

**PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE**  
**"BLESS US" = GENESIS 32:9-12, 22-32**  
**SCRIPTURE & SERMON DISCUSSION GUIDE**

## OPEN

This week we continue in our Prayers of the People sermon series looking at the story of God wrestling with Jacob and what is involved with asking God to bless us. Before diving into this week's passage, take a few minutes to reflect on the following:

1. This past week, what did you do differently to engage God in prayer? What was the biggest obstacle to engaging in prayer? What did you experience in prayer this week?

## DISCUSS

READ GENESIS 32:9-12, 22-32.

2. Tim Mackie of the BibleProject provides a great summary of the central deficit in Jacob's character and God's involvement in his story: *God blesses Jacob from birth (Genesis 25:19-34), but Jacob lives as if God's blessing depends on his own scheming and skills. And he's willing to sabotage anyone to get what he wants. In spite of this, God does not abandon Jacob. Instead, God commits himself even more to Jacob by visiting him in person to wrestle it all out. God wounds Jacob in the struggle, and it's precisely this wound that helps Jacob finally receive God's blessing as a gift. It's a gift he could never acquire by himself, no matter how hard he tries.*
  - a. Can you recall a time or season of life when you acted as if *blessing depended upon your own scheming and skills*? What losses or frustrations did you experience as a result? Is there a blessing you did receive that was less satisfying as a result of going it "alone"?
  - b. How have you experienced *God's commitment* to you when it was clear that your own schemes and skills were not enough to get by on?
3. Pastor William identified one of the key obstacles to cultivating a heart and lifestyle of prayer: "Oftentimes we don't pray because we don't want to wrestle." What did God use in Jacob's life got him wrestling instead of running? What rises up in your heart and mind as you think about prayer as *wrestling*?
4. In this wrestling match with Jacob we see our transcendent Creator God humbly presenting himself to this sinful schemer. How does this manifestation of God's presence point us to the gospel? What gospel truths do you need hold onto as you seek to meet God in prayer?
5. In this passage we see Jacob—whose name means "deceiver"—is given "Israel" as a new name, meaning "one who strives with God." When your past is brought to mind, what "name" have you (or others) called you? How does the work of Jesus provide you with a new "name"?

## PRAY

As we pray for *blessing*, ask God to give us the strength to acknowledge where we are weak and trying to sort things out on our own. Pray for a deep sense of our new identity in Christ as beloved son and daughters who have access to the throne of grace and are heirs to the kingdom of God.