

Sermon Study Guide



#7: Tactics & Truths

HOME: Finding Redemption in the Messiness of Life

May 24, 2020 | Dr. Stephen G. Tan

In this series we look at the life of Jacob to help us identify the sin issues that cause messiness in life and dysfunction in the family, and how we can find redemption in these messes.

Reflect

In what ways do people take advantage of each other at home with their own family, with their closest friend, or even with the people at church? In times of crisis like the COVID-19 pandemic, how would you describe people who take advantage of those who are obviously in need? If something is too good to be true, why do people still fall for scams?

Read and Discuss

Scripture

Genesis 30:25–31:18

Discussion Questions

1. Give specific examples of how some Christians try to use God for personal gains. What does your walk with the Lord reveal about your motivation in following Him? Think about how God has blessed your life. Would you still be following Him as faithfully as you do now if you weren't as blessed as you are now?
2. What could cause some Christians to resort to scheming in order to gain an advantage over someone in their line of work/business (or school), instead of trusting the Lord for their needs? Why should any form of sin or unethical actions ought not to be used in gaining advantage in what you do? Is the reason, "everyone is doing it" a passable excuse to do something, even if it is a sin? Why?
3. "Doing whatever it takes to win" may sound as if one is very passionate and determined, but when does it become unethical and unfair? Does Christianity teach that you can do anything that's needed to get your way? When you see a very unrighteous but prosperous person, would you credit what he got to God? What do you think is the difference between

wealth gained by oneself and that which comes from God?

4. In what ways has God proven that He is sovereign, and that He cannot be controlled or manipulated? How do people try to manipulate God? Do people who are seemingly blessed always deserving of what they have? If that's the case, what does it tell you of God and His sovereignty?
5. Why is it so important to continue to trust God even when someone has taken advantage of you? What character of God assures you that the unfairness done to you would be made right, if not in this life then in the next? What experience have you had that proved that God is indeed all-knowing and can correct what needs to be corrected without human manipulation?
6. Why does the truth that God is with you keep you from resorting to whatever-it-takes tactic mentality? What would be the result if you simply trusted the Lord and lived out the truth that He is with you, instead of doing everything in your own power when dealing with family or friendship issues? Think of a time when you were certain that God was indeed with you.

Respond

In Walk: Jacob tried to use God's blessings to Him to gain advantage over Laban and manipulate situations to suit his personal gain using a "whatever-it-takes" tactic. But God revealed to him the truth that God cannot be controlled or manipulated because He is sovereign, omniscient, and omnipotent. Have you ever tried using similar tactics as Laban and Jacob used on each other? Look back on the experience and see what it revealed to you about God, yourself, and about the people around you. How then would you live it differently if faced with a similar situation?

In Prayer: Heavenly Father, thank You for reminding me the truths about You. Forgive me, as sometimes instead of trusting You and believing that You are sovereign, all-knowing, and all-powerful, I tend to employ tactics that as Your child I should not be even considering. May you help me to fully trust in You and to always believe that You are with me. May my life give glory to Your Name, always. In Jesus' name. Amen.