

Genesis

Chapter 30:25-31:42

- ✚ **Gen 30:25-26** ²⁵ *And it came to pass, when Rachel had borne Joseph, that Jacob said to Laban, "Send me away, that I may go to my own place and to my country. ²⁶ "Give me my wives and my children for whom I have served you, and let me go; for you know my service which I have done for you."*

I think Jacob was getting home sick here. After all, he has been away from his home for at least 14 years. And for these 14+ years, Jacob had to work for Laban who we learned was a greedy man.

So Jacob worked his 14 years for his wives as he agreed to, and now he's ready to go home to his father and mother, Isaac and Rebekah. And what's Laban's response?

- ✚ **Gen 30:27-28** ²⁷ *And Laban said to him, "Please stay, if I have found favor in your eyes, for I have learned by experience that the LORD has blessed me for your sake." ²⁸ Then he said, "Name me your wages, and I will give it."*

One interesting thing Laban says is, "*the LORD has blessed me for your sake.*"

In some of the past studies we learned that our children and even grandchildren could follow the way we lived and the things we have done as we saw what happened with Abraham, Isaac and now Jacob. But Jacob is now teaching his son's something different. He is teaching them to rely on the Lord no matter what the situation is. When we start to study about Joseph we will see that he has this same trait.

- † **Gen 39:5** *So it was, from the time that he had made him overseer of his house and all that he had, that the LORD blessed the Egyptian's house for Joseph's sake; and the blessing of the LORD was on all that he had in the house and in the field.*

This is just one example of the Lord blessing Joseph and the people he worked for. But back to Jacob.

Even though Laban tricked him, Jacob still worked hard even though he was cheated and Laban saw his hard work and he even gives the glory to the Lord for the blessings he has. Laban didn't want to lose this blessing, so he asks Jacob to name his wages.

Last time Laban asked Jacob this question Laban tricked Jacob.

- † **Gen 29:15** *Then Laban said to Jacob, "Because you are my relative, should you therefore serve me for nothing? Tell me, what should your wages be?"*

Jacob named his wages at this time and asked to marry Rachel, which Laban agreed to. But on the wedding night Jacob ended up marrying Rachel's sister Leah, and Laban's excuse was.

- † **Gen 29:26** *And Laban said, "It must not be done so in our country, to give the younger before the firstborn."*

So Laban's question may have seemed like a loaded question. So does Jacob stay or does he say, "Forget you Laban. You tricked me once and I won't let you do it again"? Let's see.

✧ **Gen 30:29-33** ²⁹ So Jacob said to him, "You know how I have served you and how your livestock has been with me. ³⁰ "For what you had before I came was little, and it has increased to a great amount; the LORD has blessed you since my coming. And now, when shall I also provide for my own house?" ³¹ So he said, "What shall I give you?" And Jacob said, "You shall not give me anything. If you will do this thing for me, I will again feed and keep your flocks: ³² "Let me pass through all your flock today, removing from there all the speckled and spotted sheep, and all the brown ones among the lambs, and the spotted and speckled among the goats; and these shall be my wages. ³³ "So my righteousness will answer for me in time to come, when the subject of my wages comes before you: every one that is not speckled and spotted among the goats, and brown among the lambs, will be considered stolen, if it is with me."

Jacob had worked for 14 years for two wives. But that was all he got in those 14 years of labor. So even though Jacob was ready to leave, he really had nothing to take other than his two wives and their maids and his 11 sons.

Don't you feel like Jacob sometimes, like you're stuck in your job, or your life seems to be going nowhere? God has given you your job but it seems like you have been working forever and getting nowhere. No advancement, no real raise, and not even any recognition for the hard work you have been doing all these years. Maybe you feel stuck in your marriage like it's the same old humdrum thing; you do the same thing every night and every weekend.

Don't despair, because as we will see in Jacob's life, God is with him the whole time, and things do change for the better. You may not have to wait 14 years like Jacob did, or maybe you will or even longer. But no matter how long it takes, be assured that God is with you.

Laban offered to give something else to Jacob in return for his 14 years of service (maybe a gold watch or something) But Jacob knew Laban too well and said, "**You shall not give me anything**" I will continue to work for you and you will pay me for this work and my payment will be.

✧ ³² "Let me pass through all your flock today, removing from there all the speckled and spotted sheep, and all the brown ones among the lambs, and the spotted and speckled among the goats; and these shall be my wages

Why would Jacob ask for these certain colored sheep, lambs and goats?

