

The Story of **JACOB** & **ESAU**: Resolving Conflict God's Way



"O LORD, please rescue me from the hand of my brother, Esau. I am afraid that he is coming to attack me, along with my wives and children. But you promised me 'I will surely treat you kindly, and I will multiply your descendants until they become as numerous as the sands along the seashore--too many to count.'" Genesis 32:11-12 NLT

The story begins in Gen. 25:21. Two fraternal twins, **Esau** ("hairy & red") and **Jacob** ("heel grabber, supplanter") were miracle babies born to Isaac and Rebekah. Jump ahead about 40 years to chapter 31. Jacob has lived in constant conflict. In chapter 31 Jacob has just escaped the anger of his father-in-law, Uncle Laban. Suddenly he realizes that his sins are catching up with him in chapters 32-33. Rom. 6:23a NLT: *"For the wages of sin is death...."* His brother Esau, a desert warrior, is coming to kill him! God uses this confrontation to teach Jacob and us valuable lessons. God has the power and grace to save you if you **turn** in faith from your selfish ways to receive **His** way of life! Rom. 6:23b NLT: *"but the free gift of God is eternal life through Christ Jesus our Lord."*

The Central Lesson:

Trust God with your life in everything! Exchange your responses to conflict for God's responses!

I. UNDERSTANDING CONFLICT

A. WHAT IS CONFLICT? A difference in opinion or purpose that frustrates someone's goals or desires.

B. CAUSES CONFLICT?

- **Misunderstandings.** (Josh. 22:10-34, *27,30)
- **Different values, goals, gifts, expectations causing division.** (Acts 15:39; 1 Cor. 12:12-31)
- **Competition: limited resources.** (Gen. 13:1-12)
- **Christian persecuted by the world.** (Jn. 15:18-19)
- **Sinful attitudes and desires that lead to sinful actions.**

"You want what you don't have, so you scheme and kill to get it. You are jealous of what others have, but you can't get it, so you fight and wage war to take it away from them. Yet you don't have what you want because you don't ask God for it." (James 4:2-3 NLT)

C. CONFLICT IS PREDICTED IN SCRIPTURE

1. **Spiritual Picture:** "Conflict Of The Ages" Gen. 3:6-7; 3:15 (See Rom. 5:12-14; 1 Cor. 15:22,45)
2. **Immigration Picture:** People Changing Boundaries (Acts 17:25-27)
3. **Jacob & Esau's Picture:** Rival Nations (Genesis 25:22-28)

II. HOW WE USUALLY RESPOND TO CONFLICT

(See Chart)

III. RESPONSES OF JACOB AND ESAU TO CONFLICT

- Appear together at Isaac's death. Gen. 35:29
- Rivalry continues between Edomites (Esau) and Israelites (Jacob or "Israel"). Malachi 1:2-5 NLT

IV. LESSONS JACOB LEARNED ABOUT GOD DUE TO CONFLICT

A. At Bethel – God Is Always **WHERE You Are, Even When You Don't Know It.** Gen. 28:10-18

"Surely the LORD is in this place, and I wasn't even aware of it! But he was also afraid and said, 'What an awesome place this is! It is none other than the house of God, the very gateway to heaven!'" (28:16 NLT)

God's Mercy Enhances His Glory: Romans 9:22-24

B. At Mahanaim – God Is **READY For Anything!** Gen. 32:1-2; Psalm 34:6-8

C. In Emergencies - Don't Forget To **PRAY! God Wants To **HEAR** From You!** Gen. 32:9-12

ARGUMENTS WHY GOD SHOULD DELIVER HIM

1. God had **CALLED** him in faithfulness to Abraham and Isaac's faith in God. Gen.32:9a
2. God had **COMMANDED** him to return home. Gen. 32:9b; 31:13
3. God had **CARED** for him all this time. Gen. 32:10
4. God's **COVENANT** plans were at stake, not his. Gen. 32:11
5. God's **CHARACTER** meant that He would fulfill all His promises to Jacob. Gen. 32:12

D. At Peniel (The Face of God) "In The Ring With God"

1. **Jacob MET The LORD!** Gen. 32:22-26 G. Campbell Morgan: "the crippling that crowns."
2. **Jacob MET HIMSELF!** Gen. 32:27-32 "The God-mastered man."

E. Peace-Faking With Esau Gen. 33:1-17

Prov. 16:7 NIV *"When a man's ways are pleasing to the LORD, he makes even his enemies live at peace with him."*

V. GOD-CENTERED RESPONSES TO CONFLICT

#1 GLORIFY God. 1 Cor. 10:31-11:1 Show who He is, what He is like, and what He is doing.

#2 GET the log out of your own eye. Mt. 7:5

#3 GENTLY restore. Gal. 6:1

#4 GO and be reconciled. Mt. 5:23-24

The Central Lesson:

Trust God with your life in everything! Exchange your responses to conflict for God's responses!

► Accept Christ as your Savior. ► As a Christian, dedicate your life to Christ. ► Invite someone to next Sunday's study. ► Attend a small group. ► Read the Bible this week & journal meaningful verses. ► Pray for friends that need Jesus.