



Dgroup Discussion Guide for March 13, 2016

Breakthrough or Break You?

Scripture: Genesis 32

The grace of God transforms through God's Word and the Holy Spirit, in combination with people, circumstances and time. However, we must be mindful that many times God will use difficult people and circumstances to chisel us into Christlikeness.

Romans 12:18 says, ***If possible as it depends on you be at peace with all men.*** This is demonstrated in the story of Jacob. In Genesis 32, Jacob is on his way back to his brother Esau, who had promised to kill him the next time that their paths crossed. Although Jacob left Laban on God's command, we still see a hint of a manipulator and doubter in him. First, he chose to send out messenger before him to test the waters of Esau's feelings toward Jacob; second, he gave a peace offering in the hopes that it might help him find favor in his sight.

When the messengers returned to Jacob, they shared that Esau was on his way to meet them with an army of 400 men. In Jacob's fear and distress, he decided to divide everything he brought with him into two companies, so that if Esau attacks he will at least have spared half of his possessions. Here, Jacob allowed his fear to override his faith, and chose to take his safety into his own hands through his own manipulation of the situation.

Although his fear resulted in him making his own solutions for his problem, it also propelled him to lift up his burdens to God through prayer. Genesis 32:9 says, ***Jacob said, "O God of my father Abraham and God of my father Isaac, O Lord who said to me, 'Return to your country and to your relatives, and I will prosper you.'"*** The same way that Jacob was able to remind God of His promise to his family, we are able to claim God's promises for us as long as we know what they are—and this is something we can only be aware of if we know His Word.

Even after Jacob prayed his honest prayer—and it seemed like he was on the brink of a breakthrough—he still could not allow God to take complete control over the situation. He gathered some of his flock to give to his brother as a present; he was still manipulating the situation in his favor.

After Jacob sent his family, servants and property ahead of him, he was left alone, and wrestled with a man until daybreak. Genesis 32:26 says, ***Then he (the man) said, "Let me go, for the dawn is breaking." But he said, "I will not let you go unless you bless me."*** According to the book of Hosea, the man that Jacob wrestled with was God. The wrestling here does not refer to a literal physical match, but a wrestling that involved Jacob clinging onto God and not letting go until He blessed him. Jacob here demonstrated patient endurance until he got the reward.

In Genesis 32:28, ***He said, "Your name shall no longer be Jacob, but Israel; for you have striven with God and with men and have prevailed."*** While Jacob means "supplanted, deceiver," Israel means "prince." It was after that that God blessed him. Do we find ourselves contending with God? He says in Psalm 46:10, ***Cease striving and know that I am God.***

It is not enough to know about God; you have to *know* God. It is not enough just to believe in God; you have to *believe* God. It is not enough just to be in intellectual agreement to a set of doctrines about God; you need to

have an *encounter* with God. In Jacob’s situation, even though he knew of the God of his forefathers for many years, the Lord did not change his name until he had his own personal encounter with Him. Remember that Jacob made a deal in Genesis 28 that if the Lord remains with him throughout his journey and allows him to return to his father’s house safely, he will recognize the Lord as *his* God, and not just the God of his forefathers.

Titus 3:5 says, ***He saved us, not on the basis of deeds which we have not done in righteousness, but according to His mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewing by the Holy Spirit.*** We may already be in the process of regeneration after receiving Jesus Christ in our lives, but there are still “respectable sins” (like selfishness, irritability, laziness) that we need to continually be aware of in our daily lives.

APPLICATION:

Patiently listen as God reveals where you can apply the passage’s lesson in your life. Write down specific action points to what He has revealed to you.

	<p>Personal: Have you had a personal encounter with God? How has this affected you, how has it affected your life? Is Jesus truly LORD and SAVIOR in your life? Have you completely surrendered to His will? Have you stopped fighting God? Or do you continue to wrestle with God depending on your own strength and capabilities?</p>
	<p>Family: Talk about your transforming moment to your kids. Help them understand why you choose to love God and why Jesus is Lord and Savior. This is a good opportunity to share with them your testimony of God’s grace and love in your life.</p>
	<p>Discipleship: Discuss with your discipleship group if there are still areas of your life that you continue to wrestle with God. What are these areas? Why are you struggling – is it fear? Uncertainty? How much do you know God’s character? How much do you trust Him?</p>
	<p>Church/ Ministry: In the light of all that is happening in the world today, how am I actively and intentionally sharing the gospel to those who are around me?</p>

PRAYERS:

Lift all the things that you learned back to God. Share your thoughts to Him. If He is impressing a sin in your life, confess it to Him. He is always ready to forgive.