The one's Jacob asked for were rare, maybe one in 50 or 100 were born with these colors. So for Laban to give these up were really no big deal to him since it meant maybe

5-10% of what he had. It would be like having a one-pound bag of M&M's and sharing them with a co-worker telling them that you can have one out of every 50 M&M's, which may come to 5-10 or so M&M's for your co-worker out of that one-pound bag. Also the speckled and spotted sheep, goats, and brown lambs were considered useless or no good in a sense.

Have you ever felt like one of these animals? Maybe you are different or you don't consider yourself beautiful or accepted by people. Maybe they do reject you because you are not like them.

This is a common thing among Christians in the world. The world rejects them because they are not like them. Sometimes we try to look like or become someone we are not just to fit in. Sometimes it even means compromising your walk with the Lord to be accepted by others. But you know what? God accepts you, the real you, just the way you are. In fact God made you that way. That's right, God made you with the look you have (Your natural look, not the one with makeup, dyed hair, tummy tuck or whatever) God took the time to say, I want you to look just like this, and then you were born, just the way God wanted you look and be. You may not have the figure of a model, your hair may be to straight or to curly, you may have a big belly or be too thin, Maybe you walk or talk funny. No matter what it is, God created you to be you how you are right now.

✠ **Psalms 139:13-18** ¹³ *For You formed my inward parts; You covered me in my mother's womb.* ¹⁴ *I will praise You, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made; Marvelous are Your works, and that my soul knows very well.* ¹⁵ *My frame was not hidden from You, when I was made in secret, and skillfully wrought in the lowest parts of the earth.* ¹⁶ *Your eyes saw my substance, being yet unformed. And in Your book they all were written, the days fashioned for me, when as yet there were none of them.* ¹⁷ *How precious also are Your thoughts to me, O God! How great is the sum of them!* ¹⁸ *If I should count them, they would be more in number than the sand; When I awake, I am still with You.*

Don't try to change yourself to make someone else happy. Don't try to look like someone else to be accepted. Rejoice because God who skillfully made you in your mother's womb accepts you. If someone else doesn't accept you, tell him or her to take it up with God and have them question His work, which is you!

Laban's response to Jacob's request is:

✠ **Gen 30:34-36** ³⁴ *And Laban said, "Oh, that it were according to your word!"* ³⁵ *So he removed that day the male goats that were speckled and spotted, all the female goats that were speckled and spotted, every one that had some white in it, and all the brown ones among the lambs, and gave them into the hand of his sons.* ³⁶ *Then he put three days' journey between himself and Jacob, and Jacob fed the rest of Laban's flocks.*

Laban agreed to Jacob's request for payment, and he personally took the goats and lambs from his flock per Jacob's request and gave them to Jacob's son's to take care of. The three days journey was to separate the flocks so that they would not get mixed up or so that Laban could not accuse Jacob of stealing from his flock.

✧ *33 "So my righteousness will answer for me in time to come, when the subject of my wages comes before you: every one that is not speckled and spotted among the goats, and brown among the lambs, will be considered stolen, if it is with me."*

Jacob continued to take care of Laban's flock. Basically working for his wages.

✧ *Gen 30:37-43 37 Now Jacob took for himself rods of green poplar and of the almond and chestnut trees, peeled white strips in them, and exposed the white which was in the rods. 38 And the rods which he had peeled, he set before the flocks in the gutters, in the watering troughs where the flocks came to drink, so that they should conceive when they came to drink. 39 So the flocks conceived before the rods, and the flocks brought forth streaked, speckled, and spotted. 40 Then Jacob separated the lambs, and made the flocks face toward the streaked and all the brown in the flock of Laban; but he put his own flocks by themselves and did not put them with Laban's flock. 41 And it came to pass, whenever the stronger livestock conceived, that Jacob placed the rods before the eyes of the livestock in the gutters, that they might conceive among the rods. 42 But when the flocks were feeble, he did not put them in; so the feebler were Laban's and the stronger Jacob's. 43 Thus the man became exceedingly prosperous, and had large flocks, female and male servants, and camels and donkeys.*

What was going on here? Did Jacob have a trick up his sleeve?
Let me have pastor Chuck Smith explain the meaning of these rods to you.

Jacob probably knew by experimentation and observation what is now known as The Mendellion Law concerning the dominant and recessive genes. Knowing that in the solid colored animals that there could be the recessive spots and stripes.

In the King James translation, the word "yakham" is conceived, but more literally "yakham" means to be hot. It is more likely, understanding a little about animal's reproduction, Jacob knew as the animals came in for the watering and the striped branches were placed in front of them that it caused them to come into heat and thus reproduce. It was the LORD who blessed and prospered Jacob and gave him the strong speckled and spotted offsprings. Later on Jacob acknowledged that God had granted him the success and wealth.

