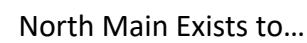


## This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.



**Know** Christ intimately,  
**Grow** in Christ continually, and,  
**Go** for Christ daily;

## JACOB'S STORY

## “JACOB WRESTLES WITH GOD” (GENESIS 32:1-32)

# Jacob Wrestles with God

(Genesis 32:1-32)

Series Title: *Don’t Go Your Own Way*

## KICK STARTERS:

- ⇒ Did you ever have wrestling matches as a kid?
- ⇒ Tell about a time when you wrestled and won...

**SCRIPTURE:** (Before studying this material, consider listening to the corresponding message online at: <http://www.northmaincog.org/media/sermon-media>)

Genesis 32:1-32 (NLT)

<sup>1</sup> As Jacob started on his way again, angels of God came to meet him. <sup>2</sup> When Jacob saw them, he exclaimed, “This is God’s camp!” So he named the place Mahanaim.

<sup>3</sup> Then Jacob sent messengers ahead to his brother, Esau, who was living in the region of Seir in the land of Edom. <sup>4</sup> He told them, “Give this message to my master Esau: ‘Humble greetings from your servant Jacob. Until now I have been living with Uncle Laban, <sup>5</sup> and now I own cattle, donkeys, flocks of sheep and goats, and many servants, both men and women. I have sent these messengers to inform my lord of my coming, hoping that you will be friendly to me.’”

<sup>6</sup> After delivering the message, the messengers returned to Jacob and reported, “We met your brother, Esau, and he is already on his way to meet you—with an army of 400 men!” <sup>7</sup> Jacob was terrified at the news. He divided his household, along with the flocks and herds and camels, into two groups. <sup>8</sup> He thought, “If Esau meets one group and attacks it, perhaps the other group can escape.”

<sup>9</sup> Then Jacob prayed, “O God of my grandfather Abraham, and God of my father, Isaac—O LORD, you told me, ‘Return to your own land and to your relatives.’ And you promised me, ‘I will treat you kindly.’” <sup>10</sup> I am not worthy of all the unfailing love and faithfulness you have shown to me, your servant. When I left home and crossed the Jordan River, I owned nothing except a walking stick. Now my household fills two large camps! <sup>11</sup> O LORD, please rescue me from the hand of my brother, Esau. I am afraid that he is coming to attack me, along with my wives and children. <sup>12</sup> But you promised me, ‘I will surely treat you kindly, and I will multiply your descendants until they become as numerous as the sands along the seashore—too many to count.’”

<sup>13</sup> Jacob stayed where he was for the night. Then he selected these gifts from his possessions to present to his brother, Esau: <sup>14</sup> 200 female goats, 20 male goats, 200 ewes, 20 rams, <sup>15</sup> 30 female camels with their young, 40 cows, 10 bulls, 20 female donkeys, and 10 male donkeys. <sup>16</sup> He divided these animals into herds and assigned each to different servants. Then he told his servants, “Go ahead of me with the animals, but keep some distance between the herds.”

<sup>17</sup> He gave these instructions to the men leading the first group: “When my brother, Esau, meets you, he will ask, ‘Whose servants are you? Where are you going? Who owns these animals?’” <sup>18</sup> You must reply, ‘They belong to your servant Jacob, but they are a gift for his master Esau. Look, he is coming right behind us.’”

<sup>19</sup> Jacob gave the same instructions to the second and third herdsmen and to all who followed behind the herds: “You must say the same thing to Esau when you meet him. <sup>20</sup> And be sure to say, ‘Look, your servant Jacob is right behind us.’”

Jacob thought, “I will try to appease him by sending gifts ahead of me. When I see him in person, perhaps he will be friendly to me.”

<sup>21</sup> So the gifts were sent on ahead, while Jacob himself spent that night in the camp.

<sup>22</sup> During the night Jacob got up and took his two wives, his two servant wives, and his eleven sons and crossed the Jabbok River with them. <sup>23</sup> After taking them to the other side, he sent over all his possessions.

<sup>24</sup> This left Jacob all alone in the camp, and a man came and wrestled with him until the dawn began to break. <sup>25</sup> When the man saw that he would not win the match, he touched Jacob’s hip and wrenched it out of its socket. <sup>26</sup> Then the man said, “Let me go, for the dawn is breaking!”

But Jacob said, “I will not let you go unless you bless me.”

<sup>27</sup> “What is your name?” the man asked.

He replied, “Jacob.”

<sup>28</sup> “Your name will no longer be Jacob,” the man told him. “From now on you will be called Israel, because you have fought with God and with men and have won.”

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

“Why do you want to know my name?” the man replied. Then he blessed Jacob there.

<sup>30</sup> Jacob named the place Peniel (which means “face of God”), for he said, “I have seen God face to face, yet my life has been spared.”

<sup>31</sup> The sun was rising as Jacob left Peniel, and he was limping because of the injury to his hip. <sup>32</sup> (Even today the people of Israel don’t eat the tendon near the hip socket because of what happened that night when the man strained the tendon of Jacob’s hip.)

## GROUP DISCUSSION:

1. What’s going on in this passage of Scripture. Give a brief synopsis:  

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2. Jacob, later in years now, has come to grips with the fact that he needs to make things right with his brother Esau. After 20-years of estrangement, Jacob makes the journey to meet with his brother. Along the way he stops at a place called Peniel and sends his family on ahead. While he rests, a “Stranger” comes and wrestles with him through the night. Who wins the struggle (vv. 22-29)?  

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3. What does Jacob desire from the “Stranger” (v. 26)?  

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4. After all these years (stolen birthrights and blessings) Jacob desires to face his own demons and come clean. Jacob wants his own blessing from God, not merely one that he has stolen from someone else. What does the “Stranger” (God), do for Jacob (vv. 29-31)?  

