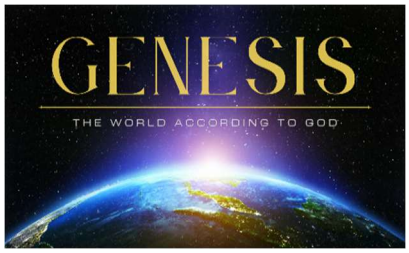

Genesis 29:1-30

DISAPPOINTMENT ACCORDING TO GOD

If you get married as Jacob did, putting the weight of all your deepest hopes and longings on the person you are marrying, you are going to crush him or her with your expectations. It will distort your life and your spouse's life in a hundred ways. No person, not even the best one, can give your soul all it needs. You are going to think you have gone to bed with Rachel, and you will get up and it will always be Leah. This cosmic disappointment and disillusionment is there in all of life, but we especially feel it in the things upon which we most set our hopes. When you finally realize this, there are four things you can do. You can blame the things that are disappointing you and try to move on to better ones… You can blame yourself…and say, "I have somehow been a failure. I see everybody else is happy. I don't know why I am not happy. There is something wrong with me." … You can blame the world. You can say, "Curses on the entire opposite sex!" … Or, lastly, you can reorient the entire focus of your life toward God. —Timothy Keller

A Rebekah struggles in childbirth—Jacob named (25:19-34)
- **B** *Interlude: Danger in a foreign place (26:1-35)*
  - **C** Jacob's conflict with Esau intensified (27:1-28:9)
    - **D** Jacob encounters Yahweh and His angels (28:10-22)
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        - **F** Jacob's children are multiplied (30:1-24)
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  - **C** Jacob's conflict with Esau reconciled (33:1-20)
- **B** *Interlude: Danger in a foreign place (34:1-31)*

A Rachel struggles in childbirth—Jacob renamed (35:1-29)

SEVEN PRACTICAL PRINCIPLES FOR LIFE

1. An emotional _____ is no substitute for spiritual _____.

Jacob's dream (28:10-22) renews his vigor and causes him to "lift up his feet" to Haran (29:1). He is emotionally high but spiritually shallow. His actions are a stark contrast to Abraham's servant in Genesis 24.

Abraham's Servant		Jacob
	PRAYER	
	PRIORITY	
	PRAISE	

2. It often takes a _____ to make a _____.

After meeting Rachel, Jacob goes from a tent-dwelling mama's boy (25:27-28) to a man of great strength, hard work, and strong devotion.

The story does not expressly make any theological points. …The narrative unfolds its theological lessons in a subtle way. —Allen Ross

In Laban Jacob met his match and his means of discipline. Twenty years of drudgery and friction were to weather his character; and the reader can reflect that presumably Jacob is not the only person to have needed a Laban in his life. Through this man, Jacob drank deeply of his own medicine. —Derek Kidner

This scene is chiefly about God's providence and Jacob's prayerlessness. —Bruce K. Waltke

Married men work harder, smarter and more successfully than their peers who are not married. That is because, even today, men still associate marriage with growing up and providing for their family… This marriage-induced responsibility ethic means married men work more hours, seek out higher-paying jobs, and are generally more reliable employees.
—Dr. Brad Wilcox, *Get Married*
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3. The world has no shortage of greedy _____.

Laban ("white") feigns love, talks smoothly, and acts like a friend but inside his heart is motivated by greed (cf. 1 Tim. 6:3-10; 2 Pet. 2:1-3).

4. Outward beauty is no substitute for _____ beauty.

Rachel captivates Jacob's eyes and heart with her striking beauty and nice figure (29:17; cf. Prov. 31:30). Meanwhile, Leah is described as having "delicate eyes" [Hebrew, *rak,* "tender, soft, delicate, weak"].

Lovely eyes? (NRSV, GNT)
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5. You _____ what you _____.

Jacob experienced God's grace but this did not deliver him from the consequences of his own poor choices (cf. Gal. 6:7-8; Prov. 26:27).

- As Jacob took advantage of Esau's desperate desire so Laban takes advantage of Jacob's desperate desire (cf. 25:30).
- As Jacob took advantage of Isaac's diminished sight so Laban takes advantage of Jacob's diminished sight (cf. 27:1).

The Adam Fallacy	The Basic Reality	The Job Fallacy
If you are in a bad situation, it is totally caused by the bad actions of others.	A bad situation is a mix of bad choices (of you and others) and the sin of this world.	If you are in a bad situation, it is totally caused by your own bad choices.

6. Temporal things cannot satisfy _____ desires.

Temporal things are good but they are not God. Jacob tries to fill the deep longings of his soul with a romanticized, sexualized love. His disorienting disappointment in the morning is a warning to us all.

7. God _____ keeps His promises!

Though God is ignored in this story, He is still always present. He is accomplishing His will and faithfully fulfilling His promises to Jacob.

Behold, I am with you and will keep you wherever you go and will bring you back to this land. For I will not leave you until I have done what I have promised you.
—Genesis 28:15

For despicability Laban takes the prize in the Old Testament.
—H. C. Leupold

Jacob was deluded by wine and the dark. —Josephus (AD 37-100)

Feast. Heb., *mishteh,* "the act of drinking, esp. wine; a banquet."

Deceive. Heb., *ramah,* "to beguile, mislead, deal treacherously." The noun form is used in Gen. 27:35.

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—Genesis Rabbah (AD 300-500)

*The words—**Behold, it was Leah**—are the very embodiment of anti-climax, and this moment is a mini-ature of man's disillusion, experi-enced from Eden onwards.*
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No human relationship can bear the burden of godhood… However much we may idealize and idolize [someone], they inevitably reflect earthly decay and imperfection… What is it that we want when we elevate a love partner to this posi-tion? We want to be rid of our faults... We want to be justified, to know our existence has not been in vain. We want redemption—nothing less. Needless to say, human partners cannot give this.
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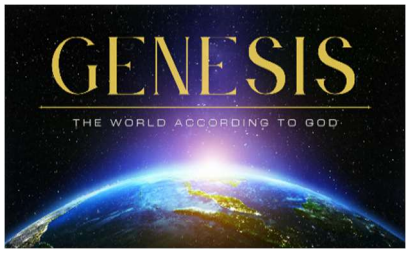

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