Notice also the last verse of chapter 30.

✧ *43 Thus the man became exceedingly prosperous, and had large flocks, female and male servants, and camels and donkeys.*

Jacob not only had his flock, but he also acquired servants as well as camels and donkeys. God knew how Laban had cheated Jacob, and it was God who was blessing Jacob. But that's not the end of this story. Let's go on to the next chapter.

✧ **Gen 31:1-3** ¹ *Now Jacob heard the words of Laban's sons, saying, "Jacob has taken away all that was our father's, and from what was our father's he has acquired all this wealth."* ² *And Jacob saw the countenance of Laban, and indeed it was not favorable toward him as before.* ³ *Then the LORD said to Jacob, "Return to the land of your fathers and to your family, and I will be with you."*

Laban's son were getting mad here; after all, not only their father was now losing his business but they were watching their inheritance dwindling away as well. We also read that Laban was not as friendly with his son-in-law like he used to be. After all, he was a greedy man and in this greed he lost two daughters and now his flock was getting less and Jacob's was increasing.

So God tells Jacob that it's now time to go home. At the beginning of this study we read of how Jacob was home sick and tired of working for Laban and wanted to go home, but it never mentioned that God said that it was time for Jacob to leave. If Jacob had left when he wanted to, he would have returned home with four women, 11 sons plus one or more daughters with no way to take care of them.

Earlier I asked if you were possible unhappy with your job or marriage or your life in general. Although it may not seem like it now, it's possible that God has you at that job or in the situation for a purpose. Hang in there, look what happened when Jacob did. I would encourage you to seek the Lord and ask what He wants you to do. It may be time to leave your job, but never your marriage! For your marriage God may speak to you and have "you" change a few things instead of you wishing your spouse would change. If God says to change, then listen to Him. After all, He's God and your not. God knows what He's doing. Trust in Him!

God said to go home and He would be with Jacob. I don't think Jacob had to ask God twice if He really meant for him to go home.

✧ **Gen 31:4-13** ⁴ *So Jacob sent and called Rachel and Leah to the field, to his flock,* ⁵ *and said to them, "I see your father's countenance, that it is not favorable toward me as before; but the God of my father has been with me."* ⁶ *"And you know that with all my might I have served your father."* ⁷ *"Yet your father has deceived me and changed my wages ten times, but God did not allow him to hurt me."* ⁸ *"If he said thus: 'The speckled shall be your wages,' then all the flocks bore speckled. And if he said thus: 'The streaked shall be your wages,' then all the flocks bore streaked."* ⁹ *"So God has taken away the livestock of your father and given them to me."* ¹⁰ *"And it happened, at the time when the flocks conceived, that I lifted my eyes and saw in a dream, and behold, the rams which leaped upon the flocks were streaked, speckled, and gray-*

spotted. ¹¹ "Then the Angel of God spoke to me in a dream, saying, 'Jacob.' And I said, 'Here I am.' ¹² "And He said, 'Lift your eyes now and see, all the rams which leap on the flocks are streaked, speckled, and gray-spotted; for I have seen all that Laban is doing to you. ¹³ 'I am the God of Bethel, where you anointed the pillar and where you made a vow to Me. Now arise, get out of this land, and return to the land of your family.' "

So Jacob calls his two wives and tells them the whole story, (most of it they knew anyway) but through the whole story Jacob gives the glory to God for his prospering. He also had to explain that he was not cheating their father, but that their father was trying to cheat him, but God watched over Jacob and would not allow Laban to take advantage of him, and the reason they were leaving is because the Lord said it was time to leave.

God also reminded Jacob of who He was and the vow he had made with God. Remember Jacob's ladder?

✠ **Gen 28:20-22** ²⁰ *Then Jacob made a vow, saying, "If God will be with me, and keep me in this way that I am going, and give me bread to eat and clothing to put on, ²¹ "so that I come back to my father's house in peace, then the LORD shall be my God. ²² "And this stone which I have set as a pillar shall be God's house, and of all that You give me I will surely give a tenth to You."*

For the last 20 years God had watched over Jacob, provided for him and his family. God was about to bring Jacob home in peace. God did what Jacob asked, now it was up to Jacob to start doing his part, which was making God his God and also giving a tenth as he said he would.

So what was Jacob's wives response to all of this?

