

The Upside of Down Times

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Genesis 32:22-31:

A turning point in Jacob's life shows how God deals with our deepest fears.

1. _____

"That night Jacob got up and took his two wives, his two maidservants and his eleven sons and crossed the ford of the Jabbok. After he had sent them across the stream, he sent over all his possessions. So Jacob was left alone, and a man wrestled with him till daybreak. When the man saw that he could not overpower him, he touched the socket of Jacob's hip so that his hip was wrenched as he wrestled with the man." *Genesis 32:22-25* (NIV)

"Even in the womb, Jacob struggled with his brother; when he became a man, he even fought with God." *Hosea 12:3* (NLT)

"Then the man said, 'Let me go, for it is daybreak.' But Jacob replied, 'I will not let you go unless you bless me.'" *Genesis 32:26* (NIV)

Ask: _____ ?

2. _____

"The man asked him, 'What is your name?' 'Jacob,' he answered." *Genesis 32:27*

"Jacob" = _____

Ask: _____ ?

3. _____

"Then the man said, 'Your name will no longer be Jacob, but Israel, because you have struggled with God and with men and have overcome.'" *Genesis 32:28*

"Israel" = _____ or _____

"Jacob said, 'Please tell me your name.' But he replied, 'Why do you ask my name?' Then he blessed him there." *Genesis 32:29*

"So Jacob called the place Peniel, saying, 'It is because I saw God face to face, and yet my life was spared.' The sun rose above him as he passed Peniel, and he was limping because of his hip." *Genesis 32:30-31*

Ask: _____ ?

"So to keep me from becoming proud, I was given a thorn in my flesh. . . Three different times I begged the Lord to take it away. Each time he said, 'My grace is all you need. My power works best in weakness.' So now I am glad to boast about my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ can work through me." *2 Corinthians 12:7b,8-9* (NLT)

Daily Meditations

Monday

Please read Genesis 32:22-31. This is such an interesting story! What did you learn about Jacob from this life event?

In what way can you relate to Jacob in this story?

What is one thing you learned from Jacob's life that you could apply to your life this week?

Thank God today for including the story of Jacob in the Bible. Thank God for His amazing love for you. Ask Him to soften your heart this week as you study the story of Jacob. Pray that you'll be willing to change as He leads you.

Tuesday

Looking for the upside to a down time can be hard. If you're like me you're tempted to wallow in the wrong but then I miss what God wants to do in my life through the hard times! Spend some extended time in prayer today, talking with God about 2009 so far:

Spend time thanking God for all the blessings He has lavished on you this year.

Then talk with God about the ways you feel like you're struggling right now.

Ask God for His peace and ask Him to quiet your fears and worries.

Pray that your heart will be soft and that you'll hear His voice above all the others in your life.

Write down some thoughts and insights from this time of prayer.

Wednesday

Read Genesis 32:22-25. What crisis was Jacob facing?

What role has crisis placed in your life lately? How has that bringing you to a point of change?

Read Psalm 13. What crisis was the Psalmist facing? How did he find encouragement in his down time?

How does this encourage you?

Thank God today that He is with you no matter what the crisis is. Thank Him for the encouragement of scripture. Talk to Him about the down times you're struggling with right now. Pray that you'll "trust in His unfailing love."

Thursday

Please read 1 John 1:8-9. What confession did Jacob need to make?

How can confession help a down time turn to an up time?

What struggle do you have when it comes to confession?

As you spend time in prayer today ask God to show you if there's anything you need to confess to Him. Pray that as you pour your heart out to Him in confession you'll find courage and peace to face your struggles.

Friday

Please read Genesis 32:28-31. What was Jacob's conversion like?

Describe your own conversion to faith in Christ. What circumstances surrounded that?

Please read 2 Corinthians 12:7-9. How did Paul see the upside of his down time?

How can you adopt the same attitude as Paul in regards to your struggles?

Thank God today for saving you. Ask Him for the courage and faith to face the down times in His strength and with His grace.

Saturday

Please be sure you know this week's verse and have finished the devotions. Please pray for the services this weekend. Pray that God will use them to give hope to people. Please also begin praying for the services Easter weekend. Pray that God will use TLC to reach out to many new people with the Good News of God's amazing grace.



"But he said to me,
'My grace is sufficient for you,
for my power is made perfect in weakness.'
2 Corinthians 12:9a