

# Leader Guide

## What could be written about you?

### Part 2

### Winter 2026 | Week 3

Message Date 1/25/2026

#### THE GOAL

This week is a continuation of the story and the passages that we began last week. The goal is to help our group see that wrestling with God does not stop at surrender, but results in transformed identity and visible evidence of God's work. Through Jacob's new name and changed relationships, we will explore how God defines who we are and how our lives reflect Jesus. By the end of the discussion, group members should be able to identify what evidence their lives are presenting and where God may be calling them to live more fully into their identity in Christ.

#### MY STORY

- 1) Have you ever had a nickname that really fit you? How did you get it?
- 2) What's one noticeable way you've changed over the past few or several years?

#### QUICK REVIEW

- 1) What caught your attention from Sunday's message?

#### DIGGING DEEPER / TAKING IT HOME

##### Genesis 32:28–31 (NLT)

<sup>28</sup> “Your name will no longer be Jacob,” the man told him. “From now on you will be called Israel, because you have fought with God and with men and have won.” <sup>29</sup> Then Jacob asked, “Please tell me your name.” “Why do you want to know my name?” the man replied. Then he blessed Jacob there. <sup>30</sup> Jacob named the place Peniel—for he said, “I have seen God face to face, yet my life has been spared.” <sup>31</sup> The sun was rising as Jacob left Peniel, and he was limping because of the injury to his hip.

##### Genesis 28:16–17 (NLT)

<sup>16</sup> Then Jacob awoke from his sleep and said, “Surely the LORD is in this place, and I

wasn't even aware of it!" <sup>17</sup> 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!"

### **Genesis 33:1–4 (NLT)**

<sup>1</sup> Then Jacob looked up and saw Esau coming with his 400 men... <sup>3</sup> Then Jacob went on ahead. As he approached his brother, he bowed to the ground seven times before him. <sup>4</sup> Then Esau ran to meet him and embraced him, threw his arms around his neck, and kissed him. And they both wept.

### **Galatians 5:22–23 (NLT)**

<sup>22</sup> But the Holy Spirit produces this kind of fruit in our lives: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, <sup>23</sup> gentleness, and self-control. There is no law against these things!

3) Why does God give Jacob a new name instead of allowing him to choose one? Identity is something God gives, not something we create or assign to ourselves. I think it's also something that we grow into. In Jacob's case he had changed and transformed over the years of hardship and struggle into Israel.

4) What does Jacob's limp teach us about real, lasting transformation? I think one of the biggest keys is that struggle leaves marks. When we wrestle with God, sometimes it leaves marks on our soul. Transformation often includes humility and ongoing dependence on God, not instant perfection.

5) How does drawing near to God increase Jacob's awareness of God's presence? Wrestling with God heightens spiritual awareness, helping Jacob recognize where God has been at work all along.

6) What evidence do you see that Jacob has truly changed when he meets Esau? I think one of the biggest keys is that Jacob approaches Esau with humility and peace rather than fear or manipulation. What other areas do you see?

7) Why is reconciliation such a powerful form of spiritual evidence? Reconciliation shows that trust in God has replaced self-protection and control. Reconciliation is also the very thing that Jesus seeks with us. When we seek reconciliation with others, we are living on mission as well as living as Jesus lived.

8) How does the Fruit of the Spirit function as evidence of our identity in Christ? Fruit is visible and experienced by others; it reveals who we belong to. Fruit of the Spirit is also a reflection of the condition of the heart. As I grow into my connection with Jesus, the fruit grows in my life and how I treat others changes.

9) Which Fruit of the Spirit do you most want God to grow in you right now? The fruits I always chase are peace and self-control. I tend to get frustrated easily and constantly have things trying to rob me of peace. I seek self-control because I want to

choose my words better and not harm instead cause reconciliation. How I behave matters.

10) What evidence in your life currently shows that you belong to Jesus?

I think this answer is best looked at over a long period of time. I've had the privilege of walking with Jesus over 30 years, and I am so not the same man that I was even 10 years ago. The evidence in my life is that I look more like Him. I have more peace and I love more deeply. I live on mission, meaning I want to help people find and follow Jesus. In thinking about this question don't think about recent events think about the long-term.

## CHAIR TIME TOOLS

Reflection Questions for Chair Time: think about the following questions and pray through them with Jesus.

- 1) God, what identity have I been tempted to give myself instead of receiving from You?
- 2) Where do You want my life to better reflect Jesus right now?
- 3) What fruit do You want to cultivate in me during this season?