✧ **Gen 31:14-16** ¹⁴ *Then Rachel and Leah answered and said to him, "Is there still any portion or inheritance for us in our father's house? ¹⁵ "Are we not considered strangers by him? For he has sold us, and also completely consumed our money. ¹⁶ "For all these riches which God has taken from our father are really ours and our children's; now then, whatever God has said to you, do it."*

Let's go for it honey, our father has not only stolen from you, but us also. God has blessed you and us too.

If you have stolen or cheated on your children or even used them for your own personal gain like Laban did, don't think it will go unnoticed. It's always obvious to others but when your own kids see it in you, then that's pretty bad. And they will!

✧ **Gen 31:17-21** ¹⁷ *Then Jacob rose and set his sons and his wives on camels. ¹⁸ And he carried away all his livestock and all his possessions which he had gained, his acquired livestock which he had gained in Padan Aram, to go to his father Isaac in the land of Canaan. ¹⁹ Now Laban had gone to shear his sheep, and Rachel had stolen the household idols that were her father's. ²⁰ And Jacob*

stole away, unknown to Laban the Syrian, in that he did not tell him that he intended to flee. ²¹ So he fled with all that he had. He arose and crossed the river, and headed toward the mountains of Gilead.

A few things are happening here. First Jacob is sneaking away. God never said to sneak away, in fact God said that He would be with Jacob, which would mean that God would protect Jacob. So why didn't Jacob tell Laban that he was leaving? One word "fear". Even though God says something and we believe it. Fear always seems to creep in. Remember at the beginning of Genesis when Satan was tempting Eve, his words were "Has God indeed said" and the same thing happens with us. God makes a promise to us in His word but that little voice always creeps into our brains and we wonder, "Has God really indeed said"? We know He has said it, just like Jacob did, but still we doubt God and His word. I've used this verse before and I will use it again until we all believe it and never doubt God or His word again.

✠ **Prov 3:5-6** ⁵ *Trust in the LORD with all your heart, And lean not on your own understanding; ⁶ In all your ways acknowledge Him, And He shall direct your paths.*

We speak God's word and say He will do something, but then the fear comes in and we don't follow up on God's promise. Just like Jacob did. He spoke God's word but he didn't live it.

In the book of James, he says:

✠ **James 1:22-25 (NLT)** ²² *And remember, it is a message to obey, not just to listen to. If you don't obey, you are only fooling yourself. ²³ For if you just listen and don't obey, it is like looking at your face in a mirror but doing nothing to improve your appearance. ²⁴ You see yourself, walk away, and forget what you look like. ²⁵ But if you keep looking steadily into God's perfect law--the law that sets you free--and if you do what it says and don't forget what you heard, then God will bless you for doing it.*

✠ **James 2:14-16 (NLT)** ¹⁴ *Dear brothers and sisters, what's the use of saying you have faith if you don't prove it by your actions? That kind of faith can't save anyone. ¹⁵ Suppose you see a brother or sister who needs food or clothing, ¹⁶ and you say, "Well, good-bye and God bless you; stay warm and eat well"--but then you don't give that person any food or clothing. What good does that do?*

God says to trust Him, if you don't trust God, then you are putting your faith in Satan's words (lies), not Gods (truth)!

The second thing going on here is, that Jacob's wife Rachel had stolen some of her father's idols. Why would she do something like that? After all it appears that Rachel had acknowledged God as the one who was prospering her husband.

Idols are something you can see, touch and feel. God you cannot see, touch or feel. Plus they were pretty and shiny. Usually these smaller idols were made out of gold or some other precious material and were pleasing to the flesh. No matter how beautiful Rachel was, she was serving other gods. It was something that Jacob should have seen the first seven years he was serving Laban. But his love for Rachel and her beauty had blinded him to the truth.

Just because that guy or girl is beautiful on the outside, doesn't mean that they are the right choice for you. Notice that Leah didn't take the Idol. Beauty on the outside does not make one a Christian or a believer in God. The worst part of this is that Jacob did not know that Rachel had done this thing, and puts her life on the line because he didn't know. And even worse is that Rachel will get away with it and bring these false idols in to the land of promise.

✧ **Gen 31:22-24** ²² *And Laban was told on the third day that Jacob had fled. ²³ Then he took his brethren with him and pursued him for seven days' journey, and he overtook him in the mountains of Gilead. ²⁴ But God had come to Laban the Syrian in a dream by night, and said to him, "Be careful that you speak to Jacob neither good nor bad."*

It took three days for Laban to find out that Jacob had left with his family because as we read there was a three day gap between the two.

And talk about protection. God come to Laban in a dream and says in a sense, "Don't mess with Jacob". Wow, but Jacob knew nothing about Laban's dream at this time.

