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# Daily Devotional - Monday, July 8, 2024 - Family Business

JULY 08TH 2024 BY DEE LOFLIN

## Daily Devotional - Monday, July 8, 2024 - Family Business

A close friend of mine works for a large, family-owned business. When the father who started the business died, the three siblings argued over who was in charge and how much each one owned. Currently, the siblings are embroiled in lawsuits against one another. When you mix in financial and leadership decisions that come with a business, the results can be devastating.

After the birth of Joseph, Jacob longed to return to the land of Canaan (v. 25). Jacob believed God's promise that he and his descendants would inherit Canaan. He knew he belonged there. However, he now had a

large family to provide for. The problem was that he did not own anything. He had worked for fourteen years to pay the bride-price for Rachel and Leah. Under his care, Laban's flocks had flourished (vv. 29–30). Laban had grown wealthy because of God's hand of blessing on Jacob (v. 27). But none of this wealth belonged to Jacob.

*The greedy stir up conflict, but those who trust in the LORD will prosper.*

**PROVERBS 28:25**

So, Jacob proposed a plan under which he would be compensated for his work. All the speckled and spotted sheep and goats from the flocks he tended would be removed (v. 32). Then, any speckled or spotted sheep or goats that were born would belong to him as a

wage. Since most sheep are white and most goats are black, this sounded like a good plan to Laban. Both Jacob and Laban tried to get the better of the other. Laban had tricked Jacob into marrying Leah. This time, Jacob had the upper hand. Through some rather odd mating practices, he was able to breed numerous strong animals for himself leaving Laban with the weaker flocks (v. 42). Here we continue to see God at work, blessing Jacob and showing Himself faithful to His promises despite challenging family circumstances.

**Go Deeper**

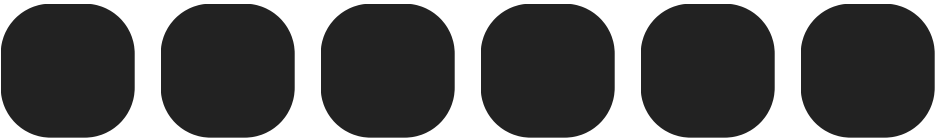
Why did Jacob want to leave Laban? Was Laban’s reaction justified? Why or why not? How did God preserve His promise through these two imperfect men?

**Pray with Us:** Lord, thank You for Your encouragement in today’s reading. We all, like Jacob, encounter challenging family circumstances, but through it all, Your promises will be fulfilled and Your purpose for our lives accomplished.

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# Daily Devotional - July 3, 2024 - Amazing Grace

JULY 03RD 2024 BY DEE LOFLIN

## Daily Devotional - July 3, 2024 - Amazing Grace

While we often celebrate God's amazing grace, deep down we may feel it would be better if we could somehow qualify for it. Perhaps our pride would be soothed if we could somehow earn God's favor. Yet over and over, Scripture teaches us that God's commitment to save and redeem His people is not based on anything we have done, but on His grace alone.

In Genesis 26, Isaac acted in fear even though God had promised to be with him and protect him (vv. 2–5). As his father before him, Isaac was afraid he would be mistreated because of his wife. So, he claimed that Rebekah was his

sister (v. 7). But, as they say, “Truth is the daughter of time; and, in time, it will come out.” Isaac was discovered “caressing” his wife in a manner that made it clear that she was not his sister (v. 8). When Abimelech found out, he issued a decree to ensure that Isaac and Rebekah would be safe (v. 11).

*We have this treasure in jars of clay to show that this all-surpassing power is from God and not from us.*

**2 CORINTHIANS 4:7**

In all of this, God was with Isaac, protecting him, and blessing him with abundant crops (vv. 12–13). His wealth sparked the envy of those around him, and he was driven away to another area of the land (v. 16). Following this, Isaac had a series of quarrels over the rights to water. Yet, through all this, God protected and provided for Isaac. In the end, the political powers of the region made a treaty with him. These Gentile kings clearly saw the hand of the Lord over Isaac and made peace with him (vv. 28–29).

