

The process of brokenness

January 13 , 2020

GENESIS 32:24-28 NIV - (24) So Jacob was left alone, and a man wrestled with him till daybreak. **(25)** 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. **(26)** Then the man said, "Let me go, for it is daybreak." But Jacob replied, "I will not let you go unless you bless me." **(27)** The man asked him, "What is your name?" "Jacob," he answered. **(28)** Then the man said, "Your name will no longer be Jacob, but Israel, because you have struggled with God and with humans and have overcome."

Either you have had or you have a piggy bank. Remember when we would turn it upside down and shake it to get the coins to come out? The coins would at times come out very slowly. You know, one here, one there. Sometimes it would take forever to get a single coin out! But because of our patience has run out, we decide to get a hammer and break the piggy bank. Why? To get everything out of it! God will shake us up, just like a piggy bank, but He will let it be known that enough is enough! And then we are broken.

We're all like Jacob. We think that the enemy, the problem, is out there. "The problem is my wife ... my husband ... my parents ... my boss ... my poor circumstances. God, please take care of the problem for me." But the enemy or problem isn't primarily out there. The problem is in me, my flesh, my sinful, selfish nature that dominates my life. So God has to reveal to me the power of my flesh before I can be delivered from it.

Obviously, God could have crippled Jacob in the first minute of this contest. When He finally wanted to, He just touched Jacob's hip and Jacob felt excruciating pain as his hip was wrenched. So why didn't God do it sooner? Why did He allow the match to go on all night long?

God wanted to show Jacob the power of his self-will. If you've ever wrestled, you know how exhausting it is to grapple with an opponent of equal or greater strength. A few minutes is enough. But Jacob kept at it all night! The Lord kept waiting to see if Jacob would surrender, but he kept fighting.

At what point do you suppose Jacob recognized that his opponent was not a mere man? Later **(32:30)** he acknowledged that it was God. The text doesn't tell us, but I'm sure that if he didn't know before, Jacob knew as soon as the Lord crippled him. But the Lord didn't use that power until He saw that Jacob would not yield **(32:25)**. The flesh dies hard! Only God can tame it. Until God crippled him, Jacob wouldn't give in. God let him wrestle all night so that Jacob could see how strong his self-will really was.

To make sure that Jacob has learned the lesson, the Lord asks him a question which, at first, doesn't seem to fit the context. Jacob is finally subdued, and he clings to the Lord and says, "I will not let you go unless you bless me." The Lord responds, "What is your name?" **(32:27)**. Remember, the Lord never asks questions to gain information. He knew the answer. He wanted Jacob to confess not just his name, but his character. He had to say, "My name is Jacob--*the sup planter, the manipulator, the traitor.*" Only after Jacob acknowledged that could the Lord bless him.

Part of the process of knowing God involves knowing ourselves. Until God reveals the power of our sinful nature to us, we tend to think that we're not so bad.

SCRIPTURE READING: PSALM 89:6-7

THOUGHT FOR THE WEEK: Brokenness is often the road to breakthrough. Be encouraged.

"A JOURNEY OF THE HEART"