

Sermon Questions for Life Groups
The Gospel According to Genesis – Restoration
‘Deceiving the Deceiver’ – Gen. 29:1-30
Pastor John Mahaffey
Sunday, September 13, 2015

*These questions are generated by several authors for Life Group discussions
or family or personal devotions*

1. Jacob’s life was marked by conflict and strife from day one. Even in the womb, life was a struggle for Jacob. In what way would Jacob’s experience in chapter 28 and God’s promise to him (read 28:10-22 to refresh your memory) prepare him for the trouble he experienced at Laban’s hand in chapter 29?
2. Compare Laban’s trickery in his dealings with Jacob with Jacob’s earlier deception in his dealings with Esau and with Isaac. Can you discern God’s hand here? In what ways? What do you think God was doing in Jacob and why?
3. In this story, God begins to strip away the bad parts of Jacob's character through trials and hardships. One of the first things that God strips away is Jacob's pride. The son of a wealthy man with many servants, Jacob had likely had to do very little hard work growing up in Canaan. Read Proverbs 11:2, Proverbs 16:18 and Proverbs 29:23 and then discuss:
 - a.) Why else Jacob may have been proud?
 - b.) What evidence showed this pride in this story?
 - c.) By what means and situations did God humble him?
4. The Bible is full of proud people that God humbles before using them. Moses and Saul of Tarsus are two prime examples of this. Read the story of Saul on the road to Damascus (Acts 9) and discuss how Saul was humbled, transformed by God and then used to fulfill God's purpose for his life.

5. The text suggests that rolling the stone away from the well was usually a job for several men, yet Jacob was able to do it by himself. How do you think he was able to manage this? How do you think Rachel would have responded to this act of showmanship?
6. Are the determination and energy shown by Jacob here a new feature in his life? Do you, like him, have a purpose and object in life to give you a similar single-mindedness?
7. Should we feel sympathy for Jacob? All of this seems unjust and unfair. How could Jacob have seen this as an anti-fulfillment of the promises God had made to him? In what ways do you perceive your present struggle and misfortune as God not being true to promises you believed he made to you?
8. Turn the clocks forward – would you consider waiting seven years to marry the person that you had selected for a future spouse because of conditions set by their father? Discuss the influence of cultural traditions on our views on marriage. How does this relate to God's concept of marriage for us as Christians?
9. We have discussed many of Jacob's negative qualities in this story.
 - a.) What are some of the positive things about Jacob?
 - b.) How did God use these qualities to bless Jacob and bring glory to His own name?
10. Pastor John spoke about the ironies that can be seen in Genesis 29 as they pertain to Jacob's life. Summarize a few of these ironies and discuss how God's discipline and development in a believer's life can sometimes be accomplished through ironic circumstances. Do you have any examples of ironies in your own Christian walk with God? Might this be somewhat of a *punishment* for wrongdoings in the past? Please discuss!
11. Read Hebrews 12:1-29. There may be several themes intertwined between accepting discipline as God's children, being holy, and worshipping / acknowledging God's Holy character, etc. See verse 14, "Make every effort to live in peace with all men and to be holy; without holiness no one will see the Lord". What are some challenges to accomplish this?
 - a) Why can't we see the Lord without holiness?