

**WHY WOULD GOD  
WRESTLE WITH US?**  
**Genesis 32:22-32**

**INTRODUCTION**

Jacob is on the way back to his homeland, and the day of reckoning is at hand. Brother Esau was intending to kill Jacob when he left 20 years ago, and he is now waiting for Jacob's return. Jacob is nervous, and has sent a generous gift ahead so Esau would know he was not a threat. Genesis 32:22-32 records an Old Testament Christophany – Jesus appearing in a visible, physical form. Jesus initiates a wrestling match with Jacob, and there is no way Jacob can beat Him. Jacob is broken and humbled. What's happening here? **Why Would God Wrestle With Us?**

**DIGGING DEEPER**

Read through Genesis 32:22-32. Remember that Jacob is in good standing with God. But, he still remains self-reliant and self-sufficient. In this story, God answers the question - **Why Would God Wrestle With Us?** God wrestles with Jacob for a perfectly good reason – that he might “*come forth as gold.*” **Job 23:10.** Put yourself in Jacob's sandals and study with an eye on personal application, beloved. *Selah*

*Pray for wisdom and understanding, and let's begin.*

I. Genesis 32:22-24. Jacob is left alone. Jabbok is an isolated place. Imagine Jacob's fear, as suddenly a hand grabs and starts to wrestle with him! Who is this Man? A robber? Esau? What does this Man want? Jacob fights with all his smarts, strength and determination. But nobody ever wins when they wrestle with Jesus. *Selah*

II. Genesis 32:25. Jacob wrestles all night to exhaustion at day break. Jacob's life was filled with contention. He knew how to put up a good fight. But Jesus wants something from Jacob. Nothing material or natural. Jacob must learn he can't completely rely on himself. Jesus knows that **self-reliance** and **self-sufficiency** are destructive for a child of God. When believers rely on their own abilities & resources they make a mess of things. **1 Corinthians 1:27-29.** Think of Moses, Israel, Samson, Saul, Jesus' disciples, Peter. **“If I am something, then God is not everything, but when I become nothing, God can become all.” Andrew Murray – Absolute Surrender** It is better to become completely dependent on God, beloved.

III. Genesis 32:26. Jacob holds on in his weakness. **Hosea 12:3-6** is a reference that help bring clarity to this story. In holding on to his own ability, Jacob was holding back from God. But as he came to the end of his strength and grabbed on to Jesus, he received a great blessing. **Psalms 119:145-147.** It's good to let go of your strength and hold on to Jesus in weakness.

IV. Genesis 32:27. Jacob confesses his name. In asking Jacob his name, Jesus gives him a chance to be confronted with who he really knew he was – heel catcher, supplanter, always trying to come out on top. By responding with his true name, Jacob confessed his self-reliance. Jesus always looks for honest confession.

V. Genesis 32:28. Jacob receives a new name – Israel! Jacob fought with God. He was a believer, but had drawn a line with God that he was not willing to cross. Jesus wants Jacob to enter into a new relationship of full surrender. Jacob actually prevailed since he endured when God beat him, and held on! Blessing comes when you quit fighting the Lord and give up.

IV. Genesis 32:29-32. Jacob limps for the rest of his life. Now it's not possible to run even if he wanted to. This was not necessary, but Jacob had to learn it's better to limp than to continue in self-reliance. Israel carries the meaning that God rules. God has to conquer us and continue to do so. **Matthew 16:24-26, Galatians 6:14.** Jacob has been reduced, but it's for the best. Now he is dependent on the Lord. **May God Rule!**

Jabbok (verse 22) is a significant place - where waters are emptied out from a swift-flowing trans-Jordan river into the Jordan. Jacob is emptied out of his self-reliance there, and now... as Israel – **God Rules!** Oh, that God may contend with us, until He rules. *Selah*

**CONSIDER .....** Jacob can't run anymore, but now can walk in God's strength. Victory in his defeat!

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|---|----------|----------------------|-------------------------|
| • Are you fighting with God over who's in charge?       | Give up. | <b>May God Rule!</b> | <i>Proverbs 3:5-6</i>   |
| • Are you holding on to something that needs giving up? | Give up. | <b>May God Rule!</b> | <i>Hebrews 12:1-2</i>   |
| • Are you weary in trying to pick up your cross daily?  | Give up. | <b>May God Rule!</b> | <i>Matthew 11:28-30</i> |

*“God rescues us by breaking us, by shattering our strength and wiping out our resistance.” A.W. Tozer*

**PRAY .....**

- that the Lord would draw those He desires to the Faith, Family, Friends Day as well as to the Baptism Picnic.
- that the Lord would continue to knit hearts together in the leadership as they stand shoulder to shoulder in service to Him.
- that the Lord would reveal any area in your life that you may be wrestling with Him. Give Him the reins of your heart and walk in submission to Him!
- for the Billings and their future visit with us – may they be touched and refreshed!