

Discover More: Together

Small Group Study

Discover More about the Message

Message Introduction: In today's scripture Jacob is on the run from his brother Esau when he has a dream of a ladder, a moment when the heavens and the earth draw near, and God speaks a promise of blessing. When Jacob wakes up he realizes that God is in fact with him, even though he did not know it. In our journey through life, there can be times when we feel that we are on our own, and yet we discover God is very near.

Reflect on the message you heard in person or on-line.

- + What is something you heard that was interesting or engaging?
- + Is there anything that raised a question or needed more explanation?

Together in Community

Check in with one another.

- + If there is a new person, welcome them and introduce group members.
- + (High) Share something good or eventful that you give thanks and praise for?

- + (Low) What has been a challenge or a prayer concern for you?

Discover Scripture and Life

- + Read the scripture.

Genesis 28:10-17

¹⁰Jacob left Beer-sheba and went toward Haran. ¹¹He came to a certain place and stayed there for the night, because the sun had set. Taking one of the stones of the place, he put it under his head and lay down in that place. ¹²And he dreamed that there was a ladder set up on the earth, the top of it reaching to heaven; and the angels of God were ascending and descending on it. ¹³And the LORD stood beside him and said, "I am the LORD, the God of Abraham your father and the God of Isaac; the land on which you lie I will give to you and to your offspring; ¹⁴and your offspring shall be like the dust of the earth, and you shall spread abroad to the west and to the east and to the north and to the south; and all the families of the earth shall be blessed in you and in your offspring. ¹⁵Know that 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." ¹⁶Then Jacob woke from his

sleep and said, "Surely the LORD is in this place — and I did not know it!" ¹⁷And he was afraid, and said, "How awesome is this place! This is none other than the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven."

- + When do you have a sense of God's presence?
 - Devotions
 - Prayer
 - Nature
 - Bible Study with Others
 - Conversation
- + What day-dreams or dreams have you had where you gained a fresh perspective on a situation? What happened?
- + See introduction: Jacob is on the run from his brother Esau after running a scam on Esau to get the blessing and inheritance. Jacob is scared and alone, not a productive mindset nor place for spirituality, yet God shows up. How has God shown up for you in unexpected times or places, through a dream, or a feeling, or a sense of presence, that calmed your spirits?
- + God shows up not to scold Jacob, but to affirm the promise of blessing, though it would seem that Jacob doesn't deserve it. What story might you share of a time

when you received a word of blessing or affirmation, though you did not deserve it.

Together for the Coming Week

- + What did you take away from the message? What will stay with you this week?
- + As you look to the coming week, what is one word that summarizes how you are feeling.
- + Do you have any prayer concern that you would like to share? What is it?
- + Close in the Lord's Prayer:

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name, thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever and ever. Amen.

Five Minutes with God

Genesis 28:10-17

Introduction. Like Jacob, we can forget God's persistent presence when we are lonely, scared, knee-deep in problems, or maybe just worn out by life. Like Jacob, we can be surprised in those moments and events of *Wow! God is here and I didn't know it!* Unlike Jacob, though, we don't need to swap out our pillows for stones for this to happen. We just need to gently remind ourselves of God's nearness.

Spiritual Practice. Affirmation prayers are on-the-go prayers that affirm God's grace, blessing and presence in our lives. Jacob's words when he wakes up from his dream are the perfect prayer to remind us of God's presence wherever we find ourselves: *Surely the LORD is in this place.* Let these words be your affirmation of God's presence this week. Write them on post-it notes and stick them where you will see them (bathroom mirror, refrigerator door, dashboard, computer, etc.). Pray them as you go about your day. Let God surprise you with grace and blessing as you are reminded of God's enduring presence.



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Team Devotion
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