

Immediately after Jacob wrestles with God, prevailing only because his hip was put out of joint, Jacob then comes to face his brother, Esau. Their previous meeting, twenty years prior, saw conflict and strife. Here Jacob prepares for a volatile reunion, setting himself and his family up for penance, hoping Esau will have mercy.

# Genesis 33:1-20

## Jacob

### Meets

## Esau

#### I. COMPARING OUR STORIES

**MY EXPERIENCE...**

**YOUR EXPERIENCE...**

When facing the unexpected, our tendency is to strategize and prepare for the worst. It makes sense, especially when we're the ones responsible for the situation we've created for ourselves. This fear of the unknown, particularly due to our foolishness, can drive us toward some interesting tendencies in order to cover up messes made.

#### II. CONSIDERING OUR STRUGGLES

**HOW** do you typically confront difficult people or circumstances?

**HOW** does fear motivate you as it relates to solving conflict?

**DESCRIBE** a time when you were surprised by the graciousness extended to you from another person whom you'd wronged.

**Why** are we sometimes reluctant to restore relationships with those closest to us?

**WHAT** are the best ways we can cultivate peace with those around us with whom there may be conflict?

# Genesis 33:1-20

## Jacob Meets Esau

# Read Genesis 33:1-20

### OBSERVATION

As the chapter begins, who does Jacob see coming toward him, and how does he respond (vs. 1-2)?

How does Jacob greet Esau in vs. 3? What is Esau's reaction in vs. 4?

What do you observe about the way each wave of people meets Esau?

Describe Esau's response to the greeting Jacob has prepared (vs. 8-9).

How does Jacob describe meeting Esau in vs. 10?

In vs. 12 and 15, what suggestions does Esau give Jacob? How does Jacob respond to each in vs. 13-14 and 15b?

What location do Jacob and Esau eventually come to (17-18)? What does Jacob build here, and what name does he give this thing (vs. 20)?

### INTERPRETATION

Why do you think Jacob puts Rachel, Leah, and Joseph in the particular order mentioned in vs 1-2? Consider Genesis 37:3.

Why does Jacob bow seven times before Esau?

What did Jacob expect upon meeting his brother, Esau? Surprisingly, how does Esau greet him and how does this compare to the story of another encounter recorded in Luke 15:11-32?

Why is Jacob so adamant to give Esau something for his kind reception?

Where have we seen the words mentioned in vs. 10 prior to this encounter, and what is the significance of this phrase? See 32:20, 30 for insight.

Where is Shechem (where Jacob arrives) and Seir (where Esau eventually returns)? What does Jacob buy here and why is this significant? Consider Genesis 24:32 for further insight.

What is the meaning of the name given to the altar Jacob builds in vs. 20? Why is this fitting in regards to who *he* is and where he has finally arrived?

### APPLICATION

How does Jacob's encounter with Esau challenge you to face a difficult situation in your life?