let it be
Consecrated, Lord to Thee;
Take my hands and let them move
At the impulse of Thy love,
At the impulse of Thy love.

Reader 2:

Take my feet and let them be
Swift and beautiful for Thee;
Take my voice and let me sing
Always, only, for my King,
Always, only, for my King.

Reader 3:

Take my silver and my gold,
Not a mite would I withhold;
Take my moments and my days,
Let them flow in ceaseless praise,
Let them flow in ceaseless praise.

Reader 4

Take my will and make it Thine,
It shall be no longer mine;
Take my heart, it is Thine own,
It shall be Thy royal throne,
It shall be Thy royal throne.

Words: Frances R. Havergal, 1836-1879 (Public domain)

You may add visual impact by Reader 1 moving his/her hands in an indication of submission or prayer; Reader 2 pointing to feet and holding a piece of music; Reader 3 pouring coins into the offering basket and adding a calendar or watch and Reader 4 holding a paper heart in an attitude of consecration.

Print the following verse and give a copy to each participant at the beginning of the devotional message (Sharing Time).

Genesis 28: 16 “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! This in none other than the house of God; this is the gate of heaven’”.

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