

FIVE PHASES GOD USES TO CHANGE US

1. CONFLICT: A struggle with others.

“Jacob heard that Laban's sons were saying, ‘Jacob has taken everything our father owned and has gained all this wealth from what belonged to our father.’ And Jacob noticed that Laban's attitude toward him was not what it had been.” Gen. 31:1-2 (NIV)

“The messengers returned to Jacob and said, ‘We went to your brother Esau, and now he is coming to meet you, with an army of 400 men!’ Jacob was terrified at the news.” Gen. 32:6-7 (NLT)

“Then Jacob prayed, ‘O God ... O Lord... I am unworthy of all the kindness and faithfulness you’ve shown me... save me I pray... for I am afraid...’” Gen. 32:9-11 (NLT)

The Reality Choice: realize I'm not God, admit I'm powerless to control my tendency to do the wrong thing and my life is unmanageable.

“God blesses those who realize their need for him.” Matt. 5:3 (NLT)

2. CRISIS: I struggle with God.

“Jacob got them safely across the brook Jabbok along with all his possessions. But Jacob stayed behind and was left all alone in the camp, and a Man came and wrestled with him until dawn. When the Man saw that he couldn't win the match, he struck Jacob's hip and knocked it out of joint at the socket.” Gen. 32:23-25 (NLT/MSG)

“Before Jacob was born, he struggled with his brother; when he became a man, he even fought with God.” Hosea 12:3 (NLT)

The Hope Choice: earnestly believe that God exists, that I matter to Him, and that He has the power to help me change.

3. COMMITMENT: I commit to God's changes.

“Then the Man said, ‘Let me go, for it is dawn.’ But Jacob panted, ‘I won't let you go unless you bless me!’” Gen. 32:26 (NLT)

The Commitment Choice: consciously choose to commit all my life and will to Christ's care and control.

“Do not let any part of your body become a tool of wickedness, to be used for sinning. Instead, give yourselves completely to God since you have been given new life. And use your whole body as a tool to do what is right for the glory of God.” Rom. 6:13 (NLT)

4. CONFESSION: I admit I'm the problem.

“The man asked him, ‘What is your name?’ ‘JACOB’, he answered.” Gen. 32:27 (NIV)

Jacob = ‘deceiver/manipulator’

The Housecleaning Choice: Openly examine & confess my faults to myself, to God, & to someone I trust.

5. CONVERSION: I get a new identity!

“Then the Man said, ‘Your name will no longer be Jacob, but ISRAEL ... Then he blessed him there. So Jacob called the place Peniel, saying, ‘It is because I saw God face to face...’” Gen. 32:28-30 (NIV)

Israel = “Prince of God”

“Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled.” Matt. 5:6 (NIV)

The Transformation Choice: Voluntarily submit to every change God wants to make in my life and humbly ask him to remove my character defects.

“The sun rose as Jacob left Peniel, and he was limping because of his hip.” Gen. 32:31 (NLT)

Weekly Reading Plan

Monday – Matthew 5

Thursday – Romans 7

Tuesday – Genesis 31-32

Friday – Romans 8

Wednesday – Romans 6

Saturday – Romans 9-10

Sunday – Matthew 18