

Wrestling with God

Big Idea: Jacob's struggle with God illustrates how faith is sometimes expressed through wrestling with God, persevering through bad times, contending for the good, praising God regardless, and trusting Him for the outcome.

Therefore do not throw away your confidence, which has a great reward. For you have need of endurance, so that when you have done the will of God you may receive what is promised. For, "Yet a little while, and the coming one will come and will not delay; but my righteous one shall live by faith, and if he shrinks back, my soul has no pleasure in him." But we are not of those who shrink back and are destroyed, but of those who have faith and preserve their souls. Hebrews 10: 35-39

Life cannot be reduced to formulas with predictable outcomes. A sovereign God, whose ways are far higher than ours, works His will through ours. Sometimes that combination creates unanswerable challenges. Our response to those struggles reveals the depth of our faith and the extent of our influence.

1. Jacob – Sometimes God's Blessings Come Through Struggles.

And Jacob was left alone. And a man wrestled with him until the breaking of the day. When the man saw that he did not prevail against Jacob, he touched his hip socket, and Jacob's hip was put out of joint as he wrestled with him. Then he said, Let me go, for the day has broken. But Jacob said, I will not let you go unless you bless me. Genesis 32:24-26

2. Job – Sometimes Bad Things Happen to Good People

Then Job arose and tore his robe and shaved his head and fell on the ground and worshiped. And he said, "Naked I came from my mother's womb, and naked shall I return. The Lord gave, and the Lord has taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord." In all this Job did not sin or charge God with wrong. Job 1:21

3. Joseph – Sometimes Bad Things Bring About Good

And now do not be distressed or angry with yourselves because you sold me here, for God sent me before you to preserve life.... And God sent me before you to preserve for you a remnant on earth, and to keep alive for you many survivors. So it was not you who sent me here, but God. Genesis 45:5,7,8a

4. David – Good Times or Bad, God is Worthy to be Praised

I say to God, my rock: Why have you forgotten me? Why do I go mourning because of the oppression of the enemy? As with a deadly wound in my bones, my adversaries taunt me, while they say to me all the day long, Where is your God? Why are you cast down, O my soul, and why are you in turmoil within me? Hope in God; for I shall again praise him, my salvation and my God. Psalm 42:9-11

5. Paul – It's in Life's Struggles We Learn To Trust God

A thorn was given me in the flesh, a messenger of Satan to harass me, to keep me from becoming conceited. Three times I pleaded with the Lord about this, that it should leave me. But he said to me, My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness. 2 Corinthians 12:7b-9a

We can't look at the consistency of principles in the Bible without noticing the unpredictability of life's circumstances and our human reaction to them. We should consider the challenges we face as tests of our faith, ones Jesus knows we have the maturity to overcome (1 Cor. 10:13; James 1:2-12).

Think about how these Scriptures and Andre Crouch's lyrics apply to the challenges you face today:
I've had many tears and sorrows, I've had questions for tomorrow, there's been times I didn't know right from wrong. But in every situation, God gave me blessed consolation, that my trials come to only make me strong. Through it all, through it all, I've learned to trust in Jesus, I've learned to trust in God. Through it all, through it all, I've learned to depend upon His Word.