

Firm Foundation Inspiration Minute – Talk #204

Topic: The Value of Struggle

Genesis 32:24-28

“Then Jacob was left alone; and a Man wrestled with him until the breaking of day. Now, when He saw that He could not prevail against him, He touched the socket of his hip, and the socket of Jacob’s hip was out of joint as He wrestled with him. And He said, ‘Let Me go, for the day breaks.’ But Jacob said, ‘I will not let You go unless You bless me.’ And He said to him, ‘What is your name?’ He said, ‘Jacob.’ And He said, ‘Your name shall no longer be Jacob, but Israel; for you have struggled with God and with man and have prevailed.’”

There are many lessons to learn from this text—not just what I’ve read, but the whole context. Today, we’re focusing on **the lesson of the value of struggle**.

Struggle as a Divine Encounter

We read that **Jacob was alone with God**.

The text calls Him a man, but we know this was a **pre-incarnate manifestation of Jesus Christ**. This struggle was designed to take Jacob **to another level**.

We sometimes perceive struggle as a hindrance, but the **Apostle James** made it clear that when trials and tests come, we should not think it strange.

James said:

“Do not think it strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you.”

He compared it to **gold being refined in fire**.

He also said:

“Count it all joy when you fall into various trials, knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience.”

And then he tells us that patience has a work—to make us **complete and entire, lacking nothing**.

So there is **value in your struggle**, but you have to frame it that way. You have to see it that way **in the grace of God**.

Persistence in the Pain

As Jacob and this Man wrestled until the breaking of day, when the Man saw He could not prevail against him, He touched the socket of Jacob’s hip. His hip went out of joint.

But even in the midst of Jacob’s hip being out of joint, **he continued to wrestle** until the Man said, *“Let me go, for the day breaks.”*

Jacob replied, *“I won’t let you go until you bless me.”*

One of the values we gain in struggle is **not giving up**—not quitting, not caving in, not making excuses. Because if you are in a struggle **in the will of God**, there is a purpose for it. God is doing something to **elevate you**.

Again, as James said:

“Let patience have its perfect work, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing.”

So even though Jacob was in pain, even though his hip was out of joint, **he kept wrestling until he prevailed**.

Understanding Jacob’s Name

When the Man asked him, *“What is your name?”* he said, *“My name is Jacob.”*

We often think of Jacob as the supplanter and deceiver, but I believe the greater revelation is this:

When Jacob was born, he was the twin of his brother Esau. Esau came out first, and the Bible says **Jacob had a hold of Esau’s heel**. When they pulled Esau out, Jacob came with him, gripping his brother’s heel.

The name *Jacob* literally means **“one who takes the heel.”**

I've always considered this an attribute of Jacob—
the **tenacity**,
the **sticking with it**,
the **not giving up**,
the **holding on to the heel**.

So when God asked him, *"What is your name?"* it was as if he was saying,
"I am the one who takes hold of the heel and won't let go."

He proved his value and his purpose **in that struggle**.

From Jacob to Israel

Then the Man said:

"Your name shall no longer be called Jacob, but Israel; for you have struggled with God and with men and have prevailed."

Israel means *"one who struggles with God"* or *"God strives."*
It is a name that represents **the value of struggle**.

The one who persevered—even sometimes to his own detriment—was elevated through struggle. God acknowledged him as **one who struggles with God and prevails**.

When the Bible says the Man could not overpower him, it was not that God was weak. God allowed resistance **to test him and to grow him**. This was not a power struggle—this was a **relational struggle**.

God wanted to elevate the relationship between Himself and Jacob, and that happened **through struggle**.

The Limp Was Repositioning, Not Punishment

Jacob's limp was not punishment—it was **repositioning**.

He could no longer walk in self-sufficiency.

He could no longer identify as the one who "takes hold of the heel and won't let go."

That is self-sufficiency.

He had learned to **trust God**, to engage God, and to stay engaged with God.

One of the things about disability—or helping people with disability—is that it makes you recognize your **need for help and assistance from others**.

A Word for 2026

As we enter this new year, **2026**, recognize the value of struggle—past, present, or future. Don't look at it as something to hinder you. Realize that **no matter what happens, God is elevating you**, and you will not be the same after an encounter with God.

The most important lesson is this:

You will be less self-sufficient and more God-sufficient.

Ministry Update

As you may be aware, I am on a mini sabbatical for the month of January.

I invited **Pastor Lee Robb** to minister at New Covenant Church, and he brought a very important message entitled **"Desires That Don't Betray You."** Be sure to click the link in this blog to watch that message on YouTube and download the detailed summary.

I appreciate Pastor Robb for being such a blessing.

This coming Sunday, we will be blessed by the ministry of **Jan Mitchell**.

God bless. Have a great day, and be encouraged.