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5. Jacob leaves Peniel with an obvious limp. How does wrestling with God leave a visible mark on our lives?  

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6. Like Jacob, does your name precede you? What do you think is conjured in the minds of others who hear your name? What would you like for others to think/feel about you? Our name can only change when God changes us.  

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7. Our struggle with God is never in vain. But, struggling with God and fighting against God are two different things. Struggling *with* God produces deeper faith; whereas, fighting *against* God produces hardships and difficulties. Where do you find yourself: *Struggling with God* or *Fighting against God*? Why?  

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8. What’s your name? Does God desire to change it? Have you struggled with God for a blessing? Are you willing to struggle with God? What visible mark has God left on your life?  

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## SELF-EVALUATION/APPLICATION:

- ⇒ **ANYTHING OF SIGNIFICANCE**, comes with a price, and the price for Jacob was a name change and a limp. What is the distinct mark that God has left on your life?
- ⇒ **WHAT MARS THE GREATEST MOMENT IN YOUR LIFE?** Is it the place you first met God? Have you ever wrestled with God? Does your reputation precede you in a good way? Do you need a name change? What do you need to come to grips with in your own life that you have been running from? Are you *fighting against* or *wrestling with* God?
- ⇒ **MEMORY VERSES:** *Genesis 32:28* and *James 1:12*.

# Wrestling with the Truth

(Genesis 32:1-32)

Yearly Theme: “Love Is...”

Series Title: *Don’t Go Your Own Way*

March 31<sup>st</sup>, 2019

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## Something to think about:

At a place called Peniel, Jacob *wrestled* with God.

It was the eve of one of the most important nights of his life. He was on his way to reconcile with his twin brother Esau, whose birthright and blessing he had stolen many, many years ago.

Being the grandson of Abraham, you can see that the apple doesn’t fall far from the tree. But what Abraham did in small quantity, Jacob did in excess. Deceit and trickery were his name. This seemed to be his life plan and goal. But God had other things in mind for Jacob. And this story climaxes with a life-changing struggle with God at Peniel.

After years away from home, and having struggled with his uncle Laban, Jacob has finally come to his senses later in life and feels the need to reconcile with his brother Esau after nearly 20 years. With some apprehension about how he’ll be received, Jacob’s mind is reeling with curiosity, fear, and legitimate concern for himself and his family’s safety. One night during their journey after escaping from Laban’s control Jacob has an encounter. What does this encounter look like? Let’s see...

**Turn in your Bibles to: *Genesis 32:1-32***

The real issue in this story with Jacob, is that wrestling with *Love* can bring us closer to God and people. Wrestling with *Love* has this ability of humbling us by revealing to us the err of our ways. In Jacob’s case, wrestling with *Love* that night at Peniel was something that Jacob had to do alone. No one else could wrestle for him. He had to do it himself. Secondly, wrestling with *Love* resulted in a name change for Jacob. No longer was he seen as a deceiver, but a man who wrestled with God. And lastly, wrestling with *Love* left a visible mark on his life for the rest of his days. The remainder of Jacob’s life reflected the change that took place at Peniel when he wrestled with *God*.

**Key Point: “*Wrestling with God makes us stronger, and leaves a visible mark on our lives.*”**

In the end, what did Jacob go through in order to set things right in his life?...

- **Jacob wrestled with God alone.**

*Genesis 32:22-26 (NLT), <sup>22</sup> During the night Jacob got up and took his two wives, his two servant wives, and his eleven sons and crossed the Jabbok River with them.*

*<sup>23</sup> After taking them to the other side, he sent over all his possessions. <sup>24</sup> This left Jacob all alone in the camp, and a man came and wrestled with him until the dawn began to break. <sup>25</sup> When the man saw that he would not win the match, he touched Jacob’s hip and wrenched it out of its socket. <sup>26</sup> Then the man said, “Let me go, for the dawn is breaking!”*

- **Jacob had a name change:**

*Genesis 32:27-29 (NLT), <sup>27</sup> “What is your name?” the man asked. He replied, “Jacob.” <sup>28</sup> “Your name will no longer be Jacob,” the man told him. “From now on you will be called Israel, because you have fought with God and with men and have won.” <sup>29</sup> “Please tell me your name,” Jacob said.*

- **Jacob’s wrestling with God left a visible mark on his life.**

*Genesis 32:30-31 (NLT), <sup>30</sup> Jacob named the place Peniel (which means “face of God”), for he said, “I have seen God face to face, yet my life has been spared.” <sup>31</sup> The sun was rising as Jacob left Peniel, and he was limping because of the injury to his hip.*

## Something to take home:

Jesus struggled side by side with us. He worked with us, ate with us, laughed and cried with us. And, His sacrifice left the mark for all of eternity in His nail-pierced hands and the wound on his side from the Roman soldier’s spear. Not only did Jesus retain the physical markings of sacrifice, but humanity was left with the mark of God in human flesh through Jesus, and the presence of the Holy Spirit to guide us and empower us. The mark of forgiveness and unconditional love will last forever because of the sacrifice God made for us. *This* was the greatest moment in history.

What marks the greatest moment in your life? Is it the place you met God? How did it change you?

As you do a self-assessment today, keep in mind that God’s love always has a way of leaving a mark on our lives. It changes our perspectives, temperaments, and our tolerance. Have you wrestled with God, and have you allowed Him to change your name? Has wrestling with God forced you to take a good, hard, long look at yourself?

**Key Point: “*Wrestling with God makes us stronger, and leaves a visible mark on our lives.*”**

Anything of significance comes with a price, and the price for Jacob was a limp.

What is the distinct mark that God has left on your life?