

# Jacob: Laban's Pursuit

## Week 8 Study Questions

[Genesis 31:1-42](#)

In Genesis 31, Jacob's uncle, Laban, continues to oppress Jacob even after twenty years of treating Jacob unfairly while he worked under him. Ultimately, we see the contrast between Jacob's faith and Laban's faith as Jacob's actions reveal his personal relationship with the one true God while Laban's actions expose that his faith is based only on knowledge and cannot bear up under the weight of adversity.

## Application

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1. Bill contrasts the faith of Jacob and Laban as being "personal" versus "propositional." In what ways does your current faith in Christ lean more towards personal or propositional (knowledge and information based)?
2. Jacob's and Laban's faith can also be contrasted as "experimental" vs. "theoretical." How have you been experimental in your faith this year? If you identify more with a theoretical faith, of acknowledging who God is but not acting on it, what steps can you take to move towards an experimental faith? What warning signs can help you identify when you are drifting from a personal and experimental relationship with God?
3. Laban puts his hope and trust in household idols that Rachel has taken from him. In what ways are you giving yourself too heavily to worldly ideas and experiences? What good things have the potential to become idols for you (e.g. children, marriage, finances, job, hobbies, friendships)? When have you felt the tension between pursuing friendships, "fun" activities, or general "busyness" with good things versus prioritizing your time and schedule for growth and serving others?

## Key Points

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- Jacob spent twenty years under the oppression of one man yet is being transformed into a faithful follower of God; we should learn to measure change in our lives over the long haul or else we may get discouraged with slow progress.
- A lot of times, our faith is disproportionately propositional and theoretical causing us to feel the tension between living a consumeristic life in this world and giving our lives away to others. If we continue to live in theoretical faith where we don't put what we know about God into practice, then that faith is

not going to yield fruit long-term in our lives, and the time will come when we realize its vanity and emptiness.

- We become powerless and foolish when we worship powerless and foolish things.
- Jacob's boldness at the end of this passage comes from a foundation of experimental faith. Faith based on this foundation produces real power in the face of adversity.

## Scripture References

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[Matthew 10:39 \(NIV\)](#)