

Discussion Guide

Back to Bethel
June 14, 2026

PART 1: RECAP. HAVE SOMEONE READ THIS OUT LOUD.

Last week we focused on the story of Jacob wrestling with God, both physically and spiritually. Our takeaway was that, just like Jacob, we are all prone to falling for the trap of self-reliance instead of trusting God's plans and timing. This week we are looking at more of Jacob and Esau's story, where it becomes clear that God's greatest work isn't in changing our circumstances but rather in changing you.

- How many times have you moved in your lifetime? From where to where?
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PART 2: HAVE SOMEONE READ GENESIS 35:1-15 OUT LOUD. ANSWER THESE QUESTIONS AS A GROUP.

- What did Jacob require of his household before they left for Bethel? (Vss. 2-4) What did this symbolize?
 - Why might a "terror from God" fall on the surrounding cities? What might this mean?
 - Review the promises made to Abraham (12:1-3; 15:17-21; 17:1-8; 22:15-18) How do these compare to the promises God makes to Jacob? (vss. 11-12)
 - Why does God again affirm that he is changing Jacob's name to Israel?
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Flip for more. →



PART 3: REFLECT. ANSWER THESE QUESTIONS TOGETHER.

- What might be some modern "foreign gods" (distractions, priorities, or idols) that compete for your worship today, and why is it sometimes difficult to let them go?
 - In verses 9-10, God appears to Jacob again and reiterates the blessing of his identity as "Israel." Why is it important for us to be reminded of who God says we are, even after we have already "arrived" at a place of spiritual maturity?
 - How do you currently "mark" or commemorate God's faithfulness in your own life so you don't forget his work?
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KEY VERSE:

Genesis 35:10-11

And God said to him, "Your name is Jacob; no longer shall your name be called Jacob, but Israel shall be your name." So he called his name Israel.

And God said to him, "I am God Almighty: be fruitful and multiply.

NEXT STEPS:

- I will examine my life for any distractions or idols and take steps to remove or minimize them.
- I will surrender _____ to God and trust him with the outcome.
- I want to come home for spiritual renewal.

