



Title: Wrestling God

Category: Serving Self

Tags: 2 Corinthians 5:17, Genesis 32:22-28, Israel, Jacob, Overcome, Revelation 3:21, Serving Self, Wrestling God

Have you ever wrestled with God? If you did, would you win? There is an odd account of the man, Jacob, who did just that.

Jacob was preparing to meet his brother Esau, and he wasn't expecting that meeting to go well. You see, Jacob had conned Esau out of both his inheritance and his father's blessing as his first-born. The last time he saw Esau, Esau was planning on killing him. Meantime, Jacob had become wealthy, so his plan was to send a multitude of gifts ahead of him to his brother and hopefully that would pacify him. He sent camels, donkeys, cattle, sheep and goats ahead of him, but he stayed back in the camp. "That night Jacob got up and took his two wives, his two maidservants and his eleven sons and crossed the ford of the Jabbok. After he had sent them across the stream, he sent over all his possessions. So Jacob was left alone and a man wrestled with him till daybreak. 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. Then the man said, 'Let me go, for it is daybreak.' But Jacob replied, 'I will not let you go unless you bless me.' The man asked him, 'what is your name?' 'Jacob' he answered. Then the man said, 'Your name will no longer be Jacob, but Israel, because you have struggled with God and with men and have overcome'" (Genesis 32:22-28).

Could it be that Jacob was so tough that even God couldn't overpower him in a wrestling match? Well, God did mess up Jacob's hip just by touching it, so I think God could have ended this match anytime He wanted to. No, the overcoming wasn't physical; there was something else going on here. The name Jacob means deceiver, and Jacob had been living up to that name his whole life. He had deceived Esau twice; first, for his inheritance--then, for his father's blessing. Even all the gifts he has been sending Esau's way were gained by deception. Now, Jacob realized that he was going to have to account for his past dealings. Like many of us, he knew the life he had been living was going to be his destruction; the stone he had rolled was going to roll back on him. If he was to be delivered from his guilt and have any kind of future he knew it would take an act of God. So, he stripped himself of everything his life was. He sent it all ahead of him and stood mano a mano with God Almighty. God didn't make it easy; He wasn't going to accept a half-hearted effort. Then, when God had fully tested Jacob's resolve, He said, "Your name will no longer be Jacob, but Israel because you have struggled with God and with men and have overcome." God changed his name from deceiver to overcomer.

Walking away from the old man and becoming a new creature requires a fight. God will test our resolve, too. Some don't make it through the night; they don't really want it. But, some do, and for them, the light dawns on a brand new day. "Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come" (2 Corinthians 5:17). Be an overcomer. Jesus said, "To him who overcomes, I will give the right to sit with me on my throne, just as I have overcome and sat down with my Father on his throne" (Revelation 3:21).