

September 13/14, 2025

"Jacob"

Pastor Aaron Buer



**Beyond the
Weekend**

SPEND DAILY TIME WITH GOD AS YOU READ, THINK, PRAY + ACT.

2025 Focus: 50 Key Truths

Each Friday, explore a key truth about our Christian faith and how we can live in light of this truth.

Day 1 [Genesis 25:22-34](#) | Wrestling Destiny

"After this, his brother came out, with his hand grasping Esau's heel; so he was named Jacob. Isaac was sixty years old when Rebekah gave birth to them." [Genesis 25:26](#)

God promises Abram (later named Abraham) that he will be the father of a great nation and that all peoples on earth will be blessed through him ([Genesis 12:1-3](#)). Abraham eventually has a son, Isaac, who also has two sons, Jacob and Esau. From the womb, Jacob, Abraham's grandson, is recognized as a wrestler. As his twin brother, Esau, was born, Jacob reached out and grabbed his brother's heel ([Genesis 25:26](#)). And thus, he was given the name "Jacob," which means, "he grasps the heel"—another way of pointing to Jacob's wily and deceptive ways.

As Jacob grew up, his self-reliant and deceptive ways followed him. Much like Jacob, we can be self-reliant and deceptive as well. Like when we retaliate against a coworker with passive-aggressive anger. Or when we attempt to numb life's pain through various methods—alcohol, video games or shopping. We may even gossip or slander someone as we attempt to get people on "our side." Much like Jacob, we are often tempted to take matters into our own hands in ungodly ways.

TODAY: A large part of growing in the Christian life is learning to trust God in all things and at all times, relying on God and not yourself. Turn to God in prayer. Ask God to show you how you have been wrestling instead of trusting him. Then ask him to give you strength and courage to rely fully upon him and not yourself.

Day 2 [Genesis 28:13-21](#) | Wrestling God's Plan

"Then Jacob made a vow, saying, 'If God will be with me and will watch over me on this journey I am taking and will give me food to eat and clothes to wear so that I return safely to my father's household, then the LORD will be my God.'" [Genesis 28:20-21](#)

Jacob's deceptive ways are catching up with him. After deceiving his brother out of the birthright and blessing, Esau is out for blood. Jacob flees from Esau and settles in the land of Haran to live with his uncle Laban ([Genesis 27:41-45](#)). While on his journey to Haran, God reveals himself to Jacob and reiterates the promise originally given to his grandfather, Abraham ([Genesis 28:10-15](#)). After Jacob awakes, he makes a vow to himself—if God would provide him with favorable circumstances, *then* he would trust God.

In much the same way, our focus is often on our circumstances rather than on God and his character and promises. We bargain with God much like Jacob. Our trust is conditional—God must meet certain expectations or circumstances. "God, *if* you change my spouse, *then* I will..." "God, *if* you allow me to land that job, *then* I will..." Or even, "God, *if* you get me out of this jam, *then* I will..." True faith, however, is not a bargaining exercise.

with God. True faith implies lifting our eyes off our circumstances and directing our gaze and attention to God and his character.

TODAY: Take time to confess how you are wrestling against God's plan instead of trusting him. Consider using this short prayer as a starting point: "God, I want you to change _____, but even if you don't, I will continue to trust you."

Day 3 [Genesis 29:16-35](#) | Wrestling Laban

"She conceived again, and when she gave birth to a son she said, 'This time I will praise the LORD.' So she named him Judah. Then she stopped having children." [Genesis 29:35](#)

Jacob arrives in Haran and meets Laban's family. He is smitten with Rachel at first sight, Laban's youngest daughter. Jacob agrees to work seven years for Rachel's hand in marriage. Laban, however, tricks Jacob and gives him Leah instead. Jacob eventually ignores Leah, who longs for her husband's love and affection. The pattern of sin and brokenness that began in Isaac's family has now been passed down to Jacob's family. Nevertheless, after birthing several sons, Leah turns to God and praises him despite Jacob's absence.

