

**VICTORIOUS LIFE CHURCH BIBLE STUDY: PASTOR WILLIAM A. LEE, JR.
SERIES- BIBLICAL LEADERSHIP SERIES: JACOB- HE EVOLVING LEADER**

One of the most compelling aspects of the Bible is how God is constantly working through imperfect people to do unbelievable things.

1 Corinthians 1:26-28

26 For ye see in your calling, brethren, how not many wise men according to the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called. 27 But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise, and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty; 28 and base things of the world and things which are despised hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought things which are,

Being flawed ourselves, allows us to make a personal connection to the scriptures as we are in constant need of mercy and inspiration. There is a title that we often see God identifying himself as. In about a dozen places in the Bible, the Lord God is referred to as the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. This name of God emphasizes the covenant that God made with Israel and the Israelites' special place as God's Chosen People. Often when I see God identify Himself in this way I become concerned about His associations. I can Understand Abraham- The Father of Faith. Isaac the obedient Son willing to follow his Father to Mt Moriah. But Jacob? Jacobs resume was not the best in that he literally started out his life journey in a controversial manner and lived out most of his life steeped in controversy which we will explore in the upcoming lessons. However, there are many lessons that we can learn from studying the life of Jacob in the book of Genesis that will help us understand our unique purpose. This Bible study on the story of Jacob will help us to begin to understand how God created each of us with a special purpose in mind. As we examine his life let us consider how our personalities, life situation, and weaknesses may be a

part of a bigger plan to do something great in the world. Jacob is one of the Bible's most unique characters in that his life seemed to be surrounded by controversy and inconsistencies. He has moments of strong faith as well as of fear. His family is sometimes in disarray, and yet at the end he is the one who sets it straight. Jacob the Patriarch is a bit too much like us -- with very human strengths and weaknesses, but a man with a striving for spiritual things. **Ancestry and family life:** Jacob was the second son of [Isaac](#), the son of Abraham. He was the last of the patriarchs from whom all Israel descended as after him Israel split into twelve tribes. Jacob was two generations removed from [Abraham](#) who came from Mesopotamia. That is the branch of the family Isaac went to, to get his wife and also Jacob. God had made a special covenant with Abraham and Isaac, one he would also extend to Jacob.

Not much text is devoted to Jacob's father Isaac. We see that he is characterized by passive acceptance. In some cases this is good such as when he allowed Abraham to attempt to sacrifice him, and agreed to the marriage Abraham's servant arranged for him. Yet this very submissive nature also may have contributed to the family problems we see surrounding Jacob and Esau. Because Isaac didn't seem to have a strong will to lead, Rebekah moves in to take control of what she can. Rebekah had problems. When her twins are born, she shows partiality to Jacob, the non-hairy weaker looking one. Genesis 25:27 says Jacob spent most of his time at home. So Rebekah takes over his life and arranges everything for him. She teaches him how to cook. She arranges for him to steal the blessing. And she arranges for his deliverance from Esau by sending him to her brother Laban, telling him everything will work out fine. There are many interesting births taking place in the Bible and this is one of them. Rebekah was barren and only

after Isaac prayed for her she conceived, highlighting the fact that her children were a gift from God, the giver of life.

Genesis 25:19-25

19 This is the account of the family line of Abraham's son Isaac. Abraham became the father of Isaac, 20 and Isaac was forty years old when he married Rebekah daughter of Bethuel the Aramean from Paddan Aram[c] and sister of Laban the Aramean. 21 Isaac prayed to the Lord on behalf of his wife, because she was childless. The Lord answered his prayer, and his wife Rebekah became pregnant. 22 The babies jostled each other within her, and she said, "Why is this happening to me?"

Rebekah could feel the struggle of the babies even in her womb. In a time with no ultrasounds, she already seemed to expect that she would have twins and wanted to know why they were struggling so within her.

So she went to inquire of the Lord. 23 The Lord said to her, "Two nations are in your womb, and two peoples from within you will be separated; one people will be stronger than the other, and the older will serve the younger."24 When the time came for her to give birth, there were twin boys in her womb. 25 The first to come out was red, and his whole body was like a hairy garment; so they named him Esau.

And she received a very accurate prophesy from the Lord stating that the nations coming from these two babies would have conflict, but that the older (Esau) would serve the younger (Jacob).

This is yet another of many prophecies that come true in the Scriptures. Jacob was a shepherd.

He evidently learned this occupation helping out with his own father's flocks, who likely also

learned it from Abraham. Jacob was evidently a very skilled shepherd as Laban continuously

begged him not to leave. As we continue talking about Biblical Leadership I want to identify

Jacob as a developing or evolving leader because we will see that it took him years to overcome

many areas of weaknesses and bad habits to evolve into the leader that he eventually became.

This mans life speaks to many of the people that God calls because we find ourselves like Jacob not quite where we need to be but hopefully moving forward in our development. Let us see how his story speaks to us in terms of God developing us into leaders.

I. GOD GRACES LEADERS TO OVERCOME A BAD START

“People will be impressed by how you start but will remember you by how you finish”

In a book entitled the Forst 90 days the author Michael D. Watkins suggest that When leaders derail, their problems can almost always be traced to vicious cycles that developed in the First few months on the job. In others words most people who fail do so because of a bad start. There are many reasons why a person can get off to a bad start in leadership. Sometimes we are given the wrong information. Sometimes people can find themselves up against seemingly insurmountable odds. Sometimes bad decisions are made at the beginning. However, in the Kingdom of God, the King specializes in equipping his people to overcome back starts.

If Ever a person got off to a bad start that was Jacob. A bad start that actually began before he was born.