One Bible commentator described Isaac like this: “He is timid, fearful for his own skin; he is prepared to lie and put his wife at risk to save himself.” Yet, despite his weakness, God would be faithful to His promises that through Abraham the world would be blessed.

## Go Deeper

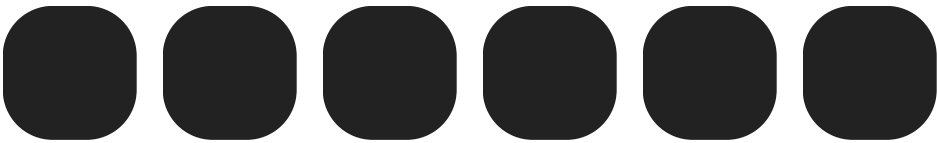
How might a commentator describe *your* character flaws? Despite your weaknesses, what are some ways you have experienced God's grace in your life?

**Pray with Us:** Lord, You are a merciful God! When faced with our flaws, difficulties, and sorrows, may we say: “In the day of trouble he will keep me safe in his dwelling; he will...set me high upon a rock” (Ps. 27:5).

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# Daily Devotional - Monday, July 1, 2024 - Waiting on the Lord

JULY 01ST 2024 BY DEE LOFLIN

Daily Devotional - Monday, July 1, 2024 - Waiting on the Lord

It is not easy to wait. We are used to getting things quickly. The internet has made it possible to get almost any information we want immediately. When it comes to ordering things online, I find myself getting impatient if it does not arrive at my house within a

day.

Today we begin our study of the second half of the book of Genesis. In chapter 25, we meet Isaac's son Jacob, a man who would learn a lot about waiting upon the Lord. Before he was born, Jacob's mother Rebekah

*Wait for the LORD; be strong and take heart and wait for the LORD.*

**PSALM 27:14**

noticed something odd happening in her womb. Distressed by this, she inquired of the Lord who granted her a prophetic oracle, "Two nations are in your womb...one people will be stronger than the other, and the older will serve the younger" (v. 23). Against all expectations, God told Rebekah that the younger would be the leader of the family and receive the Abrahamic promise.

Although Jacob and Esau were brothers, they did not have much in common. Esau loved the outdoors, hunting, and an active lifestyle, while Jacob was more of a homebody (v. 27). Esau was his father's favorite, while Rebekah preferred Jacob (v. 28).

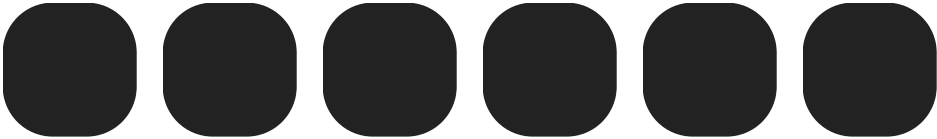
The passage ends with a brief story that characterizes both brothers. Esau is portrayed as thoughtless and driven by appetite. He came in from hunting famished and begged his brother for some stew (v. 30). To get it, he was willing to sell his birthright (vv. 32–33), one of the most significant and valuable rights that he possessed. And he traded it for a meal! Jacob, on the other hand, is portrayed as cold-blooded and calculating. Rather than having compassion on his brother, he used the opportunity to get ahead (vv. 31–33). Instead of waiting upon the Lord's timing, he grasped for position through his own efforts.

## Go Deeper

Is there some area of your life where you are being required to wait? How has God worked during times of waiting in your past?

**Pray with Us:** As we start this month's study, we ask You, Lord, to increase our faith in Your promises and to instill in us patience to wait for their fulfillment. What a joy it is to know that Your timing is perfect, and Your promises are faithful and true!

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# Daily Devotional - Wednesday, June 26, 2024 - God's Presence in Serving Others

JUNE 26TH 2024 BY DEE LOFLIN

## Daily Devotional - Wednesday, June 26, 2024 - God's Presence in Serving Others

What if you had a mirror that didn't just reflect your outward appearance, but could also reveal your inner self? The mirror would show how you interact with other people around you, particularly the least noticed and least cared for among us. This is like what Jesus does in Matthew 25:31–46, as He communicates a profound truth about recognizing His presence in those we meet as we go about our everyday lives.