We all have cycles of sin and brokenness that we were exposed to in our home of origin or in other contexts while growing up. Unfortunately, when we have been harmed by others, we are at increased risk of passing on similar harm. If left unchecked and unaddressed, we will pass on patterns of sin and brokenness to our families. So, we must identify these patterns and turn from them before we repeat them in our relationships with others.

TODAY: One way we take part in breaking cycles is by bringing them into the light by talking with other believers. Talk with a trusted Christian friend about struggles in your life. Are you looking for a friend or a group of believers you can share life with? Join a small group! Being part of a small group is one of the best ways to share and process life with like-minded believers. Sign up for a group [HERE](#).

Day 4 [Matthew 1:1-6](#) | Wrestling's End

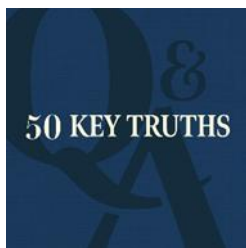
"This is the genealogy of Jesus the Messiah the son of David, the son of Abraham: Abraham was the father of Isaac, Isaac the father of Jacob, Jacob the father of Judah and his brothers." [Matthew 1:1-2](#)

God promises to bless the entire world through the line of Abraham ([Genesis 12](#)). But, as the story unfolds, the line of Abraham is dysfunction junction. From Abraham comes Isaac and Jacob. Then Jacob has twelve sons with four different women. Nevertheless, God works through the dysfunction of Abraham's family tree. Judah is one of the sons born of Leah (Jacob's unloved and ignored wife). Through Judah, God fulfills his promise of blessing the whole world. The royal line comes through Judah, eventually leading to the birth of Jesus, the Messiah.

Jacob was known for his striving, and his family tree was one of great dysfunction. Yet, it is amid such dysfunction that God provided a Savior. The sin and brokenness we see exposed in Jacob's story (and throughout the pages of Scripture) find their remedy in the person and work of Jesus Christ. Jesus came to forgive us of our sins and redeem our stories of brokenness. He came to purge the evil in our hearts, rewrite our

stories and give us a forever home with him in his eternal kingdom. Our wrestling and striving cease when we turn to and trust in Jesus.

TODAY: Have you placed your faith in Jesus? If you have never received Jesus by faith, today is a great day to take that step. If you have, today is a great day to give God thanks. Praise God by singing with our worship team, "[Nothing But the Blood](#)."



Day 5 [John 16:7-15](#) | Question 36: The Holy Spirit's Help

Question: How does the Holy Spirit help believers in their spiritual journey?

Answer: The Holy Spirit strengthens, convicts, counsels and empowers believers to live out their faith.

"But when he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all the truth. He will not speak on his own; he will speak only what he hears, and he will tell you what is yet to come." John 16:13

Jesus speaks to his disciples on the night before his crucifixion, preparing them for his departure. He promises that he will not leave them orphaned, but the Holy Spirit will come and be their helper and counselor. The Spirit will actively assist them in their ministry and spiritual lives. Jesus explains the Spirit will convict the world of sin, righteousness and judgment, and guide believers into all truth. The Spirit does not speak independently but communicates what he receives from the Father and Son. This divine helper will strengthen their faith when they feel weak, give wisdom beyond their natural understanding and empower them for the mission ahead.

The Holy Spirit continues this same ministry in believers' lives. He strengthens us with power when we feel weak ([Ephesians 3:16](#)). He convinces us of the truth of God's Word ([John 16:13](#)) and convicts us of sin, helping us defeat it ([John 16:7-9](#)). The Spirit helps us pray and even prays for us when we don't know how ([Romans 8:26-27](#)). He counsels us when we lean on him ([John 14:26](#)) and fills us with joy ([Acts 13:52](#)). The Spirit gives us spiritual gifts to build up the church ([1 Corinthians 12:4](#)) and gives us peace ([Romans 14:17](#)). Because the Spirit is more powerful than us and the enemy who tries to tempt us, we can live lives pleasing to God through his strength ([1 John 4:4](#)).

TODAY: Identify one specific area where you need the Spirit's strength, conviction, counsel or empowerment. Ask the Spirit to work powerfully in that area, trusting that he is greater than any challenge you face. Learn more about the role of the Holy Spirit in believers' lives in our We Believe document [HERE](#).