✧ **Gen 31:25-30** ²⁵ *So Laban overtook Jacob. Now Jacob had pitched his tent in the mountains, and Laban with his brethren pitched in the mountains of Gilead. ²⁶ And Laban said to Jacob: "What have you done, that you have stolen away unknown to me, and carried away my daughters like captives taken with the sword? ²⁷ "Why did you flee away secretly, and steal away from me, and not tell me; for I might have sent you away with joy and songs, with timbrel and harp? ²⁸ "And you did not allow me to kiss my sons and my daughters. Now you have done foolishly in so doing. ²⁹ "It is in my power to do you harm, but the God of your father spoke to me last night, saying, 'Be careful that you speak to Jacob neither good nor bad.' ³⁰ "And now you have surely gone because you greatly long for your father's house, but why did you steal my gods?"*

God had to intervene because Jacob didn't trust in God's word and tried too sneak away. Laban wanted to give them a big send off and say good-bye to his daughters and his grandchildren.

"But earlier we read of how Laban wanted Jacob to stay. Do you really think he would have done this?"

I do believe that, because Laban wanted Jacob to stay because he was getting rich off of Jacob. But he knew he had cheated Jacob and was losing everything because of it. So I think Laban knew it was time for Jacob to go back home.

Laban also tells Jacob about how God told him not to mess with Jacob, once again Jacob realizing that God was watching over him and that he messed up by trying to sneak away. Then the cliffhanger in verse 30:

✎ *30 "And now you have surely gone because you greatly long for your father's house, but why did you steal my gods?"*

Oh no, will Rachel get caught now?

✎ *Gen 31:31-32 31 Then Jacob answered and said to Laban, "Because I was afraid, for I said, 'Perhaps you would take your daughters from me by force.' 32 "With whomever you find your gods, do not let him live. In the presence of our brethren, identify what I have of yours and take it with you." For Jacob did not know that Rachel had stolen them.*

I could see Rachel now; she was probably shaking in her sandals motioning to Jacob from the tent that she had taken something. But Jacob was an honest man and knew in all his years of service that he had not taken anything from Laban.

Can you say that about your job?

✎ *Gen 31:33-35 33 And Laban went into Jacob's tent, into Leah's tent, and into the two maids' tents, but he did not find them. Then he went out of Leah's tent and entered Rachel's tent. 34 Now Rachel had taken the household idols, put them in the camel's saddle, and sat on them. And Laban searched all about the tent but did not find them. 35 And she said to her father, "Let it not displease my lord that I cannot rise before you, for the manner of women is with me." And he searched but did not find the household idols.*

So Laban still didn't trust Jacob after all these years and searches Jacob's tent first and finds nothing, then Leah's and the tents of the maids and finds nothing. All were honest and had not stolen from Laban.

Then there was Rachel. To put this in a modest way as my face turns red trying to explain this. Women back then did not have the certain things that women do today to help during that certain time of the month. They basically sat there on a rag and the men knew this and that was her excuse for not getting up. Laban was not about to make her get up after he found that out. So Rachel gets away with it. But now she has not only stolen, but has lied about it as well.

✎ *Gen 31:36-42 36 Then Jacob was angry and rebuked Laban, and Jacob answered and said to Laban: "What is my trespass? What is my sin, that you have so hotly pursued me? 37 "Although you have searched all my things, what part of your household things have you found? Set it here before my brethren and your brethren, that they may judge between us both! 38 "These twenty years*

I have been with you; your ewes and your female goats have not miscarried their young, and I have not eaten the rams of your flock. ³⁹ "That which was torn by beasts I did not bring to you; I bore the loss of it. You required it from my hand, whether stolen by day or stolen by night. ⁴⁰ "There I was! In the day the drought consumed me, and the frost by night, and my sleep departed from my eyes. ⁴¹ "Thus I have been in your house twenty years; I served you fourteen years for your two daughters, and six years for your flock, and you have changed my wages ten times. ⁴² "Unless the God of my father, the God of Abraham and the Fear of Isaac, had been with me, surely now you would have sent me away empty-handed. God has seen my affliction and the labor of my hands, and rebuked you last night."

Finally Jacob cannot take it any more and lets lose on Laban and tells him his feelings and gives the glory to God for all that the has and his protection.

Jacob has now proclaimed God, as his God, to his father in law who served false gods.

Or as we would say today, he was being a witness of God in his life.

Next week we will read of Laban's response and then a meeting of Jacob with his brother Esau. Remember the one who wanted to kill Jacob for stealing his blessing.