

**GROW. PRAY. STUDY.**  
**First United Methodist Church - Weekly Study Guide**  
*"Equipping people in becoming deeply committed Christians "*

**Wrestling with God – The Story of Jacob**  
**May 10-15**

We end our sermon series today with a story about Jacob's sons. How appropriate this is as we celebrate Mother's days and Children's Sabbath. One of the most important things we learn from Jacob is the power of legacy. He not only followed in a rich legacy of Abraham and Isaac but he also left a great legacy for his twelve sons to follow.

Interestingly enough, we also learn from Jacob and his story the power of struggling with God to find our own calling in life. Perhaps this was the lesson that he left for Joseph and his brothers. His life of trickery and deceit had been transformed to show the power of God's love in the midst of any situation. He wasn't just a new person; Jacob and his family were a different people – changed and molded by God's grace and love.

What message does your life speak? What legacy are you leaving for present and future generations?

**MONDAY 05.10.2010 Genesis 37:1-11**

Jacob favored Joseph, Rachel's first son. The "dreamcoat" (we can't be sure what it looked like) showed Joseph's favored status. Family therapists now know that being a "chosen child" like Joseph often skews emotional growth and relationships. Joseph's strutting misuse of his ability to receive and interpret dreams finally upset even Jacob.

- Jacob should have known the danger of parental bias from his own parents – but he didn't. Have you ever been "the favorite" in some setting? Have you had to relate to someone else who's "the favorite"? What wounds from those experiences undercut your life and the lives of those around you – limiting your joy and effectiveness?

**PRAY THE WESLEY COVENANT PRAYER**

**TUESDAY 05.11.2010 Genesis 37:12-36**

Jacob cluelessly sent Joseph to see his brothers. They acted on their outrage at being lorded over by their brother and undervalued by their father. First, they wanted to kill Joseph. Reuben and Judah talked them out of that, and they sold him to traders. They tricked Jacob (sound familiar?). He believed his favorite was dead and mourned the loss bitterly.

- Reuben and Judah had enough moral courage to stand up to their brothers and say, "No, don't kill Joseph. We don't want blood on our hands." On the other hand, they weren't able to say, "Dad, Joseph isn't dead – we sold him to traders headed for Egypt." How morally courageous are you? In what areas do you want to become braver?

**PRAY THE WESLEY COVENANT PRAYER**

**WEDNESDAY 05.12.2010 Genesis 42:1-38**

Years later, Jacob sent his sons (all but Benjamin, Rachel's other son) to Egypt for food. Over time, Joseph had thrived in Egypt (the story is in Genesis 39-41). He ran the famine relief plan. His brothers didn't know him and bowed to him. (Remember his dreams?) He gave them a tough time at first (Genesis doesn't say why), and insisted on seeing Benjamin.

- Imagine yourself in Joseph's position. In all of Egypt only Pharaoh held more power than he did. What could Joseph have done when he saw his brothers coming before him? On a spectrum from "most vengeful" to "most generous," where would you put his response? How would you have responded in his place?

**PRAY THE WESLEY COVENANT PRAYER**

**THURSDAY 05.13.2010 Genesis 43:1-16, 45:1-18**

Desperate, Jacob sent Benjamin to Egypt. Joseph put the brothers through more trials (chapter 44). Finally, overwhelmed by emotion, he revealed who he was. He made peace with the brothers who sold him as a slave and nearly killed him. He told them God had worked for good even in their evil actions. He asked them to bring his father to Egypt.

- When Joseph revealed who he was, Genesis says his brothers were terrified (which makes sense!). What do you imagine the impact of Joseph's forgiving generosity was on them? In what ways does Joseph give us a vivid image of the way God treats each of us when we seek God's grace?

**PRAY THE WESLEY COVENANT PRAYER**

**FRIDAY 05.14.2010 Genesis 45:25 – 46:7, 48:1-11**

Amazed, Jacob learned that his much-loved, much-mourned son not only lived, but held great power in Egypt. His "spirit revived," and he went to Joseph. At the end, he blessed Joseph's children, blessed all his sons (chapter 49), and spoke yet again about losing Rachel. Jacob's story, like ours, is one of human messiness mixed with the grace of Jacob's God.

- One last irony: Jacob got as nearly-blind as his father Isaac had been (48:10). However, the boys he kissed and embraced really were Joseph's sons. There was no struggle or trickery when he met his grandsons. What do you learn about God's patient work in human lives as you think back over Jacob's long spiritual journey?

**PRAY THE WESLEY COVENANT PRAYER**

**SATURDAY - Read Luke 24:44-53; Acts 1:6-11**

Today we will be reading the passage we will use in worship tomorrow. As you read it, begin to prepare yourself for a true worship experience.

***I invite you to pray the following prayer:***

*Dear God:*

*As I read this passage today help me do so with an open heart, sincerely listening for your voice in my life. Use this passage to prepare me for worship tomorrow. As I read it help me to set aside my own agenda and my own desires so that I may come to worship tomorrow prepared to be molded by you as I continue my journey to becoming a deeply committed disciple of yours. In Christ's name I pray, AMEN*

Here at FUMC we believe part of becoming a Deeply Committed Christians is praying daily. If you find yourself struggling with what to say, we suggest you try praying Wesley's Covenant Prayer.

***A Covenant Prayer in the Wesleyan Tradition***

I am no longer my own, but thine.  
Put me to what thou wilt, rank me with whom thou wilt.  
Put me to doing, put me to suffering.  
Let me be employed by thee or laid aside for thee,  
exalted for thee or brought low by thee.  
Let me be full, let me be empty.  
Let me have all things, let me have nothing.  
I freely and heartily yield all things to thy pleasure and disposal.  
And now, O glorious and blessed God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit  
thou art mine, and I am thine. So be it.  
And the covenant which I have made on earth,  
let it be ratified in heaven. AMEN  
(*United Methodist Hymnal*, p. 607)