

Introduction: *Inquire about firsthand experience.*

Wrestling with God...Ask if anyone in your group participated in wrestling or a similar martial arts activity in the past. If you have such a person, ask him to comment on the hand-to-hand struggle described in Genesis 32.

Review: *Provide your group members with a brief overview of the events that preceded this passage.*

- Jacob leaves home (Gen. 28)
- Jacob marries Rachel (Gen. 29)
- Jacob has multiple sons by multiple women (Gen. 29–30)
- Jacob separates from Laban (Gen. 31)
- Jacob prepares to meet Esau, his older brother whom he cheated (Gen. 32)

Engage your group members as they read.

Read the following verses (Gen. 32:21-30) and look for the answers to these questions:

1. Why is Jacob alone?
2. With whom does he wrestle?
3. What are the two outcomes of the wrestling match?

Follow up with these questions: *Do you recall such an experience in your spiritual life? Perhaps the Lord chose to literally bring you to your knees just as He did Jacob. Did the confrontation take place after a period of rebellion? Would you consider the outcome of your confrontation with God as being “broken before God”?*

Use media to highlight the lesson.

Show the trailer from the new movie *War Room*:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mIl-XY9t_Lw

Ask members who have seen the movie to compare Jacob's wrestling, brokenness, and transformation to the three main characters in the movie. Each went through a period of self-absorption and rebellion, experienced pain and struggle, and overcame their troubles through prayer—and not without consequences for their rebellion.

Challenge for conviction and transformation.

Read Genesis 35:2 aloud and ask your group members to take a moment and consider the following questions seriously:

1. Have I gotten rid of other gods and placed Christ first in my life?
2. Have I changed from my old self, not just the “outer garments”?
3. Have I acknowledged God's grace in my life—that He has been with me wherever I have gone?

Conclusion: Close with a challenge.

Read Genesis 35:11-12 and challenge your group members to write down on a notecard what task/responsibility he or she is called to in light of God's grace and blessing.