*I tell you the truth, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me.*

Here, in the parable of the Sheep and the Goats (vv. 31–40), Jesus surveys all the people from all

nations, separating them into two groups: sheep and goats (v. 31). One is given “eternal punishment” the other “eternal life” (v. 46). Jesus uses a unique method to tell one group from the other; and He identified with “the least of these”—the hungry, the thirsty, the stranger, the naked, the sick, and the prisoner (vv. 35–39). When we act in love to them, we encounter the living Lord Himself. By neglecting them, we turn our backs on Jesus and risk incurring future punishment.

Jesus calls us to be people of compassion. God’s presence is not only found in expected places, for example where we regularly meet to worship with other believers, but also through our humble acts of kindness toward others. We are to cultivate a heart of compassion toward “the least of these” (v. 40) because when we do reach out to those in need around us, we are doing it as if the recipient was Jesus Himself. The words of Jesus are both sobering and enlightening: “I tell you the truth, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did for me” (v. 40). Jesus’ presence, then, is intricately intertwined with our actions and interactions with others, especially those on society’s margins.

## Go Deeper

What was your reaction to the parable of the Sheep and the Goats? Which group better reflects your actions toward others? How can you cultivate a heart of compassion?

**Pray with Us:** Holy Spirit, teach us to recognize the presence of Jesus in others and be ready to help them. The parable of the Sheep and the Goats humbles us, as we see that Jesus identifies with “the least of these”—people we often avoid or neglect.

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## Daily Devotional - Monday, June 24, 2024 - Eternity in His Presence

JUNE 24TH 2024 BY DEE LOFLIN

### Daily Devotional - Monday, June 24, 2024 - Eternity in His Presence

Have you ever tried to put together a new piece of furniture without reading the instruction manual? At first it might seem self-explanatory, but there's nothing more troubling than to be left with several leftover pieces. Clearly, you needed more information.

In Matthew 22:23–33, Jesus confronts those who were misunderstanding something important. The Sadducees were a wealthy and powerful religious group. They believed

*He is not the God of the dead but of the living.*

**MATTHEW 22:32**

in the Torah, the first five books of the Bible, and emphasized individual free will. They also did not believe in life after death, so their question to Jesus was dishonest. They questioned Jesus about marriage, hoping to trap Him (v. 23). Their question revealed that they did not fully comprehend what happened after death and what it would be like to be in God's presence for eternity. Jesus responded by affirming the reality of the resurrection and the eternality of God's presence. He corrected their misunderstanding: "He is not the God of the dead but of the living" (v. 32). The apostle Paul tackled this issue in 1 Corinthians: "How can some of you say that there is no resurrection of the dead?" (20:15).



The Sadducees needed guidance and clarity. God’s presence is not limited to our earthly existence; it’s eternal, encompassing both the now and the everlasting. His presence spans beyond our temporal understanding into an eternal reality. This knowledge should inspire awe, devotion, and joy in us and motivate us to dig deeper into His Word and seek to live more fully in His presence.

Jesus was critical of those who “do not know the scriptures or the power of God” (v. 29). It reminds us not to take lightly the privilege we have been given of reading and learning from God’s Word.

**Go Deeper**

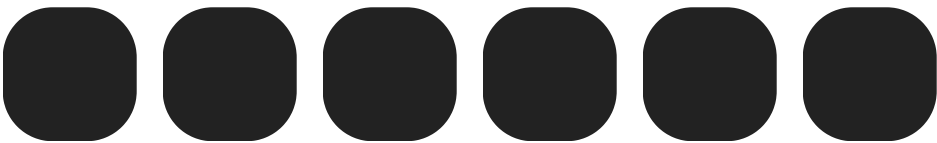
What did the Sadducees believe? Why were they wrong? What are some popular ideas about God and eternity in our culture that are antibiblical?

**Pray with Us:** Lord, it’s a joy to reflect on Your words, that You are the God of the living. You gave us new life in You and eternity in Your kingdom! This truth motivates us to dig deeper into Your life-giving Word.

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