



The Night Jacob Wrestled God

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[Jacob] got up that night and crossed over the ford of the Jabbok. Jacob was left alone, and he wrestled with a man there until daybreak. When the man saw that he could not defeat him, he touched the socket of his thigh, and the socket of Jacob's thigh was dislocated as he wrestled. The man said, "Let me go. It's daybreak." Jacob said, "I will not let you go unless you bless me." Then he said to him, "What is your name?" He said, "Jacob." Then he said, "Your name will no longer be Jacob, but Israel, because you have fought with God and with men, and you have won.

Genesis 32:22,24-28 (EHV)

Have you ever heard of sportsmanship? It's not about the rules of the game—it's about how you act as you play. Do you play fair? Do you shake hands after the game? Or do you brag, cheat, or get angry? Now imagine this: in today's Bible story, Jacob wasn't just playing soccer or basketball. He was wrestling . . . with GOD!

Here's what happened: Jacob was traveling home with his family. He knew his brother Esau was coming with hundreds of men, and Jacob was afraid. The last time he saw Esau ended horribly. Esau wanted to kill him. Jacob was afraid for his family. So he spent the night in prayer. Suddenly, a man came and wrestled with him all night long. But this was no ordinary man—it was God in human form! And guess what? Jacob won! Jacob won in his wrestling match against God, because Jacob had God in a wrestling hold that God could not break. He told God, "I won't let you go unless you bless me." Jacob wasn't being rude—he was holding God to his promises. God agreed. Jacob didn't have God in a headlock, but in a promise-lock.

So why did God pop Jacob's hip out of place? Was God being a sore loser? Nope! God often gave people a physical sign to remind them of his promises (like the rainbow after the flood, or Samson's long hair). Jacob's limp was a sign he would never forget: God keeps his promises.

So when you're worried, or when life feels like a wrestling match, you can "wrestle" with God in prayer—holding on to his promises and not letting go. And you can be sure: God always keeps his Word.

Questions to Consider

- Have you ever wrestled with a friend, sibling, or parent? What was it like?
- What do you think it means to wrestle with God in prayer?
- Why was Jacob nervous about meeting Esau again?
- How can prayer feel like wrestling when you're worried or scared?
- What "victory" did Jacob win in prayer?
- What's one promise from God you want to "hold on to" this week?