

As Jacob continues to prosper from the blessings of the Lord, the time comes for him to return to Canaan. Laban, however, gives one final effort to prevent the prosperity of Jacob leaving his presence. Both parties do finally reach a covenantal agreement of peace and part ways for a last time.

Genesis 31:1-55

Jacob

Flees

Laban

I. COMPARING OUR STORIES

MY EXPERIENCE...

YOUR EXPERIENCE...

Encounters with family conflict can be tougher than any other kind. In-laws, particularly, can pose troubles sometimes not experienced in other relationships. When two families come together, there can be a “marriage” of more than just two people. It can also involve extended households, requiring extensive grace and patience to navigate harmoniously.

II. CONSIDERING OUR STRUGGLES

DESCRIBE a time when you felt “cheated” in some way.

HOW do you tend to work through scenarios with others who have treated you wrong?

WHEN you find yourself in conflict, are you more prone to stuff the problem away, avoiding it at all costs, or are you more inclined to react and get angry?

HOW important is patience when it comes to resolving conflict, and **HOW** patient of a person do you perceive yourself to be?

Genesis 31:1-55 Read Genesis 31:1-55

Jacob

Flees

Laban

OBSERVATION

As chapter 31 begins, what news comes to Jacob's attention?

What does God communicate to Jacob in vs. 3?

What argument does Jacob give to his wives in defense to his interactions with their father, Laban (vs. 4-13)?

How do Rachel and Leah respond to Jacob's words in vs. 14-16?

As Jacob flees, what does Rachel take from her father (vs. 19-21)?

How does Laban respond to Jacob's departure in vs. 22-23?

Who intervenes with Laban's plans, and how, in vs. 24?

Describe all that Laban accuses Jacob of in vs. 26-32.

What is Laban unable to locate in vs. 33-35, and why?

For what reasons does Jacob give, explaining his anger in vs. 36-42?

In vs. 44 Laban and Jacob enter into a covenant. Paraphrase its details.

INTERPRETATION

What favor had Laban previously shown Jacob that he longer is (vs. 2)? Consider 30:27.

Where has Laban acted deceitfully up to this point? What do we know about his character and "true colors"? See 24:29-31, 29:21-30 for insight.

What circumstances does the Lord use to drive Jacob, his family, and acquired possessions to Canaan?

Why do you think Rachel stole her father's household gods?

What do you notice about Jacob's character now compared to previous decisions and actions? (see vs. 41)
Keep in mind what his name means.

How does Jacob finally establish peace with Laban? What are the steps and agreements taken, and what do they do to memorialize this moment of peace?

APPLICATION

What are you able to glean from Laban and Jacob's attempt to resolve conflict, give (and receive) forgiveness, then move on?

What are specific strategies you've implemented in order to resolve conflict and avoid bitterness?