

TITLE AND NUMBER: 102. Jacob wrestles with God



REFERENCE AND KEY VERSE(S): Genesis 32:22-31

So Jacob was left alone, and a man wrestled with him till daybreak. When the man saw that he could not overpower him, he touched the socket of Jacob's hip so that his hip was wrenched as he wrestled with the man. (v.24-25) Then the man said, "Your name will no longer be Jacob, but Israel, because you have struggled with God and with men and have overcome." (v.28). Then he blessed him there. (v.29b)

LOOKING FURTHER: 2 Corinthians 12: 7-10

What does this Bible passage tell us?

Jacob was returning with his family to his homeland. At the beginning of our passage, it is likely that he sent his family on ahead because he wanted to spend time alone with God. The man who wrestled with Jacob (v.24) was a messenger from God, an angel. We do not know why he fought with Jacob. But we do know that Jacob continued to struggle with him, even after his hip was damaged, because he wanted to receive God's blessing (v.26). The angel therefore gave Jacob a new name – Israel – which means 'he who struggles with God' (v.28). Jacob had struggled with God and had persevered. He then received God's blessing (v.29). He realised that he had seen God face to face and yet, unlike others in similar situations, he had survived (v.30). Despite his damaged hip, he must have been greatly encouraged by this.

In 2 Corinthians 12:10 it says, 'That is why, for Christ's sake, I delight in weaknesses, in insults, in hardships, in persecutions, in difficulties. For when I am weak, then I am strong.' Like Jacob and his hip, we all have weaknesses but they can help us grow if we learn to trust God.

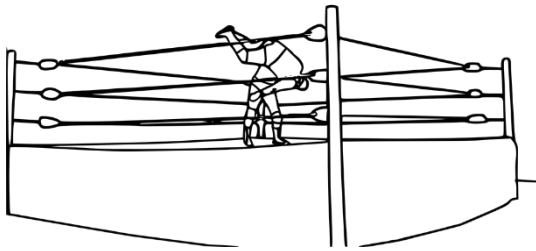
You may have watched the Commonwealth Games on television this summer. Instead of having separate Games for able-bodied and para-athletes, events for both were held together and athletes lived and socialised together. Although the bodies of some were not as strong as those of others, their spirits, enthusiasm and joy or sadness in both success and disappointment were equal and their delight in supporting each other was obvious.

We should not be afraid of our weaknesses, whether physical or mental, for it is through our weaknesses that we grow stronger, learning to trust God and each other.

Reflections:

- If you have a physical or mental disability which you consider to be a weakness, read again Paul's words in 2 Corinthians 12:7-10 where God says to him, 'My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.'
- When we recognise our own weaknesses, it makes us more understanding of others. Who might you need to change your attitude towards?
- If others seem to be coping better than you, talk to them about this; they may be able to help you. If you see someone who is not coping, think about how you could help them.

Write or draw something you read in this Bible Study that stood out to you.



Do you have any questions about this week's Bible Study?



How does this week's message apply to your life?



What can we learn about God from this week's passage?



What would you like to ask God this week?



Has God responded to your prayers this week in the way you had hoped for? It's okay to talk to God about this.