1 Isaac prayed to the Lord on behalf of his wife, because she was childless. The Lord answered his prayer, and his wife Rebekah became pregnant. 22 The babies jostled each other within her, and she said, “Why is this happening to me?” Lord said to her, “Two nations are in your womb, and two peoples from within you will be separated; one people will be stronger than the other, and the older will serve the younger.”

Jacob teaches us that there are some circumstances that develop around us while there are others that we were born into. Jacob, was literally born battling. He did not know peace even while being in the safe cocoon of his mothers womb. He, like so many was literally

nurtured and born battling and struggling. There are many just like Jacob who were seemingly born into negativity and strife who because of it may think that are disqualified from God using you.

Jeremiah 1:5

“Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, before you were born I set you apart; I appointed you as a prophet to the nations.”

Psalm 139:13-18

For you created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother’s womb. 14 I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; your works are wonderful, I know that full well. 15 My frame was not hidden from you when I was made in the secret place, when I was woven together in the depths of the earth.

16 Your eyes saw my unformed body; all the days ordained for me were written in your book before one of them came to be. 17 How precious to me are your thoughts, God! How vast is the sum of them! 18 Were I to count them, they would outnumber the grains of sand —when I awake, I am still with you.

QUESTION: Has anyone in here started out on a job, relationship or project that got off to a bad start and God turned it around?

God is a God of small and new beginnings.

Zechariah 4:8-10

8 Then another message came to me from the Lord: 9 “Zerubbabel is the one who laid the foundation of this Temple, and he will complete it. Then you will know that the Lord of Heaven’s Armies has sent me. 10 Do not despise these small beginnings, for the Lord rejoices to see the work begin, to see the plumb line in Zerubbabel’s hand.”

2 Corinthians 5:17

17 Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.

**“Every sunset is an opportunity to reset. Every sunrise begins with new eyes.”
— Richie Norton**

“Isn’t it nice to think that tomorrow is a new day with no mistakes in it yet?”
— L.M. Montgomery

II. GOD GRACES LEADERS TO OVERCOME BAD NAMING

Naming is a powerful thing especially in the scripture.

A good name is more desirable than great riches; to be esteemed is better than silver or gold. (Proverbs 22:1, NIV)

The reason we spent so much time picking names for our children is because a name speaks to *identity*, and identity is a big deal. There is a three-word question that most of us spend our lives trying to answer, even if we don’t realize it. That question is: *Who are you?*

Question: What comes to mind when you hear those three words? How do you answer that question?

It’s a question that cuts to the core of identity. It reveals what you believe about yourself. It reveals what you value and where you find your significance. Some of us answer it with our vocation or our job title. Some first questions we ask unfamiliar people are, “What do you do?” or, “Where do you work?” It is common to tie our identity to our work. But what happens when our job changes or the company dissolves? If our identity is in our work, we will have a crisis when our job changes. Some of us place our identity in our family roles — husband, wife, aunt, uncle, brother, sister, mom, or dad. We define ourselves through our relationships with other people. But what happens when those relationships change? What happens when death or divorce enters the picture, or when the kids leave the house? Many of us have discovered relationships are not a stable place to put our identity. Sometimes we tie our identity to our behavior — our successes, accomplishments, besetting sins, sinful patterns, or even our shame. “I’m an addict,” and “I’m a leader” are both identity statements. When we let our successes or

our sins define us, it can become more difficult to embrace the identity God has for us. Names hold meaning: Isaac- Laughter, Abram- exalted Father, Abraham- Father of nations, Sarai- Princess, Sarah- noble woman and Jesus- Savior. Jacob became the victim of a bad name.

Genesis 25:25-26

25 The first to come out was red, and his whole body was like a hairy garment; so they named him Esau.[d] 26 After this, his brother came out, with his hand grasping Esau's heel; so he was named Jacob.[e] Isaac was sixty years old when Rebekah gave birth to them.

They called him Jacob. This Old Testament name means “supplanter,” which is often interpreted as someone who seizes, circumvents, or usurps. A name that served as a negative prophetic voice in his life. Our society engages in the practice of negative naming, labeling and tracking in which there is a purposeful attempt to label people and put them on a track for failure.

Question: Can any of us in here think of moments in which labels were placed upon you? If so how did you respond?

Genesis 32:24-32

24 And Jacob was left alone; and there wrestled a man with him until the breaking of the day.25 And when he saw that he prevailed not against him, he touched the hollow of his thigh; and the hollow of Jacob's thigh was out of joint, as he wrestled with him. 26 And he said, Let me go, for the day breaketh. And he said, I will not let thee go, except thou bless me. 27 And he said unto him, What is thy name? And he said, Jacob. 28 And he said, Thy name shall be called no more Jacob, but Israel: for as a prince hast thou power with God and with men, and hast prevailed. 29 And Jacob asked him, and said, Tell me, I pray thee, thy name. And he said, Wherefore is it that thou dost ask after my name? And he blessed him there. 30 And Jacob

called the name of the place Peniel: for I have seen God face to face, and my life is preserved. 31 And as he passed over Peniel the sun rose upon him, and he halted upon his thigh. 32 Therefore the children of Israel eat not of the sinew which shrank, which is upon the hollow of the thigh, unto this day: because he touched the hollow of Jacob's thigh in the sinew that shrank.

Genesis 35:17-19

17 And it came to pass, when she was in hard labor, that the midwife said unto her, "Fear not. Thou shalt have this son also." 18 And it came to pass as her soul was in departing (for she died), that she called his name Benoni [that is, The son of my sorrow], but his father called him Benjamin [that is, The son of the right hand]. 19 And Rachel died, and was buried on the way to Ephrath, which is Bethlehem.